MEANING, TRUTH AND REALITY: A STUDY OF HILARY PUTNAM'S PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

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DECLARATION

I, Rahul Kumar Maurya, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **Meaning, Truth and Reality: A Study of Hilary Putnam's Philosophy of Language** submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of **Jawaharlal Nehru University** is my original work and has not been submitted by me or by anyone else for any other degree or diploma of this or any other university.

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To My Grand Father

Late Shri Satgura Prasad Maurya

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Introduction

Language plays pivotal role in human life. It is a unique characteristic of human being. If it is not an exaggeration, we can say it is only the language which distinguishes human beings from animals. Language is used to communicate with others about our emotions, thinking of past, future plans, actions etc. Through language we not only know about others and ourselves but we gather information about the world we inhabit. Language penetrates every sphere of human life, be it personal, social, cultural, aesthetic, economic, scientific, etc. Language has evolved along with the evolution of human beings. So if we study language we can know about human beings and their evolution. Language can unfold different layers of the development of human beings. So, the primacy of the study of language consists in unfolding the knowledge of human beings and the world.

Regarding the relationship between thought and language, there is a philosophical debate whether thought is prior to language or thought and language are coextensive. There are philosophers who believe about the primacy of thought over language and some believe that thought and language are coextensive. Wittgenstein argues that we cannot think of anything without language, in that sense thought and language are coextensive. Whatever we think or understand, we understand as expressed in a language. Thus, to grasp what the relation between thought and language is and how they are connected with reality is the main target of philosophy of language.

The Linguistic Turn

The linguistic turn has been dominating Anglo-American philosophy in the twentieth century since Frege and Russell. This is a methodological shift from the traditional methods to approach and deal with philosophical problems. This movement handles philosophical problems or issues through a study of language. This movement focuses on language because of its being representative of the different facets of human knowledge, such as science,

morality, metaphysics, etc. Philosophers belonging to this tradition try to resolve or dissolve the philosophical problems by analyzing the natural language or constructing ideal language due to the ambiguity of the natural language.

The prominent question is, what was the factor responsible for the linguistic turn to come into being? What is the aim of linguistic philosophy? What are the achievements concerning its aim? Frege is considered as the founder of linguistic philosophy, not explicitly but in an implied sense from his work. According to Dummett, the first and clear example of linguistic turn occurs in Frege's *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetike* of 1884. In this book, Frege raises the Kantian question, "How are numbers given to us, granted that we have no idea or intuition of them?" Dummett argues that his answer to this question is laid down in the introduction to introduce a fundamental methodological principle in the book which is to be followed throughout the book. The context principle has been put forth as a governing principle for an enquiry into language rather than into modes of thought. However, as Dummett says,

> No justification for the linguistic turn is offered in *Grundlagen*: it is simply taken, as being the most natural way of going about the philosophical enquiry. And yet, as his philosophy developed, Frege became more and more insistent that thoughts, and not the sentences that express them, formed his true subject-matter. Natural language came to appear to him more of an obstacle than a guide in logical and philosophical enquiries.[1]

Due to problems of natural language, Frege's contention was that we have to develop such an ideal language which can be free from all ambiguity and can serve best to resolve all the philosophical problems. For Frege, natural language is mischievous and full of contradiction and ambiguity, and hence, it is a major obstacle in the philosophical progress. In November 1906, he wrote to Husserl that "The main task of the logician consists in liberation from language"[2] and in the article 'Erkēnntnisquellen', accomplished in the last year of his life, he writes, "a great part of the work of the philosopher consists in . . . a struggle with language."[3] Dummett notes that Frege's denial of natural language becomes more vehement in his late writings and his insistence shifts to the mirroring of thoughts by sentences. Frege wrote in his notes for Darmstaedter,

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[1] Dummett (1994), pp. 5–6.
[2] Frege (1980), p. 68. (as quoted in Dummett, 1994, p. 6.)
[3] Frege (1979), p. 270. (as quoted in Dummett, 1994, p. 6.)

> The sentence can be regarded as an image of the thought in that to the relation between the part and the whole within the thought there by and large corresponds the same relation between the part of the sentence and the sentence.[4]

Dummett's remark over Frege's view given above is that "Language may be a distorting mirror: but it is the only mirror that we have." What the above remarks in the work of Frege show is that there was presence of the tendency of linguistic philosophy, the investigation of thoughts through the analysis of language in Frege's work. Dummett claims that though Frege himself was not fully aware of the thrust in this direction, linguistic turn is certainly the offshoot of his philosophy. Dummett discusses three characteristics of Frege's philosophy which certainly brought the linguistic turn into being as a discipline which can be seen as a natural development from it, though Frege did not explicitly acknowledge that his philosophy had these characters. These characteristics are as follows:

1. The discernment of constituent senses, as parts of a thought is parasitic upon the apprehension of the structure of the sentence expressing it. Frege emphasized that the structure of thought must be mirrored in the structure of a sentence, that is to say, it is necessary to the notion of expressing a thought, rather than merely encoding it.

2. For Frege, the reference of the sentence is its truth-value that means it is sense of the sentence that primarily has the reference, and the sentence only derivatively. And going ahead, generalizing this principle, he says that even in the case of proper name it is the sense of a proper name that primarily refers to the object, rather than the proper name itself.

3. For Frege, an expression simply has a sense: one who uses it does not need to bear its sense in mind throughout the process of employing it. The sense, considered in itself, is objective, and hence capable of being grasped by different minds.[5]

Frege's above emphasization over language in order to understand the thought tends towards the study of language. For Frege, language is only a means for reflecting the reality not on itself: his focus on truth-value and the sense of sentence shows that language tends to go

[4] Ibid., p. 255. (as quoted in Dummett, 1994, p. 6.)
[5] Dummett (1994), pp. 7-10.

outside of itself. Language is always used to talk about non-linguistic phenomena except only when we study the language for the purpose of understanding the contents of it and its functioning. This implicit tendency of Frege's philosophy to engage in language gives the way to the philosophers, further, to establish the philosophy of language as a discipline. Frege finds that natural language is not sufficient enough to clarify philosophical issues, so he insists on constructing an ideal language which can be free from all kinds of ambiguity and contradiction and that can express or mirror the reality as such. Though later it is realized by philosophers that ideal language is so narrow that it cannot encompass the multifaceted reality and for this purpose we have to analyze natural language.

Now we will come back to the first question as to what was the factor giving use to the linguistic philosophy as a discipline which dominated the whole twentieth century. In Frege's philosophy, we find that there were very obvious symptoms for linguistic philosophy but that is not to say that in Frege's philosophy linguistic turn had come with its clear purpose. The role of the linguistic philosophy as opposed to earlier philosophy is defined later. Linguistic philosophy comes and grows with dissatisfaction of excess metaphysics of twentieth century philosophy especially emanating from Germany. This dissatisfaction permeates throughout Britain and America. And with increasing in such dissatisfaction leads philosophers to focus more and more on language to prevent this excessive metaphysical encroachment in philosophy.

In order to understand this linguistic turn in a more appropriate way we have to see how, in the history of philosophy, philosophy has progressed. In Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Husserl, early Wittgenstein, and later Wittgenstein, there have been particular methods such as "clear and distinct ideas," "transcendental method," "bracketing," "meaninglessness of traditional philosophical theses by focusing on logical form of language," and "pointlessness of these theses by investigating the causes of their having been propounded," respectively, to achieve their required solutions for the philosophical issues. In this way, each philosopher has gone against another philosopher to replace his predecessor with new rival theory or methodology in order to show the real philosophical progress and thus fixing the meaning of "philosophy" for the especial purpose the philosopher has. But none of them can be taken to be successful regarding this purpose. This has been best formulated by Richard Rorty in the introduction of *The Linguistic Turn,*

> . . . every such revolution has failed, and always for the same reason. The revolutionaries were found to have presupposed, both in their criticisms of their predecessors and in their directives for the future, the truth of certain substantive and controversial philosophical theses. The new method which each proposed was one which, in good conscience, could be adopted only by those who subscribed those theses. Every philosophical rebel has tried to be "presuppositionless," but none has succeeded.[6]

In the above paragraph, Rorty shows that in the name of philosophical progress there have been only methodological shifts and attempts to free philosophy from unwarranted presuppositions. For the philosopher who proposes one kind of method to serve the philosophy best, philosophy progressed and for opponents it is not progress in real terms of philosophical progress. Linguistic philosophers argue against prevalent philosophical tradition by noting that they have no agreement in themselves regarding how they should deal with philosophical issues. They are just quarrelling among themselves for a better philosophy over other. Linguistic philosophers were motivated by science and hoped that all philosophers must have consensus regarding the methodology which philosophy opts. Linguistic philosophers argue that since their predecessors could never agree, they must have been misguided; a method which does not lead to a consensus cannot be a good method. But to such a remark, non-linguistic philosophers demanded an account for why they were misguided to which linguistic philosophers could not offer a satisfactory answer.

Linguistic philosophers claim that in our methodology all philosophers would have consensus because it does not presuppose any substantive philosophical thesis, rather it focuses on only the analysis of language and shows the world as such. Linguistic philosophy admits that we can resolve or dissolve all the philosophical problems by merely reforming the language or by knowing more about the language, as Rorty notes. Though opponents of linguistic philosophers argue that it is a sign of the sickness of our souls, a revolt against reason itself, and a self-deceptive attempt to procure by theft what one has failed to gain by honest toil.[7] Linguistic philosophers' claim that this method is presuppositionless is highly disputable and this claim is not worthy to be taken on its face value. It needs serious investigation to pass on any judgement regarding their claim. Putnam says that this analytic tradition has not been ideologically free, though analytic tradition, in principle, ought to be

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[6] Rorty (ed.) (1967), p. 1.
[7] This remark Richard Rorty has derived from Blashard, Gellner, Mure and Adler. Rorty, ed. (1967), p. 3.

ideologically ceased. This is what has been wrong with analytic tradition due to some great pillars like Carnap who was highly ideologically loaded.

The Philosophy of Language

For understanding the significance of the language we talked above, study of language is worthwhile. Philosophy of language is basically concerned with three areas out of four about a language, which linguistics also deals with. These four areas of language marked to be studied in the range of linguistics are as follows: syntax, semantics, pragmatics and phonology. Philosophy of language studies only three branches of linguistics that is syntax, semantics and pragmatics. But why it is so that philosophy of language needs to study the areas of language for which already there is well established discipline – linguistics. Devitt and Sterelny state,

> It is in semantics, or "the theory of meaning," that the theoretical and conceptual chaos mentioned above is most striking. There are also some similar problems in syntax. Philosophy is typically concerned with the most intractable and conceptually difficult parts of various disciplines. So it is not surprising that it is deeply concerned with semantics and has some concern with syntax.[8]

For the above reason mentioned by Devitt and Sterelny, philosophy of language is properly suited to the study of language. These three areas of language, syntax, semantics and pragmatics need to be clarified more.

Syntax is the study of the grammatical rules that describes the way words are permissible in a sentence to make it, in formal terms, a correct sentence. Syntactic description of language is not concerned with the concept of meaning. Because sentence may be in purely formal terms correct but not meaningful.

Semantics is the study of the meaning of words and sentences. Semantic theory or theory of meaning tells us what constitutes meaning and how the meaning of any word or sentence is determined. Any semantic theory helps us knowing the meaning of any expression

[8] Devitt and Sterelny (1999), p. 4.

and also what the relation between a word and its meaning is. Reference and truth are two main semantic notions dealt under any theory of meaning. Pragmatics also has a point to explain regarding the notion of reference.

Pragmatics is the study of what speakers do with language. Speakers do many things with language, they do not simply talk in language. While speaking language, they promise, swear, marry, forgive, apologize, insult, and enrage one another. Sometimes what speakers communicate is not wholly conveyed by what is said. We require speaker's intention to grasp the whole idea of what is meant by the speaker in the use of a linguistic expression. Such issues related to language are studied under the domain of pragmatics.

Study of language in the above three ways tends to throw light on the traditional philosophical problems in metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Regarding the nature of philosophy, many philosophers consider philosophy to be identical with the study of language. Such rendering of philosophy seems to be problematic, for, Devitt and Sterelny point out, "much of this goes too far: philosophy of language has become too big for its boots."[9] Though this remark is highly loaded one needs to investigate the whole analytic philosophy to reach any conclusion. There are ambivalent feelings regarding the nature of philosophy advocated by philosophers of language. Putnam has a positive attitude towards philosophy of language and its role in resolving the philosophical problems. He says,

> If philosophers have become very interested in language in the past fifty years it is not because they have become *dis*interested in the Great Questions of philosophy, but precisely because they *are* still interested in the Great Questions and because they have come to believe that language holds the key to resolve (or in some way satisfactorily dispose of) the great questions.[10]

Though it is not true that philosophy of language has succeeded in its goal but it has enormously contributed towards this goal. The importance of language is not just prerogative to analytic philosophy which took language as thrust of its study but it is also seen in the Classical Greek view of language that shows how language is involved in every sphere of human life. The famous Athenian rhetorician Isocrates (436-338BC) writes:

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[9] Ibid., p. 3.
[10] Putnam (1975b), p. 1.

> In most of our abilities we differ not at all from the animals; we are in fact behind many in swiftness and strength and other resources. But because there is born in us the power to persuade each other and to show ourselves whatever we wish, we not only have escaped from living as brutes, but also by coming together have founded cities and set up laws and invented arts, and speech has helped us attain practically all of the things we have devised. For it is speech that has made laws about justice and injustice and honour and disgrace, without which provisions we should not be able to live together. By speech we refute the wicked and praise the good. By speech we educate the ignorant and inform the wise. We regard the ability to speak properly as the best sign of intelligence, and truthful, legal and just speech is the reflection of a good and trustworthy soul . . . .[11]

Thus, analytic philosophers have taken the study of language very seriously because a good understanding of language can help us minimize the chaos in philosophical enterprise. If we understand language seriously it can bring down, if not all the philosophical problems, at least, can diminish the confusion among ourselves. Analytic philosophers are greatly divided amongst themselves regarding what language needs to be analyzed. As mentioned earlier, some of them believe that for philosophical analysis we should construct an ideal language. The rules of these newly constructed languages are intended to be clearer, more complete, and more precise than the rules that govern our use of language in ordinary discourse.[12] Ordinary language philosophy is also called natural language philosophy which focuses on the language used by laymen in their daily life. Thus it has a point to say that natural language has sociological nature because of its use and the structure which is embedded in the social phenomena.

Thus, analytic philosophy developed through two substantive lines, not together but at different times. These two lines of enquiry are ordinary language philosophy and ideal language philosophy. The ideal language philosophers are Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell and early Wittgenstein. And ordinary language philosophers' camp belongs to G.E. Moore, Gilbert Ryle, J.L. Austin, Paul Grice, P.F Strawson and later Wittgenstein.

According to Russell, ordinary language has deceived us and thus cannot help in solving the metaphysical and epistemological issues in philosophy. Frege, the Vienna circle (especially Rudolf Carnap) which is a well-established branch for ideal construction of

[11] Harris and Taylor (1989), p. xi (Introduction).
[12] Ammerman (ed.), (1965), pp. 2–3.

language, and young Wittgenstein, they all have tried to deal with ideal language by using the resources of modern logic. For them, logic is supposed to be the explorer of genuine structure of language which makes language free from all ambiguities and helps language to show the reality as such. Logic becomes the pedestal for the ideal language. Analytic philosophy takes formal or mathematical logic as its foundation, since by analyzing the logical structure of sentence and thought, we can bring out the analytic truths. This compels philosophers to study of logic of language. Thus, study of language based on the logical structure appears in Frege, Russell and early Wittgenstein. Frege, being one of the founders of analytic philosophy, was of the view that philosophy is a critique of pure thought as expressed in a pure language.[13]

Russell's distinction between grammatical form and logical form plays a significant role in this context. By being aware of this distinction one may know how grammatical structure is misleading and causes the difficulty in the proper understanding of language. Logical structure of language keeps the sentence meaningfully intact, though grammatically correct sentence may be absurd in terms of having any meaning. Therefore, this misuse of the language causes several bewilderments in philosophy. Russell, Frege and Wittgenstein held that many philosophical problems arise due to our being misled by the surface structure of language. Thus, we have to rely on the logical structure of language in order to understand the structure of reality. If ideal language is in place, it enables us to replace the ambiguity and superficially misleading structure of natural language. And this becomes, for the ideal language philosopher, a perfect language free from all defects.

Early Wittgenstein, like Russell, admits that natural language needs to be reformulated as to be unambiguous and explicit enough to mirror the reality as such. In Tractatus, Wittgenstein says that to deal with the philosophical issues we need an ideal language. Along with Frege and Russell, Wittgenstein also tries to construct logically perfect language. Wittgenstein, therefore, strongly believes that language needs to be understood in its logical structure because we can understand the structure of the world only by unfolding the logical structure of the language. Wittgenstein says, "Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts."[14]

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[13] See Dummett (1973).

[14] Wittgenstein (1922), p. 49, (4.112).

Ordinary language philosophy has a concern with the language of life and not with the logical language. The demerit of the logical and mathematical structure of language is that it is dissociated from human life, whereas natural language is tied with every aspect of life. Thus, Wittgenstein in his later work turns back from the grammatical investigation of the language of mathematics and logic towards the language of life. Natural language has multifaceted structure spread in human life. Wittgenstein tries to free the philosophy from the obsession with science and logic. It is the *language-games*[15] that matters and not the language structures. The structure of language without its functioning in language-games is empty. Thus, later Wittgenstein's primary focus is on language-games not on language structures.

In the ordinary language philosophy camp, against ideal language philosophy, philosophers like, Ryle, Austin, Searle, Grice and Strawson argue that language is closely tied to the speakers. According to Grice, primarily it is for the speaker to mean something, and if communication is successful speaker has performed a speech-act. Austin says that to say something is to do something. He argues against the logical positivists who held that a sentence is meaningful only if it has a verifiable truth-value. He shows that there are good enough ordinary and meaningful sentences that are neither true nor false. Such speech-act theory claims that by using language we not only give description of the state of affairs but we perform certain acts. For example, the obvious speech act performed by saying "Can you pass the salt?" is a question (Are you able to ...?); yet at a dinner table one produces such utterance to make a request. In other example when one says, "You are standing on my feet," is a statement just to make a request that a person get off speaker's feet. In the current time ordinary language analysis has got much attention.

Problems in the Philosophy of Language and Putnam's Approach

One of the main aims of philosophy of language is the study of semantic theory or theory of meaning. How words in our language become meaningful? Are words themselves meaningful irrespective of any situation or context? Do words have a tendency to mean something beyond its linguistic expression? If words mean something beyond their linguistic expressions, then how do they hook on to non-linguistic entities? Words are used to refer certain things in the

[15] See Wittgenstein (1951).

world. But how do words enable us to pick out certain object in the world? The same way any statement is used to refer to the exact state of affairs. And if any statement is exactly in match with the state of affairs, then statement is true otherwise false. Hence, the truth value is the property of a statement. Thus, statements are loaded with information about the world and of human being. But the nature of this informative knowledge presupposes certain metaphysical and related epistemological projects.

In my dissertation, I have taken up three notions to study in the philosophical work of Hilary Putnam: Meaning, Truth and Reality. These three notions are closely related to each other. Notion of meaning deals with how words refer or what is the relation between a word and an object. This notion of reference immediately relates language to the external world and thus to reality. This presupposes a kind of metaphysics of the world language purports to express. Along with this is the related notion of meaning, because the notion of meaning, especially for Putnam, has a reality involving character. So the notion meaning does not directly have any metaphysical commitment but it depends on the notion of reality that any theory of language has. Once the notions of meaning and reality are ready, the notion of truth has the job of telling whether any sentence is according to the fact or not.

Hence, the notions of meaning, truth and reality are interconnected within the study of language. There are different and rival theories of reality thereby different theories of meaning and truth. In the analytic philosophy, there are different groups of philosophers belonging to different camps of realism: metaphysical realism, internal realism, anti-realism, constructivist realism, direct realism, naïve realism, etc. According to the realistic project, there have been different theories of meaning and truth.

In the history of philosophy, there are many rival theories of meaning and reality. Putnam is an externalist with reference to the theory of meaning and internal realist with reference to a theory of reality. But, for Putnam, these two notions, externalism and internal realism are not different but are two sides of the same coin. We try to examine Putnam's position by putting his theory of meaning and reality together.

In chapter 1, we deal with the notion of word-meaning as discussed by Putnam comparing it with the traditional theories of meaning. This chapter consists of two points: one

is the problem with traditional theory of meaning and second is Putnam's treatment of it with his new insight. Putnam prioritizes the word-meaning over the sentence-meaning for his strong belief that the success of the sentence-meaning in the history of philosophy has been dependent on the word-meaning. Though there are many philosophers for whom sentence-meaning is primary and word-meaning secondary, i.e., words have their meaning only in the context of a sentence. Putnam does not regard his notion of meaning as a theory of meaning. But for him notion of meaning is a multifarious notion, and every attempt to construct any theory of meaning will result in failure.

Traditional theory of meaning distinguishes between intension and extension and puzzles over their interconnection. It claims that a term has an intension which, in turn, determines its extension. And intension is what one bears in his mind or in other words, it is a mental state which fixes the extension. This theory takes intension to be primary meaning that enables to get to the extension or we can say that meaning in one sense is an intension connected with a term and in another sense it is an extension. What Putnam argues is that if meaning is intension then it cannot determine the extension. Putnam offers arguments to show why this determination is not possible. Through his Twin Earth thought experiment he tries to prove that meaning cannot be intension, and that meaning is externally determined, and hence does not consist in being in mental state.

In this context, we attempt to examine Frege's criticism of psychologism and Putnam's response to it. Putnam argues that Frege's notion of sense is not free from psychologism and hence Frege's theory is pseudo anti-psychologism. Frege conceives that sense belongs to the *third realm*,[16] and hence can be available to everyone. Putnam's argument is that though sense is not in one's mind but grasping the sense is still being in a psychological state. Putnam admits that Frege's argument against psychologism is not an argument against mental entities in general but against identifying concepts with mental particulars.[17]

Finally we deal with Putnam's position how to fix the meaning of any term. Putnam has put forth a causal theory of reference. And to trace this causal chain for reference he has

[16] Frege in Strawson (ed.) (1967), p. 29.
[17] See Chapter 1, Note 11.

introduced a set of interrelated notions: division of linguistic labor, environmental factor, and indexicality and rigidity. We conclude the first chapter by considering the role these notions play in Putnam's theory of reference.

In chapter 2, we deal with Putnam's internal realism as opposed to metaphysical realism which, according to him, necessarily attracts global skepticism. Discussing internal realism, there are certain other issues which need discussion: relativism, conceptual relativity and reality within conceptual scheme. Above all issues have been dealt within this chapter at length. Metaphysical realism claims divide between noumena and phenomena, according to which our mind does not have access to noumena or reality as such. All human efforts to conceptualize the reality go in vain. Our human mind has only access to the phenomenal reality. So, if we accept metaphysical realism then we have to face global skepticism. According to global skepticism, we can be deceived or mistaken about reality while grasping it. Global skepticism is congenial with metaphysical realism, since metaphysical realism accepts that human cognitive capacity is limited.

We have tried to examine Putnam's argument for conceptual relativity and against relativism. Putnam argues that his internal realism does permit conceptual relativity but it does not allow any kind of relativism. Because relativism claims that reality is relative as there are conceptual schemes, and it permits different world in place. There are some charges against Putnam that he is disguised relativist, though Putnam claims that he is not relativist. Putnam argues against Thomas Kuhn who favors that there are many worlds as there are many conceptual schemes. Putnam says that though there are many conceptual schemes but the underlying reality to all those conceptual schemes is one.

In the last, part we deal the theory of realism within conceptual scheme. Putnam argues that everything we know we know through our concepts. But that does not mean that what we know is not real. Without employing conceptual scheme we cannot talk about reality. So in that way concepts are essential to cognize the unconceptualized reality. Putnam says there is no unconceptualized knowledge:

> Even our description of our own sensation, so dear as a starting point for knowledge to generations of epistemologists, is heavily affected (as are the sensation themselves, for

that matter) by a host of conceptual choices. The very inputs upon which our knowledge is based are conceptually contaminated; but contaminated inputs are better than none.[18]

In chapter 3, we discuss Putnam's view on analyticity as opposed to the view of Quine, but not outrightly contrary to Quine's. Davidson's theory of meaning as a truth condition which has been criticized by Putnam and also been considered in the final chapter. Further we try to examine what is the relation between meaning and truth. In this regard Putnam tries to save the analyticity of a trivial kind which is linguistically helpful, though Putnam agrees with Quine that no analyticity exists for philosophical use, and taking analyticity in that manner is making a philosophical mistake.

We compare and contrast Davidson's theory of meaning as a truth condition with Putnam's theory of meaning. Davidson argues that to know the meaning of any sentence we must know its truth condition, and argues for a disquotational theory of meaning. Putnam shows his difficulty with this theory because it does not have any metaphysical and epistemological commitment. Another difficulty that Putnam has with Davidson's position is that Davidson argues for sentence meaning and about words he says that words can also be considered as short sentences. In the last part we discuss the relation between meaning and truth.

[18] Putnam (1981), p. 54.

Chapter 1

Reference and Meaning

Introduction

In this chapter entitled 'Reference and Meaning' I would like to see what constitutes the notion of reference and what constitutes the notion meaning of a word. Reference and meaning are interlinked. According to Putnam, reference of a word constitutes a part of its meaning, it tells us what the object is, which is referred by a word. Meaning is generally a conception about a word which enables us to recognize or individuate an object or thing. According to Putnam, traditional theories of meaning are problematic. In this chapter I shall evaluate Putnam's argument for a particular theory of meaning contrasting it with some traditional and contemporary counter arguments. Three sections of this chapter form a single argument for a theory of meaning, which is the core of Putnam's theory of meaning detailed in the long essay 'The Meaning of Meaning'. I shall go into the details of these arguments here. Putnam is the philosopher who regarded the theory of meaning as a '*common sense view' of* meaning of a word. Putnam thought, since our concept of word meaning has been worse off than concept of our sentence meaning, it is important to develop a theory of word meaning. Putnam believes that theories about meaning have been nothing but literally theories. Putnam, by 'literally theories' means that in contemporary time philosophers have gone to build more and more complicated theories of meaning which have nothing to do with the idea of word meaning that common people have. Rather, theories of meaning have been confined to their complicacy and did not bear fruits in real terms. According to Putnam,

> Since I regard the traditional theories about meaning as a myth-eaten (notice that the topic of 'meaning' is the one topic discussed in philosophy in which there is literally nothing but 'theory' – literally nothing that can be labelled or even ridiculed as the 'common sense

> view'), it will be necessary for me to discuss and try to disentangle a number of topics concerning which the received view is, in my opinion, wrong.[1]

Due to the above reasons Putnam talks of a *word meaning* in detail and defends a *common sense view* of meaning as opposed to some of the prominent theories of meaning.

1.1 Intension and Extension

Traditionally, a pair of terms, like *intension* and *extension* or *sinn* and *bedeutung* (first introduced by Frege), has been used to explain the concept of meaning. The *extension* of a term is a set of things which a term is true of or refers to. Therefore, the word 'rabbit' refers to all rabbits and only rabbits, which the word is true of; hence the extension of 'rabbit' is precisely a cluster of things to which the term 'rabbit' applies. Intension is a concept corresponding to a term or it may be a group of properties which a word is connected with. For Putnam,

> . . . 'rabbit' *in its most common English sense* illustrates one such problem: strictly speaking, it is not a term, but an ordered pair consisting of a term and a 'sense' (or an occasion of use, or something else that distinguishes a term in one sense from the same term used in a different sense) that has an extension.[2]

Here Putnam tries to show that the meaning of any natural kind word is an *ordered pair*[3] which has intension and extension both. Another problem is about 'set' of things, in terms of mathematical sense; any object either belongs to a set or does not. But in natural language, words cannot be used always to refer to objects in this way. There are some cases where the border line

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[1] Putnam (1975b), p. 216.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Any natural term is a two function word, first it is a term itself, and second it implicitly has a concept attached with that term which helps to recognize its referent or extension. For Putnam, it has been misconceived by traditional philosophers, they think that any natural kind term has an intension or fixed entity as a meaning of a term which exactly picks out the object corresponding to that term. This has also created confusion among them; there was dispute about whether 'meaning' is twofold notion. In one sense 'meaning' is intension and in second sense 'meaning' is extension. Putnam takes up this issue in his paper 'The Meaning of Meaning' in order to settle the question of meaning.

is fuzzy; description of one thing can match with another one. And the line between border line cases and clear cases is itself fuzzy.

Putnam takes an example of the two compound terms, 'creature with heart' and 'creature with kidney' and asks us to assume that every 'creature with heart' possesses kidney and vice versa, hence the *extension* of both the terms is same. It leads us to imagine meaning as involving two notions, meaning in one sense is an intension and in another sense it is extension. Intension is the concept which is associated with the word which we use to individuate a thing; extension is the things which we refer to.

Putnam shares his disagreement with such canonical explanation of the notions of intension and extension because it does not provide any evidence that extension is one sense of meaning and another sense of 'meaning' means meaning - intension. This traditional notion of meaning which possesses extension/intension is very ambiguous. Traditional philosophers[4] thought that meaning is something like a mental entity. But Frege and Carnap have criticized such psychologism; moreover, they have considered that meaning is something of a public entity, because the same meaning can be grasped by others even by the same person at different times. They think that meaning is an abstract entity. Putnam claims, "However, 'grasping' these abstract entities was still an individual psychological act"[5]

Putnam argues that no philosophers thought that grasping a concept (understanding intension) is just being in certain psychological state. Frege's famous classic example, 'morning star' and 'evening star' have different sense but same extension or single reference, did show that two terms can have same extension yet differ in intension, and that reverse is impossible – that two terms can have same intension but different extension. But according to Putnam no argument was ever offered for this impossibility.

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[4] Philosophers like, Aristotle, Locke, and in certain sense Frege and Russell are considered here as traditional philosophers. Since, Aristotle and Locke thought meaning as mental entity fixed once and for all. Frege thinks that meaning is not a mental entity rather it is an 'abstract entity' which anyone can get hold of, for Frege, meaning of a term has a public character. But Putnam expresses doubt about both these positions.

[5] Putnam (1975b), p. 218.

Traditionally, philosophers took a concept corresponding to a term to be just a conjunction of predicates (properties). For Aristotle, a concept is a set of attributes essentially connected with a term. Whereas, essence is precisely what an individual is, it is not an attribute of something else. So, for him, attributes are those which are to be possessed by something, whereas essences are what something is to be. Locke, however, holds that the real essence of a thing is a set of properties which determine all the rest of the properties of that thing. Now, as all other properties depend on its real essence, therefore it should be accepted that the essential properties of a thing are retained by it during any change. Aristotle believes that all scientific knowledge is that of essence. In contrast, Locke in his epistemological theory maintained that there is no knowledge of real essences. Those are only nominal essences, not real essences. For Locke it is 'nominalism' not 'essentialsim' which provides necessary and sufficient condition for falling into the extension of the term.

According to one Fregean interpretation, *sense* is a meaning of a term in terms of intension or concept, not a *reference* because sense and reference[6] are two different things and work at different levels; one is a meaning of a term in the sense of intension and second is referent or object in sense of extension. What leads this theory is that one may know the sense of 'morning star' and 'evening star' in terms of their intension but may not know that 'morning star' and 'evening star' are the same in their extension. What I am trying to explain here is that since, sense of a term in Frege does not contain its extension, it is very much possible for one to know the sense of terms without knowing their reference. It allows us to say that sense does not determine extension. Fregean senses are not mental entities, because they can be known commonly by more than one people, and thus have public character. However, knowing a sense does constitute one's being in a psychological state.

For Russell, it is definite description which uniquely picks out an individual. Russell's definite description is an idealization of a word or a term (whatever) which works out as an

[6] Though, Peter Geach and Max Black have translated '*Bedeutung*' or '*Reference*' as 'meaning' and say that this rendering is actually required for their occurrence in German works quoted by Frege, and for his own use of the words when alluding to such quotations. Further they say that 'meaning' in ordinary English often answers to Frege's *sinn* rather than *Bedeutung*. But I took *sense and reference* here in the above sense. (Peter Geach and Max Black, eds., 1970).

intension to recognize an individual or thing or an object (whatever) in every possible world. This notion of meaning allows us to say that intension determines extension. But it embroils him into a problem, as contemporary philosophers argue, that any name is not equivalent to any set of descriptions. No description can uniquely individuate an object or a person, since these descriptions are contingent facts about the object or individual. To take an example, being a teacher of Alexander and pupil of Plato are contingent facts about Aristotle, he might not have been teacher of Alexander even though he would remain Aristotle. This point will be considered later while considering Putnam's new insight into theory of meaning.

For philosophers like Carnap, who accepted the verifiability theory of meaning, the concept corresponding to a term provides a criterion for belonging to the extension. These positivistic philosophers were happy to retain the traditional view of meaning. Putnam figures out two unchallenging assumptions which this kind of theory of meaning rests on:

1. That knowing the meaning of a term is just a matter of being in a certain psychological state (in the sense of 'psychological state', in which states of memory and psychological dispositions are 'psychological states'; no one thought that knowing the meaning of a word was a continuous state of consciousness, of course).

2. That the meaning of a term (in the sense of 'intension') determines its extension (in the sense that sameness of intension entails sameness of extension).[7]

These assumptions have been taken, in general, by all traditional philosophers as well as by some contemporary philosophers. Putnam argues that these two assumptions cannot be maintained together. Hence, he thinks that traditional notions of meaning hinge on false theory.

In order to show this fallacy he takes up some predicative expressions to clarify the traditional notion of psychological states, like *being five fit tall, being in pain* and *knowing the alphabet* are all states. But these states are defined in terms of parameters given by science regarding individual state, whatever. Above all kinds of states are described by different branches of science, as *being five fit tall* is a state (from the point of view of physics), and *being in pain* is

[7] Putnam (1975b), p. 219.

a state (from the point of view of mentalistic psychology). According to Putnam, in this trivial sense it may be true that knowing the meaning of the word 'water' is being in a psychological state (viewed from the standpoint of cognitive psychology). But this is not the sense of psychological state that is at issue in the above assumption (1). Putnam writes,

> When traditional philosophers talked about psychological states (or 'mental' states), they made an assumption which we may call the assumption of methodological solipsism. This assumption is the assumption that no psychological state, properly so called, presupposes the existence of any individual other than the subject to whom that state is ascribed. (In fact, the assumption was that no psychological state presupposes the existence of the subject's *body* even: if P is a psychological state, properly so called, then it must be logically possible for a 'disembodied mind' to be in *P*).[8]

In the above paragraph, Putnam tries to establish that philosophers have narrowed down the scope of the psychological states. Such limited notion of psychological states is due to methodological solipsism, which holds that every psychological state is mere mental phenomena; they have no commitment to the world. Is it possible for one to have a mental state which is not guided by external world? Putnam explains that our psychological states are determined by something outside of the subject. If it is possible for one to have a psychological state out of nothing other than one's own private resources, then it permits us to say that even disembodied mind can have such states. But this is a more devastating proposition than we need. It is, possibly, an adoption of a limited program – a program which deliberately limits our scope and nature of psychology in order to construct an ideal world – a world which does not exist beyond our mind. Thus, Putnam takes an example as impediment in the way of reconstruction of ideal world, as *being jealous*. Putnam says that they have to reconstruct such psychological states if methodological solipsism is to be retained. Such psychological states as *being jealous* of someone, entails there is someone apart from my mental state, who exists and whom I am jealous about. *Being jealous* presupposes existence of other. However, we cannot allow such psychological states if methodological solipsism is possible. We can call psychological states in the wide sense and the psychological states permitted by methodological solipsism are psychological states in the narrow sense. Putnam holds,

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[8] Ibid., p. 220.

> The reconstruction required by methodological solipsism would be to reconstrue *jealousy* so that I can be jealous of my own hallucinations, or of figments of my imagination, etc. Only if we assume that psychological states in the narrow sense have a significant degree of causal closure (so that restricting ourselves to psychological states in the narrow sense will facilitate the statement of psychological *laws)* is there any point in engaging in this reconstruction, or in making the assumption of methodological solipsism. But the three centuries of failure of mentalistic psychology is tremendous evidence against this procedure, in my opinion.[9]

Putnam has shown us that reconstruction of such psychological states has no point at all or it does not work. We can say that *being jealous of someone* cannot *be* reconstructed into *I can be jealous of my own hallucination*, because hallucination presupposes some genuine perceptions, otherwise it is vacuous, we cannot make sense of it. Hallucination has a functionary meaning only if there is genuine perceptions, and genuine perceptions are about the external world about which, sometimes, we may be mistaken. Thus, reconstruction of such psychological state as *being jealous of someone* into hallucinating of oneself does not cease the world to exist, in toto. So no argument can be offered to retain methodological solipsism.

Putnam shows that our interpretation of the traditional notion of intension/extension is not suitable as far as meaning theory is concerned. According to Putnam,

> . . . even if meanings are 'Platonic' entities rather than 'mental' entities on the Frege-Carnap view, 'grasping' those entities is presumably a psychological state (in the narrow sense). Moreover, the psychological state uniquely determines the 'Platonic' entity. So whether one takes the 'Platonic' entity or the psychological state as the 'meaning' would appear to be somewhat a matter of convention.[10]

For Putnam, psychological states are public in a sense that more than one people can have the same meaning or grasp the same 'platonic' entity. Putnam does write,

[9] Ibid., pp. 220–21.
[10] Ibid., p. 222.

> Indeed, Frege's argument against psychologism is only an argument against identifying concepts with mental particulars, not with mental entities in general.[11]

Now meaning as having a public character can be seen in the sense that whatever one understands about the concept of a word is not typical to the speaker in question or he is not in any private mental state in grasping the meaning of a term, it is general to everyone that they can have this same mental state while grasping the sense of a term. Putnam claims,

> . . . that it is possible for two speakers to be in exactly the *same* psychological state (in the narrow sense), even though the extension of the term *A* in the idiolect of the one is different from the extension of the term *A* in the idiolect of the other. Extension is *not* determined by psychological state.[12]

So the traditional notions of intension and extension are unsatisfactory in accounting for a theory of meaning.

1.2 Semantic Externalism

In the previous section, I have examined traditional problem of meaning and reference, which Putnam has argued against. In this section, I shall examine how his semantic externalism has developed and how he responded to Frege and Russell and some contemporary philosophers. What compelled him to develop semantic externalism was causal theory of reference developed in the mid 1960s and defended in 'The Meaning of "Meaning"'. It is considered as a response to the then prevalent and famous idea that when our intension, concepts or beliefs change our meaning and hence referents also change. This relativist conception of meaning emerged under the influence of Carnap and Kuhn, which Putnam tried to encounter with altogether different insight into the notion of meaning. For him, meaning of a term is not determined individually, there are factors external to the individual which constitute the meaning of a term. Of course, Frege and Russell were not relativist. Why they were not relativist? And if not then what were the principal reasons? Were they externalist? According to Putnam, they were not externalist.

[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

This compels us to think how Putnam's externalism provides us with an alternative to Frege and Russell. But why did Putnam launch his attack on Frege and not on Russell? Juliot Floyd in "Putnam's "The Meaning of 'Meaning'": Externalism in Historical Context" writes,

> For it is Frege, and not Russell, who appears as a primary object of attack in MoM (The Meaning of Meaning), and it is Frege, not Russell, from whom Putnam has explicitly drawn in the context of his most recent efforts to articulate an anti-Carnapian (that is, anti-conventionalist), anti-Quinean (that is anti-empiricist) notion of *necessity* relativised to a conceptual scheme.[13]

Now, I shall try to understand Putnam's semantic externalism, for which Putnam has used Twin Earth thought experiment which introduces 'contribution of environment', 'division of linguistic labor' and 'indexicality' to substantiate his position. His main conclusion is that "meaning" is not just in the head.[14] To understand this proposition I shall go by his argument.

Contribution of Environment

Semantic externalism deals with the way of fixing reference of the words. Environmental factor has a central role in Putnam's externalistic thesis, that is, it is the substance itself within the external environment which partly fixes the reference of a word. This contribution of environmental factor, Putnam has discussed with the help of Twin Earth thought experiment. He says that suppose somewhere in the galaxy there is a planet we call it Twin Earth. Twin Earth is almost the same as Earth; everything on Twin Earth is identical to Earth except that rivers and lakes in Twin Earth filled with XYZ and not with H_2O. People on Twin Earth even speak English. Thus, Putnam says that speakers on Earth and Twin Earth express the same intension when they use word 'water', but extension of the term, hence meaning (in a sense of extension) differs according to the community and environment, as it is XYZ on Twin Earth and H_2O on Earth. It can be said that in 1750, when chemistry was not as advance as modern chemistry, the term "water" did not have the same reference. Word "water" on Earth has a reference to what we

[13] Ben-Menahem (2005), p. 17.
[14] Putnam (1975b) p. 227.

call any substance as H_2O and word "water" on Twin Earth has reference to what they call any substance as XYZ.

We can understand it another way, suppose I ask you by pointing to a glass filled with 50% water and 50% different component which is not water, would you say it is water? Your answer would be no, you will say it is a mixture of water and some different substance. The same way it is argued that if water on Earth is H_2O and water on Twin Earth is XYZ, we cannot say water has the same meaning on Twin Earth as on Earth. Though, they have the same mental state or intension but we cannot say that Earthians and Twin Earthians were referring the same substance. Putnam states,

> The "mental representations" of Earth speakers and Twin Earth speakers were not in any way different; we may suppose that they were exactly the same, even if we include "mental representations" in the heads of the chemists; the reference was different because the *substances* were different. This illustrates how the reference is partly fixed by the environment itself. This is the phenomenon that I have called *the contribution of the environment.*[15]

Thus, according to Putnam, assumption (2) fails to explain that intension determines its extension, as it is portrayed in this example that speakers on Earth and Twin Earth are competent speakers of English and share the same concepts and mental or intensional state but do not share the extension or referent.

Putnam uses another non-science-fiction example to elaborate his argument. Putnam asks that suppose there is a competent speaker of English who is not able to distinguish "elm" from "beech" tree. But this does not mean that extension of elm in my idiolect is different from your idiolect or extension of beech in my idiolect is different from your idiolect. We can say that extension of elm in my idiolect is the same as someone else's and extension of beech tree in our idiolect as well as in someone else's. It means, it is not possible for individual to idealize the extension in terms of concepts or as intensions, since the concept of elm and beech may be exactly the same for someone. That is where the problem of the assumption (2) lies, so to speak

[15] Putnam (1988), p. 32.

intension cannot determine its extension. Putnam says, meaning or extension should be determined by the social and environmental context of a given term in the given language. Hence, division of linguistic labor comes in place introduced by Putnam.

Division of Linguistic Labor

According to Putnam, about our language one thing has never been discussed, and that is, that there is a division of linguistic labor. Words like elm and beech, and aluminium and molybdenum should never have come into being, if there were no way of recognizing the distinction between them though he also cautions that for everyone such distinction is also not important. According to Putnam,

> Consider our community as a 'factory': in this 'factory' some people have the 'job' of *wearing gold wedding rings*, other people have the 'job' of *selling gold wedding rings*, still other people have the 'job' of *telling whether or not something is really gold*.[16]

Reference is a social phenomenon. According to Putnam, it is a collective linguistic endeavour to determine reference of a term. It is not individual's task to distinguish one natural kind term from others, like elms from beeches. Why is it not possible for individual to fix the reference of elm or beech? The reason is that a particular individual possesses only some mental representation associated with a term, which can be similar to mental representation associated with another term. In that case an individual cannot uniquely pick out the exact reference. Here mental representation is identical with concept, sign or image in mind. Now the question arises that if it is only a group of experts who knows the whole meaning of any natural kind term, then how can laymen talk about meaning of terms and how can they use them in a language. Putnam cites Gareth Evans' suggestion,

> . . . that the average man doesn't really know the meaning of such words as "gold", that he only knows part of the meaning of such words.[17]

[16] Putnam (1975b), p. 227.
[17] Putnam (1988), p. 23.

Now question arises, what is the whole meaning of such words like "gold"? Can we talk of element with atomic number 79 as a whole meaning of "gold"? Putnam has suggested in "The Analytic and The Synthetic" that such a statement as "gold is an element with atomic number 79" is not analytic. If it was found, due to some scientific fault, that the atomic number of "gold" is not really 79, we would not say that that metal was not gold. It will still be gold, but we can say that it does not have atomic number 79. The knowledge that a chemist has about gold is not different knowledge about the meaning of "gold" from that of laymen, though he knows more about "gold".

So coming back to the question, if whole meaning of a term is restricted to the group of experts then how can laymen use those terms in language and discuss things meaningfully? Putnam admits that what common people hold in their mind about the words is certainly helping to them in order to communicate with others, some basic information associated with those words. But this basic information, call it stereotype, will not necessarily fix their reference. Putnam argues,

> . . . what is in people's brains or minds, their mental representations or mental descriptions or mental pictures, does not in general determine the reference of a word that they know how to use. In the case of most of us, our mental representation doesn't do much beyond telling us that gold is yellow precious metal to help determine the reference of the word "gold".. It certainly doesn't pick out the reference of the word "gold" exactly.[18]

Putnam explains that no mental representation can help one to determine reference of the words one uses. The point that Putnam wants to emphasize here is that it is not that our mental representations do not have any role in individuation of an object that word refers to. Definitely they have a role of referring to a particular object, but they are not sufficient enough to get hold of their reference. They partly constitute the notion of meaning regarding the natural kind terns, which at least helps laymen to participate in the use of language. Putnam writes,

> . . . these words fail to refer, but that the mental representation isn't what picks out their reference, or at least that the mental representation of the typical speaker isn't what picks out

[18] Ibid., p. 24.

> their reference. As long as we stick with Aristotle's assumption that the word "hooks on to the world" because it is associated with a mental representation which hooks on to the world, we will be blind to facts which are, so to speak, under our noses.[19]

Putnam argues, if mental representation does not pick out the reference of the words then what it is that picks out the reference of any word? For, it cannot be simultaneously both that mental representation is the meaning of a word and also determines its reference. For Putnam, meaning is not determined by what is in mind but by collective linguistic endeavor. Putnam holds that we need linguistic labor as non-linguistic labor in society. Because fixing the reference of a particular term, psychological state of an individual will not work to fix its extension.

> . . . it is only the sociolinguistic state of the collective linguistic body to which the speaker belongs that fixes the extension.[20]

Indexicality and Rigidity

Putnam distinguishes between an indexical and a stereotype though both elements have importance for his notion of meaning. Stereotypes are criteria associated with a natural kind term for recognizing the object the word refers. Sometimes these criteria work as necessary features recognizing that object. But here 'necessary' is not used in a strong sense because sometimes these criteria features are very weak and fuzzy as in the case of "molybdenum" or in the case of "elm" and "beech." Though, they are important in our general discussion and in use of our language. Indexicals like, 'now', 'here', and 'this' are directly referential terms. These indexicals have their reference which varies from token to token or from context to context. When I refer to the glass of water by saying 'this is water', here 'this' refers to the water within glass, even if we do not know what the exact meaning to the term 'water' is. At least it refers locally to that water body in front of me. For Putnam, there are twofold ways of knowing what is meant by natural kind words such as 'water' or 'tiger', or 'lemon'. First is an ostensive definition and the other is to give descriptions for the term to be identified. Description as Putnam explains may consist of markers and stereotypes. Putnam holds,

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[19] Ibid.
[20] Putnam (1975b), p. 229.

> The central features of the stereotype generally are *criteria* - features which in normal situation constitute ways of recognizing if a thing belongs to the kind, or at least, necessary conditions (or probabilistic necessary conditions) for membership in the kind.[21]

It explains that stereotypes in normal or ordinary cases help to individuate thing or object or at least give some necessary conditions to help recognize an object. But these stereotypes may be in some cases very weak to give any clue to identify the object as in case of elm tree, 'being a deciduous tree'. But being deciduous tree is a common stereotype for other trees. So we can not say that 'elm trees were deciduous' is analytic. Here necessary conditions for the membership in the kind are in loose sense, only in a sense that this gives epistemic advantage, without which even first step is not possible towards recognizing any object.

Second thing is that an ostensive definition[22] means we can talk of 'water' through sentences with indexicals like, 'this is water' or 'this is a tiger'. As Putnam points out those natural kind words like, 'water' refer to substances. We call them by those names in our existing language, so there an unnoticed, ineliminable element is present.

Kripke took names as rigid designator, and he explains this notion by saying that when we use names, and names directly refer to the person named in every possible world through causal link. Putnam has extended Kripke's causal theory of reference of proper name to natural kind terms. When Putnam uses rigidity for natural kind terms like 'water' it explicates that water bears the relation of being the same liquid in every possible world. For Putnam,

> Then the theory we have been presenting may be summarized by saying that an entity x, in an arbitrary possible world, is *water* if and only if it bears the relation $same_L$ (construed as cross-world relation) to the stuff *we* call 'water' in the *actual* world.[23]

Like Kripke, Putnam suggests that the meaning of natural kind terms like 'water' typically introduced by ostension may be taken to be 'rigid,' that is, assumed to refer to the substance in

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[21] Ibid., p. 230.

[22] Ostensive definition is used in a way child learns his native language by their parents' way of pointing towards the thing and pronouncing certain noises which a child, gradually, learns to associate these noises with the objects. For example by pointing 'this is a cup', 'this is a tiger', etc., child learns to use these words.

[23] Ibid., p. 232.

all possible worlds (this stuff here) in an epistemically defeasible way. "Human intuition," Putnam remarks 'has no privileged access to metaphysical necessity', if such there be.[24]

Putnam argues that indexicals like 'I', 'here', and 'we' seem to flout an idea that intension or concept determines extension in fairly intuitive way. Such indexicals explicitly retain the meaning while varying their references from time to time. If the indexical analogy for natural kind terms is well suited, even if the rigidity idea is wrong, it would still suggest preventing us from being trapped into the kind of meaning and object relativism about natural kind terms associated with Kuhn and Feyerband. However, Putnam has taken up both indexicality and rigidity very seriously. This forces him to hold on to a modified form of (individualized) assumption (2), discussed in first section of this chapter, by arguing that,

> . . . difference in extension is *ipso facto* a difference in meaning for natural-kind words, thereby giving up the doctrine that meanings are concepts, or, indeed, mental entities of *any* kind.[25]

With the argument that meaning does not depend on any theory, so, change in theory does not qualify change in meaning, Putnam has criticized anti-realists, like Dewey, who believes that truth is theory dependent. For anti-realists truth makes no sense, except an intra-theory notion of truth. Putnam shows that someone led by the same underlying idea but prepared both to surrender the analytic/synthetic distinction and to take the socio-cultural character of human language use as constitutive of it could avoid this conclusion and retain certain pre-theoretical ways of speaking about meaning. For Putnam,

> If we put philosophical prejudices aside, then I believe that we know perfectly well that no operational definition does provide a necessary and sufficient condition for the application of any such word. We may give an 'operational definition', or a cluster of properties, or whatever, but the intention is never to 'make the name *synonymous* with the description'.

[24] Ibid., p. 233.
[25] Ibid., p. 234.

> Rather 'we use the name *rigidly*' to refer to whatever things share the *nature* that things satisfying the description normally possess.[26]

Putnam's main point here is that no operational definition at any time can even be perfect, or any set of predicates can never be identical to any name. These predicates may become part of meaning but cannot constitute the whole meaning. Name is used primarily to directly refer to the object. What we have discussed so far is one part of meaning and this is properly a topic of sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistic deals with the mechanism which helps in fixing the reference. This mechanism is collective linguistic cooperation – a division of linguistic labor. The second part of meaning is properly a topic in psycholinguistics. Psycholinguistic deals with the concept or cluster of properties connected with any term that is stereotype. What this second part of meaning turn out to be is minimal linguistic competence to participate in a linguistic community and to make communication successful. Suppose a speaker points out to snowball and asks, "is that a tiger?" Then it is obvious that he does not know anything about tiger. Therefore, in talking about 'tiger' what is required is that the speaker should know some stereotypes about tiger. Putnam metaphorically has said,

> After all, we do not permit people to drive on the highways without first passing some tests to determine that they have *minimum* level of competence; and we do not dine with people who have not learned to use a knife and fork. The linguistic community too has its minimum standards, with respect both to syntax and to 'semantics'.[27]

So part of the meaning which is psycholinguistic is a linguistic obligatoriness on the part of individual speaker to possess a set of stereotypes to recognize or identify the extension of the term. So, stereotypes are not fixed once for all, they are not necessary and analytic with any given term or we can say that no set of stereotypes will be synonymous to the term. Yet as Putnam writes,

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[26] Ibid., p. 238.
[27] Ibid., p. 248.

> Most stereotypes do in fact capture features possessed by paradigmatic members of the class in question.[28]

As Putnam explains, we understand that stereotypical necessity is a postulation of linguistic communication. And there should be match of stereotype with the given term or word, at least in weak sense. In strong sense, of course, stereotypes are defeasible. Putnam holds, "we could hardly communicate successfully if most of our stereotypes weren't pretty accurate as far as they go."[29]

In summary, I would like to present the ideas of meaning expanded in 52 pages long essay 'The meaning of "Meaning"'. Putnam has talked about syntactic markers, semantic markers, stereotype and extension to construct semantic externalism. Idea of semantic markers comes into place from the work of J. Katz and J.A. Foder, which was later modified and used by Putnam. These semantic markers are class categories, things fall into them. These semantic markers have been used as Quine's notion of maximum unrevisability. Like 'animal', living thing' and 'artefact' have maximum unrevisability. For example, in the statement 'All tigers are animal', animality is also a part of stereotypes of a tiger, but this animality has maximum unrevisability regarding other stereotypes like 'black stripped', 'four-footed', 'big-cat-like'. We cannot conceive of tigers without conceiving animal. What Putnam considers is that this animality is hardly revisable but that does not mean it is immune from revision. Syntactic markers are those which apply to words like, 'noun' – 'mass-noun' or 'concrete noun'. And finally we have description of additional features of the stereotype and a description of the extension. Putnam explicitly says that except the fourth component of the meaning vector, the other parts are related to individual speaker's competence. Thus the normal form of description for 'water' might be, in part:

[28] Ibid., p. 250.
[29] Ibid., p. 251.

Syntactic Markers	**Semantic Markers**	**Stereotype**	**Extension**
mass noun, concrete;	*natural kind;* *liquid;*	*colorless;* *transparent'* *tasteless;* *thirst quenching;* *etc.*	H_2O *(give or take impurities)*

Putnam explains,

> Notice that if we had chosen to omit the extension as a component of the 'meaning-vector', which is David Lewis's proposal as I understand it, then we would have the paradox that 'elm' and 'beech' have the *same meaning* but different extensions.[30]

What Putnam suggests here is to give up assumption (1) and retain assumption (2). Both together cannot be reconciled. So we can say that meaning determines its extension, disallowing that intension determines meaning. And agreeing to this, we have to say that 'elm' and 'beech' have the same meaning but different extension. Lastly, Putnam presents a very clear view of philosophy and language.

> . . . it must be connected to the fact that the grotesquely mistaken views of language which are and always have been current reflect two specific and very central philosophical tendencies: the tendency to treat cognition as a purely *individual* matter and the tendency to ignore the *world*, insofar as it consists of more than the individual's 'observations'. Ignoring the division of linguistic labor is ignoring the social dimension of cognition; ignoring what we have called the *indexicality* of most words is ignoring the contribution of the environment. Traditional philosophy of language, like much traditional philosophy, leaves out other people and the world; a better philosophy and a better science of language must encompass both.[31]

[30] Ibid., p. 270.
[31] Ibid., p. 271.

1.3 Causal Theory of Reference

Causal theory of meaning is also known as a causal theory of reference since for Putnam reference is a main constitutive part of meaning. Causal theory of reference is supposedly an explanation for his semantic externalism, developed in *Reason, Truth and History*, chapter 1, with the help of the 'Brain in a Vat' argument. It explains how meaning of a term is fixed by its reference through causal interaction between terms and objects which are named. Putnam shows that according to causal theory of reference, a term rigidly refers to an object. With this understanding Putnam defends his metaphysical realism. Later he abandoned his long standing defence of metaphysical realism and adopted internal realism. The problem with metaphysical realism, according to Putnam, is that it fails to explain the possibility of reference and truth. Metaphysical realism claims that there is a reality in itself which we can know by employing our conceptual scheme. But if we accept such reality then how can we make correspondence intelligible? How can correct match be possible between concepts and objects? Metaphysical realism, for Putnam, does not give us any obvious way to connect conceptual scheme with things, objects and individuals. If it is possible for conceptual scheme to match up with the things themselves in a certain way then it can only be mysterious matching. This enforces Putnam to take up internal realism and show it to be compatible with causal theory of meaning. Ambrus in his recent article 'Is Putnam's Causal Theory of Meaning Compatible with Internal Realism',[32] shows that causal theory of meaning loses its force as weapon against internal realism, whereas Putnam seems to be explaining it coherently. Ambrus also points out that Putnam's turning to internal realism amounts to being an antirealist, because for Ambrus internal realism is a species of antirealism.

In this section I shall discuss Putnam's causal theory of reference and explain its relation with semantic externalism. And I shall also contrast it with internal realism, and see whether his theory of reference coheres with internal realism.

The main problem with metaphysical realism, according to Putnam, is to assure epistemic accessibility on the part of human mind. Putnam is happy with a particular type of realism to

[32] Ambrus (1999), pp. 1–16.

retain epistemic accessibility to human mind. Because metaphysical realism is radically non-epistemic, it leaves no access to human mind and this gives rise to mysterious notion of reference and truth. Investigating the hypothesis of Brain in a Vat will result to ascertain which kind of realism is tenable. This Brain in a Vat hypothesis is as a keen to the Cartesian hypothesis of evil genius. Putnam's solution to skeptic view of external world has often been misunderstood. Massimo Dell'Utri in 'Choosing Conceptions of Realism: The Case of Brains in a Vat', points out,

> Probably because of the sketchiness of Putnam's analysis, his radical solution of the sceptical problem has generally been misunderstood. In particular, some critics failed to see that arguing pro or con the BIV (Brain in a Vat) hypothesis is not a neutral task, but presupposes a definite metaphysical position from the point of view of which our epistemic situation in the world could be described.[33]

Suppose there is a mad scientist who takes the brain of a person and puts in a vat filled with nutrients that keep the brain alive. Now he connects this brain's nerve endings to a super computer through wires. This super computer is capable of providing any possible experience in the brain. This is possible through simulation of every possible situation or world, he may like. If he wants to raise his arm this information travels to the computer and in response computer provides him simulation of same wanting which gives him the feeling that he is raising his arm. Putnam says that scientist can also obliterate the memory of the brain operation. So that it will seem that the victim has always been in this environment. It can even seem to the victim that he is sitting and reading these very words about the amusing but quite absurd supposition that there is an evil scientist who removes people's brains from their bodies and places them in a vat filled with nutrients which keep the brains alive. This possibility has been discussed in order to find a solution to skeptical problem about the external world. This predicament, for Putnam, is also a useful device for raising issues about the mind/world relationship. Putnam goes on to say that instead of having just one human being's brain in a vat, we could imagine that all human beings are brains in a vat. There is no evil scientist outside. And perhaps this universe is consisting of automatic machinery converted into vat full of brains. Being collectively brains in a vat, we all

[33] Dell'Utri (1990), p. 79.

get collective hallucinations, when we ask for tea, you seem to be hearing my voice and responding to me in a certain way. When we all are brains in a vat it is not that my words approach your ear, for we do not have mouth and tongue nor do you have ear. Instead when I produce my words, there are certain impulses that travel from my brain to the computer which both causes me to 'hear' my own voice uttering those words and causes you to hear my words and see me speaking etc. In this predicament we are in communication and we are not mistaken about your real existence apart from brains.

Now Putnam asks a question, "Could we, if we were brains in a vat in this way, *say* or *think* that we were?"[34] Putnam argues that the answer is no, we could not. For Putnam,

> . . . the supposition that we are actually brains in a vat, although it violates no physical law, and is perfectly consistent with everything we have experienced, cannot possibly be true. *It cannot possibly be true*, because it is, in a certain way, self-refuting.[35]

A self-refuting supposition is one whose truth implies its own falsity. Suppose there is a statement that 'every statement made by "A" is false', then "A" enunciates 'there were raining yesterday'. This second statement made by "A" is false. For example, 'I do not exist' is self-refuting if thought by me.

Putnam's answer that if we were brains in a vat, we could not think we were, has a point to be noticed. He is making this claim from a particular metaphysical stand. And the skeptic's argument against the epistemological claims about the external world has also a particular metaphysical stand. Massimo Dell'Utri argues that there are four kinds of metaphysical positions, one can argue for by embracing anyone of them.[36]

First there is one which could be called a radically non-epistemic realistic position. According to this point of view, the world exists independently of the human mind and of the conceptual scheme and categories which can be constructed about it. Hence, mind does not have

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[34] Putnam, (1981), p. 7.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Dell'Utri (1990), p. 80.

even slightest epistemic access to the world. There is no match between theories about the world and the objective world itself, so to say, truth is indeed a radically non-epistemic notion, it cannot become object of possible knowledge. And in this case, it is highly possible that we can be a deluded brain in a vat, but not necessarily. Because the world we make sense of according to particular theory may be completely different from the world as it is. This is metaphysical position that makes radical skepticism possible.

Another realistic position could be called a simply non-epistemic realistic position. This position is very much like the earlier one except that the gap between mind and the world is not so deep that human cognitive faculties could not reach the world. It does not also prevent theories to construct the genuine knowledge about the world bereft of any theoretical guarantee that mind can grasp the truth of theories the mind constitutes. And whether mind can penetrate the external world in terms of epistemic certainty cannot be said. Even if by sheer chance our theories manage to reach successfully a certain part of the world which results as true theory of the world, we still could not succeed in knowing that our theory is true. In other words, truth still remains a non-epistemic notion but one which might be object of possible knowledge. Following this, we cannot be deluded brains in a vat; even though our cognitive power is limited, it is not so limited as to exclude a genuine epistemic success.

Third metaphysical position is called an epistemic realistic position. Epistemic realists see the world as something partly dependent on human mind partly dependent on 'objective stuff' the world is constituted of. For epistemic realists, truth is an epistemic notion, that is, it is an object of possible knowledge. Here, there can be guarantee of a sure connection between conceptual scheme and the world. It is guaranteed epistemic connection to the world which prevents us being hopelessly deluded brain in a vat.

The last metaphysical position is called, generally speaking, idealism. According to the idealists, the world is more or less construction of human mind and dependent completely on mind, world has no existence independent of mind. For idealists, truth is, of course, an epistemic notion but one which our theory possesses, so to speak, in an empty way, theories are not constrained by objective stuff at the time of construction of our knowledge. In this case, there is no possibility of skepticism but not to the extent to exclude that we are brain in a vat.

As a result of this quick analysis, we can derive that one who rejects the idea that we are all brains in a vat – cannot be either realist or idealist. But only hard core realist expounds the necessary conditions for the correct expression of the brains in a vat hypothesis. The brains in a vat hypothesis is a particular version of skeptical doubt over epistemological certainty. Therefore, it is an epistemological issue. Massimo Dell'Utri correctly shows,

> Indeed, this kind of skepticism is an activity which takes place in epistemology: it tries to undermine confidence in our cognitive faculties by showing that knowledge of the external world is not possible. But it is already metaphysically determined: that is to say, this form of skepticism is always a consequence of the most extreme conception of realism, and of nothing else.[37]

According to this account of skepticism, skeptic eye has already taken shelter in the hard core realistic nest. To simply bypass skeptics, we can take shelter in a different nest altogether, and we can save our epistemic reach to the world and construct an argument against brains in a vat hypothesis. Dell'Utri writes,

> In the history of philosophy one of the answers to a sceptical claim is a transcendental argument, that is, one which aims at pointing out the possibility conditions for the very target the sceptical claim is attacking, so as to show that the sceptic cannot entertain his claim without implicitly presupposing just what he wants to deny. Thus, there are as many transcendental arguments as there are sceptical claims.[38]

Putnam, in *Reason, Truth and History*, gives a transcendental argument aimed at investigating preconditions of reference, and, hence of thought-preconditions built into the nature of our minds themselves, though not (as Kant hoped) entirely devoid of empirical assumptions.[39] Putnam claims that we have investigated these preconditions not by investigating the meaning of these words and phrases by reasoning a priori in the old 'absolute' sense, but in the sense of inquiring into what is reasonably possible assuming certain general premises or making certain very broad theoretical assumptions, 'empirical' and *a priori*, so he speaks, that these assumptions might be

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[37] Ibid., p. 82.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Putnam (1981), p. 16.

rendered empirical. Yet his enquiry has a close relation with what Kant called a 'transcendental investigation'. Now we need to see what are these premises and assumptions.

Putnam took up one general empirical assumption which helps him to build his entire argument against skepticism and prove his semantic externalism. According to Putnam, "the mind has no access to external things or properties apart from that provided by the senses."[40] This assumption leads Putnam to establish two premises for his argument. One of them is that magical theories of reference are wrong.[41] The second that one cannot refer to certain kind of things, e.g. tree, if one has no causal interaction at all with them or with things in terms of which they can be described. Since these two premises are extremely important for Putnam, let us examine them.

According to Putnam, 'magical theories' say that we can refer to an object intrinsically and claim that mind has the power to reach the world directly. Putnam maintains that one of these powers, in the history of philosophy, has been given the name 'intentionality' by some philosophers like Brentano. Their general claim is that any mental representation, be it an image, sign, symbol, etc., necessarily refers to an object, so to speak. One can think of an object just by having one's thought related to the object (existing or non-existing). If this is so, Putnam finds this position problematic. He goes on to explain his idea with the help of a thought experiment. Suppose, there is a planet somewhere in the universe, people on this planet are almost similar to us but there are no trees on this planet and people on this planet have never seen a tree. They have never imagined about tree, have no concept of a tree. Suppose one day a picture of a tree subtitled in English is dropped on their planet by spaceship passing by without having any other contact with them. Imagine them puzzling over the picture. They make all sorts of speculation about this picture, building, a canopy, even an animal of some kind. But suppose they never come close to the truth. For us, this picture has a representation of a tree but for them it is a strange object, though anyone who has seen the picture on that planet has same kind of mental image as us which is exactly a mental representation of a tree. But for them, it is only a strange object. Putnam goes ahead to say that one may still argue that mental image is in fact a representation of a tree, if only the picture (which caused this mental image) was itself a

[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

representation of a tree. But this is not the case; even this physical picture of a tree has a causal connection with an actual tree and without this causal interaction between any kind of representation and object which is represented, a word or sign cannot refer to anything. Putnam says that we can take a different example where representation is only accidental; e.g., ant's sketch of *Winston Churchil.* Suppose there is an ant which crawls on the patch of sand in a way that when it stops, the picture resembles *Winston Churchil.* It is obvious that ant has not drawn a picture intentionally to represent *Winston Churchil.* Because ant has no concept of *Winston Churchil*, hence it has no intention to draw a picture of *Winston Churchil.* This proves that mental or physical representation does not necessarily refer to anything. As regarding concepts, Putnam points out that they are not occurrences, but rather abilities to use words and sentences in the right context and to give coherent answers to every question one is confronting with, where 'ability' is the criterion by which we decide whether a person possesses a given concept. Putnam writes,

> Concepts are signs used in a certain way; the signs may be public or private, mental entities or physical entities, but even when the signs are 'mental' and 'private', the sign itself apart from its use is not the concept. And signs do not themselves intrinsically refer.[42]

So, to sum up, mental representation does not have any necessary connection with what it stands for; it is not sufficient by itself to establish a genuine relation of reference. Hence, magical theories of reference are wrong.

The second premise, which is a causal theory of reference, is used by Putnam and Kripke. And Putnam first used it in "The Meaning of Meaning" to establish semantic externalism. Every use of word, semantically correct, requires a causal connection with the object it refers to. This causal connection should be established either directly or indirectly through interaction of the speaker with the object in question, either by personal interaction or by verbally mediated interaction with other speaker who had those same interactions. In other words, we can understand that speaker must have intention, while using words, to refer to an object which is causally connected to the word in question and in the same way, use of the word should be open

[42] Ibid., p. 18.

for all, not for only individual speaker. Hence, the reference of the word in a language, fixed by the world one has causally interacted with and by speaker's intention, becomes the heritage of the entire society. Putnam emphasizes one more point, that is, these causal chains of reference have to be at least in principle knowable. Not any chain suffices to establish a connection between word and object. Only those causal chains, which are part of a social practice of knowledge, will do.

To sum up we can say that words are used to refer through causal connection and our referential intention should possibly be socially shared and reference itself should be knowable. But why should reference be knowable? It is because words and sentences are used not only syntactically correct way but are also semantically correct. Reference and truth value are semantically binding on linguistic practice. Use of word does not amount to only manipulating symbol or sign as use of sentence does not amount to only syntactic exercise, rather we do use language to convey something to someone or other. Massimo Dell'Utri correctly points out,

> Speaking and thinking take place on the basis of this 'something', that is, on the basis of the world which is a common ground for all speakers and without which there could not be interpersonal relations. In fact, we speak to communicate with other speakers, to transfer knowledge about the world from one speaker to another, to achieve our goals, and so forth. We constantly presuppose the existence of a world and the presence of others, taking them as a stimulus and as well as a restraint: we cannot, for instance, always say what we want, or simply state our opinions as true, making ourselves, as Protagoras claimed, 'the measure of all things'.[43]

In this passage, Massimo Dell'Utri shows semantical necessity and objectivity of language, to be communicated successfully in order to work out their plans. He also emphasizes that linguistic practice in every linguistic community needs common ground to understand each other and communicate their views. This common ground is an epistemic necessity. Putnam does emphasize this epistemic necessity that is why he chose epistemically realistic framework to save human being's worthwhile and worth-protecting achievement. Michael Dummett also describes,

[43] Dell'Utri (1990), p 84.

> . . . it is equivalent to describing the game of chess by specifying only the permissible moves and the initial and final positions, while omitting the 'vital point . . . that is the object of a player to win'.[44]

This is a metaphor used by Dummett to clarify that semantical value of language is primary and syntactic exactness or grammatically correct sentences cannot communicate anything until and unless they are in appropriate connection and in the right context with an intention to refer something other than the language itself. Putnam's division of linguistic labor is the key to describing the reference in order to grasp it. A collective linguistic cooperation is a must in building up a coherent and satisfactory picture of the world, including image itself as part of the world. With this view he succeeds to build up a clear picture of the world, where epistemic certainty to some extent resides.

To conclude, internal realism is a metaphysical framework on the basis of which Putnam rejects the brains in a vat hypothesis. Valer Ambrus' argument that causal theory of meaning is not compatible with internal realism is not that strong. It seems to be a pretty good and coherent picture. This project will be dealt in the next chapter to show that Putnam's causal theory of meaning is compatible with internal realism. When the skeptic claims that the references of our terms are unknowable, Putnam retorts that this is impossible because our collective human nature states the possibility of reference, and concludes that the skeptic contradicts himself by implicitly presupposing that very knowability of reference he wants to deny.

So, if the skeptic speaks with others in a way which goes beyond a mere uttering of sounds and grunts, if the skeptic understands the language he listens to and makes others understand his own, then also the term 'brain' and 'vat', like the rest of his language, do have a genuine reference and not a reference-in-the-image: this is enough to show that he is not brain in a vat. In offering a solution to skeptic's position, Putnam heavily leans on Wittgenstein who has been a great help and inspiration for Putnam. Wittgenstein has been a major influence to Putnam to construct brain in a vat hypothesis to show incoherence of skepticism.

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[44] Dummett (1978), p. 2.

Conclusion

Putnam has developed externalism regarding theory of meaning of words. He has shown that a traditional theory of meaning is based on two fundamentally wrong assumptions, which together cannot be accepted. For Putnam, meaning cannot be identical with concepts or any kind of mental states in Aristotelian sense. He connects the notion of meaning with reference and concepts with stereotypes. Concept or stereotype which constitutes the psychological part of the meaning and the reference which constitutes the social part of the meaning together make meaning. Meaning is socially determined, because the notion of meaning depends upon reference which has an external character. Putnam developed a whole mechanism to fix the reference of the words. There are basically three factors – division of linguistic labor, environmental contribution and indexical element, which together generate the whole mechanism to determine the causal chain of reference. There have been objections that Putnam's theory of meaning is relative to science, time and speaker, but that is not correct. Though Putnam admits that psychological part of the meaning i.e. stereotype is subject to change during course of time, but that does not mean that meaning of the word has changed. Stereotype is something which helps to identify reference of the word but does not uniquely pick out its reference. Reference has the main role regarding the notion of meaning, which is fixed by the experts who have been assigned special job of telling us e.g., whether something is gold. Along with this Putnam has taken indexicals as fixing the reference. Indexicals, like 'this', 'now' and 'here', keep the reference intact. And environment also has a main role in externalistic thesis of meaning. Putnam says that substance itself plays a role in fixing the reference in different environment like, Twin Earth thought experiment shows. For Putnam, it is reference that is the entire meaning of a term, not stereotype; they are only useful in helping to determine the reference. Thus, meaning does not change as stereotype may change; hence meaning is not relative to science, time and speaker. Meaning is not determined by individuals or what is in their minds; it is determined by collective linguistic cooperation.

Chapter 2

Internal Realism

Introduction

In the second chapter entitled 'Internal Realism', I shall discuss Putnam's ideas on relationship between words and reality. How a word hooks on to the world? How do we know about the world? How does language give us understanding of the world? Putnam's internal realism may seem contradictory to his semantic externalism at a first blush, but after a clear understanding of his ideas about semantic externalism and internal realism, we will see that they complement each other. This is because Putnam's internal realism is actually different from metaphysical or transcendent or robust realism. Metaphysical realism has bifurcated the notion of world into appearance and reality. Appearance is what we come to know as part of our experience. Reality is beyond our experience or beyond our conceptual scheme – a stuff to be conceptualized, which we can never know. Such realistic project has set reality far from human being's cognitive capacity. This philosophical proposition has been put forth from Descartes' mind-body dichotomy, and also figures in Kant's noumena/phenomena distinction. This distinction has been widely accepted by philosophers. In the contemporary time most of philosophers have challenged this realistic position and have gone to advocate different versions of realism, like internal realism, direct realism, naïve realism, common sense realism, critical realism and indirect realism. Some of them, in response to metaphysical realism, even have advocated anti-realism and some have moved towards relativism.

Putnam's internal realism is completely different from anti-realism. Though, many philosophers have leveled charges against him of being an antirealist or relativist. The aim of the present chapter is to show that Putnam, after abandoning metaphysical realism, and adopting internal realism does not fall into any sort of relativism or antirealism. Rather, internal realism is

a kind of realism which brings back hope for philosophy to continue in order to understand the reality with a human face, which claims that reality may be viewed from within different conceptual schemes. That does not permit us to say that reality is multifarious; but to say that reality may have different descriptions compatible with each other.

In the first section, we shall give a picture of how metaphysical realism always attracts global skepticism. Such skepticism occurs due to the deep bifurcation of reality and appearance. In the second section we shall try to show that conceptual relativity and relativism are incommensurable. In the third section, we shall evaluate the arguments for internal realism, that is, realism within a conceptual scheme, and the importance of this form of realism.

2.1 Metaphysical Realism and Global Skepticism

Metaphysical realism is always best understood in terms of strong bifurcation of reality into 'what appears to us' and 'what is there'. 'What appears to us' has a perspective or can be said to depend on any person's position. 'What is there' is a kind of perspective from 'God's eye view-point'[1] or a 'view from nowhere'[2]. It is the view that external reality exists independent of human cognition. So metaphysical realism establishes three principles:

1. The structure of the world is ontologically independent of the human mind.
2. Truth is radically non-epistemic.
3. If there are more than one adequate conceptual schemes of any given domain, they can be type reduced to one.[3]

Since, the world is independent of the mind, so truth is non-epistemic. When we say truth is non-epistemic, it means that truth is beyond the reach of our cognitive ability. Skepticism in this context claims that, we can never be sure of whatever we know and that we can never be sure that we are not deceived by demon. This problem of skepticism is embedded in mind/world

[1] Putnam (1981), p. 49.
[2] Nagel (1986).
[3] Putnam (1981), pp. 49–50.

divide Descartes introduced. It is because mind has access only to thoughts and mental signs that express particular propositions, which are in language. So, these propositions are alone to take as either true or false. However, whether these propositions are true or false depend on the conditions in the world. But the difficulty is that we have no position from the perspective of the world to rectify our propositions as true or false. All our propositions about the world are mediated by the thoughts, which lead to the separation between thought and the world. No matter how confident we may be about our belief, we have no way to determine whether our beliefs about the facts fit or not. In search of certainty Descartes tries to establish a correlation between belief and world through the means of some *a priori* proofs founded on the indubitable premises. If we consider Descartes to be successful in regard to founding a priori proofs, then it would afford certainty, that is, many of our beliefs about empirical facts would be necessarily true.

Descartes claims, on the basis of *a priori* proofs, that if I am certain that p then p is true. But skeptic says that my being certain that p does not imply that p. John Heil, in his paper 'Skepticism and Realism', expresses this clearly as follows,

> . . . the Cartesian strategy – involving a priori proof of non-deceiving God – enables me to achieve certainty, that if I am certain that p, then p. But this evidently leaves the original skeptical worry untouched. This suggests that it is misleading to regard skepticism as a straightforward demand for proof or certainty. A skeptic is not someone with exacting epistemic standards. Rather, skepticism makes salient the consequences of our adopting a certain picture of the world and our place in it. If that picture is inevitable, so is the skeptical challenge.[4]

In this paragraph John Heil explicitly mentioned that the problem with skepticism is not just with our epistemic standard or with the kind of epistemology we pursue in order to acquire knowledge. But problem lies somewhere else. Problem of skepticism lies in the acceptance of a certain picture of the world or the metaphysics of the world we embrace. And if this metaphysical picture of the world is inevitable, so is skepticism. Thus, our skeptical problem lies in our metaphysical realism. I think that such metaphysics of the world, which keeps the human mind away from the world, is not inevitable or not the only way to construct the picture of the

[4] Heil (1998), p. 57.

world. It seems that metaphysical realism and global skepticism are congenial to each other. They need each other for their survival. They have bloomed and flourished through centuries. In contemporary philosophy, some philosophers have tried to search for an alternative to this picture, which can save our epistemology as well as our metaphysics. Cartesian skepticism was a methodological skepticism, which is understood as a fallibilistic thesis stating that we can be wrong about what we know. But Descartes' metaphysical position regarding mind/world dualism entrapped him permanently into skepticism. Even Descartes' attempt to get away from this predicament failed because he could not see that if he retains this mind/ world dualism, skepticism cannot be flushed out.

Most of the philosophers have dodged skeptical challenges on the pretext of its false or unjustified demands without scrutinizing the kind of metaphysical project they hold. For them, skepticism is an aberration, philosophical gimmick, a tease. John Heil believes that there can be three responses to skepticism and he also believes that there are good reasons to answer skeptical challenges.

- First that the skeptical picture presupposes an observer to be distanced from the world he inhabits in order to observe the same world, and this presupposition can be challenged.
- Second response is to accept the skeptical point of view, but argue that we are justified, perhaps on practical grounds, in repressing it.
- Third response is to argue for antirealists and reject the picture on the basis of the conviction that we have no reason to grant objective and mind-independent world.[5]

From the first response, it becomes explicit that the problem of skepticism is not a problem of epistemology but a problem of metaphysics about the external world to which humans do not have any access. Second response seems unphilosophical, dogmatic and an irritated response to skepticism; it does not suit a philosopher to offer such argument anyway. The third response is problematic, one cannot afford to embrace it because embracing this position leads to the losing of realism completely, and this is too much of a price to pay for skepticism. It is, however, easier

[5] Ibid., p. 58.

said than done. Still there is hope to go on to save our realism and answer to skeptics as well. Putnam's internal realism, which propagates realism within conceptual scheme, tries to avoid skepticism while retaining a form of realism. Internal realism does not make mind/world dichotomy and argues that the mind and the world jointly constitute the mental and the physical domains.

At this stage we need to take metaphysical realism and global skepticism as serious challenges to Putnam's position and discuss them in detail. In the current discussion, philosophers have understood skepticism in different ways and tried to answer to its challenges as per their need. We will take two versions of skepticism here to present the picture more clearly; fallibilism on the one hand and global skepticism on the other hand. Fallibilism claims that though we make mistakes, we can correct them. We have equipment to fight it; we may lose some battles but cannot lose complete war. Global skepticism pronounces that we have no arms to fight, no bunker to take shelter, we are captive, powerless and vulnerable. Any move to escape from skeptical position is impossible. For this reason it is not quite appropriate to talk about fallibilism in connection with global skepticism. Fallibilism is something that locates the mistakes locally in the domain of knowledge. Mistakes are things we make. Being wrong about practically everything is rather something that happens to us. Therefore, global skepticism typically uses language of "illusion" or "deception."

Global skepticism rests on a distinction between truth and illusion. It claims that it is impossible to be sure about our beliefs about the world, given that justification for our belief is not infallible. This fallibility makes a space for global skepticism, but if it is denied, skepticism ceases to exist in its global form and local form of skepticism is a help to our improved system of knowledge. As I mentioned above, metaphysical realism is committed to a radically non-epistemic conception of truth and this conception is prone to criticism. Metaphysical realists try to show that we can distinguish between truth and illusion. If it can be shown that we are not dreaming or not being deceived by demon, skepticism can be disposed off. But for such distinction they have to devise a criterion, which can set illusion and truth apart. Even if metaphysical realists succeed to put forward a criterion of this kind, this will not make the skeptics silent. They can further claim, as by the skeptic disposition, that the very distinction of

truth and illusion is itself within the metaphysical category of "illusion." No matter how far metaphysical realists can go on to revise his criterion, global skepticism is bound to strike back again with the same weapon. There is no ray of hope for metaphysical realist to overcome this predicament, unless he embraces at least modest form of verificationism which, by definition, metaphysical realism cannot.

Metaphysical realism can go further to counter skepticism by joining hands with the conception of fallibility of justification. If it is possible for a belief to be false in future, then any justification is fallible. And any justification is infallible, if it is impossible for a belief to be false in future. Gabor Forrai said,

> Today most epistemologists agree that it is unreasonable to demand that justifications should be infallible. We should lower the standards by which we judge whether we possess knowledge. We should still require that a belief should be true and justified, but we should rest content with weaker, fallible justification. The metaphysical realist may join the majority of epistemologists and argue as follows. Fallible justification does not exclude the possibility that the belief is false.[6]

This idea is endorsed by Keith Lehrer that the possession of knowledge is compatible with the possibility of being wrong. Gabor Forrai tries to show how metaphysical realists manage to get rid of skepticism by accepting fallible justification. To examine metaphysical realists' approach to epistemic possibility, Forrai took two issues to clarify, first what is meant by fallibilism, and second what is meant by skepticism. He considers two claims as follows:

(1) We do not have knowledge.
(2) We might not have knowledge. (Possibly, we do not have knowledge.[7])

Here, (2) is regarded as fallibilism. Fallibilism claims that we might be mistaken in knowing. If we are mistaken, we do not have knowledge. Therefore, if mistake is a possibility, we might not have knowledge. Metaphysical realists do not hesitate to accept (2). But they do not believe that

[6] Forrai (2001), p. 99.
[7] Ibid.

(2) entails (1). (2) would entail (1) if and only if the infallibility of justification was regarded as necessary condition for knowledge. Once it is decided to quit the necessity of infallibility condition, the logical connection between (2) and (1) becomes redundant. Thus, metaphysical realist rejects (1), and tries to show that skepticism is connected with (1), whereas metaphysical realist has to adjust with (2) only. Since (2) does not imply (1), no reason has been offered to show that (1) is right. Since, as metaphysical realist claims that (2) is not skeptical proposition, the charge that metaphysical realism is prone to skepticism is unjustified.

Gabor Forrai sees that the above argument is partly right and partly wrong. He grants that metaphysical realism is not committed to (1) and grants the arguments explaining that why it is not. What he rejects is the identification of skepticism with (1). In the history of philosophy, skepticism has been understood differently by different philosophers. Gabor Forrai reminds us that in the history of philosophy,

> . . . some of the skeptics, the Pyrrhonic ones, would have only accepted (2). I do not think, therefore, that the metaphysical realist should be allowed to pick one sort of skepticism he managed to get rid of and claim that thereby he disposed of skepticism as such. In turn, I must acknowledge that I failed to show that metaphysical realism is committed to skepticism as such. I showed only that metaphysical realism is committed to one sort of skepticism, a globalized version of fallibilism.[8]

I partly agree with Gabor Forrai but also partly disagree. I agree that skepticism should not be equated with (1), and that metaphysical realist should not be content with rejecting only statement (1) mentioned above. Forrai's globalized version of fallibilism strikes me to think, against Forrai, that this sort of global fallibilism can be linked only to metaphysical realism due to its deep divide into noumena/phenomena. Metaphysical realism creates deep bifurcation of reality and appearance which permits global skepticism to come in place and denies the possibility of knowledge in any sense even with certain fallibility. Metaphysical realism, in its nature, prevents a mind to have access to reality and any effort by mind to grasp the reality is bound to go in vain or to be mistaken. Though, local fallibilism can be granted to certain kind of realistic project which holds that in some cases of knowledge we may be mistaken not in every

[8] Ibid., p. 100.

case and, that mistaken case, further, can be corrected. Internal realism wards off all the possibility of any kind of skeptic scenario. It shows that each and every attempt to validate skepticism is unsuccessful. We will discuss it later.

Forrai in his early chapter does agree that metaphysical realism is radically non-epistemic. Metaphysical realism makes a water-tight divide between mind and world where epistemic reach to the world becomes a distant dream. Knowledge is possible only when metaphysical realist compromises his position and opts for some feasible realistic project keeping in mind the epistemic concerns. But the problem is that he cannot do so. Because of the inherent nature of metaphysical realism, the moment he compromises, he ceases to be a metaphysical realist. Thus, one cannot compromise at the cost of his own existence. On this ground I am reluctant to grant him globalized version of fallibilism and to reject the logical relation between (2) and (1). I do believe that metaphysical realists' persistent questioning about the criterion of knowledge and the acknowledgement that I could be deceived by evil genius, permits us that (2) does entail (1) and that metaphysical realist is committed to (1) as well.

There are some other philosophers who had been extreme or global skeptics, later turned to softened versions of skepticism. The extreme skeptical proposition is that nothing can be known. But as we know, this form of skepticism is self-contradictory. Equally inconsistent is the attempt to prove that nothing can be proved. However, while global skepticism is contradictory, academic skepticism is false. Alan Musgrave used the expression 'Academic Skepticism' to discuss the moderate form of skepticism embraced by philosophers who find global skepticism contradictory. Academic skepticism is a global skepticism in a disguised form. It only tries to prove the thesis of global skepticism by any means. What academic skepticism tries to say is that nothing can be known, in tune with global skeptic, except its own thesis 'nothing can be known'. Now the fundamental question arises regarding this issue,

> . . . if one thing can somehow be known, then why cannot other things be known in a similar way? . . . (But) if anything else can be known, then academic scepticism is false (for it says

that only academic skepticism can be known), and being false it cannot be known either (for we cannot know falsehood).[9]

Here academic skeptic seems to achieve his position by using the very argument which he thrown it out after, in a manner in which a man can throw his ladder after reaching high place. As I have shown that keeping this global skepticism, no version of realism can be saved and in this stronghold for global skeptic too who was also fighting to breathe out properly. Yet Sextus did not endorse academic skepticism and tried to shield Pyrrho. In last, he, the same Sextus, who declared the impossibility of establishing any position as true, including his own, did not universalize the scope of doubt in practice. In contrast to his own theoretical position, he pronounced to raise one's doubt against which is not founded on sufficient evidence. In the same modest spirit, the arch-skeptic Hume persuaded in a similar vein that, doubting which is so devastating theoretically, is mere philosophical argument not to be taken seriously in practice.[10] Chhanda Gupta writes,

> It is what human enquiry caught up in the cross current of despair and hope encounters, finds frustrating, and still takes up as a challenge to be overcome in its arduous task of seeking something that would be considered 'sufficiently evident'. More the doubter doubts, the greater would be the effort to secure adequate grounds for stable, sufficiently evident beliefs, the cherished desiderata of our cognitive enterprise. Such a doubting skeptic is a friend not a foe of the knower.[11]

All this discussion shows that philosophers are ready to accept some softened version of skepticism. But this is not possible without some change in our metaphysical realism. Putnam adopts internal realism and elucidates how this demon deceiving argument is false and does not establish skepticism through his famous brain in a vat thought experiment. Putnam's argument against global skepticism is founded on the following assumption:

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[9] Musgrave (1993), p. 20. (As quoted by Chhanda Gupta in her *Realism versus Realism*)
[10] Hume (1902), p. 160. (As quoted by Chhanda Gupta in her *Realism versus Realism*)
[11] Gupta (1995), p. 122.

- One cannot refer to certain things unless the one stands in the right sort of causal connection to the things.[12]

Putnam tries to explain how this statement goes against skepticism. Putnam says that when computer provides stimulation to brains in a vat, the information loaded in computer is programmed by evil scientist and it is competent to generate random sentences which are not only grammatically correct sentences but semantically true. But the difficulty with the information supplied from computer to brains in a vat is that computer's sentences do not have references, because the computer does not stand in causal connection to the world, it does not have the capacity to adjust his speech according to the world around it. According to Putnam's assumption mentioned above, computer's programmed sentences or informations do not stand in causal interaction with the world while supplied to the brain in a vat and cannot be adjusted as per needs of the social and physical environment. Information programmed in the computer will keep on being supplied to the brain even when the world ceases to exist. Since, reference is a relation between language and the world, language must be in relation to the world and one must have capacity for adjusting his speech to the world.

Accepting this assumption, internal realism regards reference as an epistemically loaded notion, since it argues that it is fixed by justification conditions. Metaphysical realism fails to fix the reference because according to its thesis mind does not exist in epistemic relation with the world, so it considers reference as a non-epistemic notion, whatever it is. For metaphysical realist, truth is also out of epistemic reach, because truth is determined by reference and reference should be epistemically known.

Now we shall turn to the brain in a vat argument to show its consequence as a failure of skeptical thesis itself. Putnam's argument may be put forward as follows:

1. We are either brains in a vat (speaking vat English) or we are not brains in a vat (speaking English).

[12] Putnam (1981), p. 13.

2. If we are not brains in a vat (speaking English), the sentence 'we are brains in a vat' is false.
3. If we are brains in a vat (speaking vat English), the sentence 'We are brains in a vat' is false.

Conclusion: The sentence 'We are brains in a vat', is false.

Putnam, in the above formulation, has shown us that skeptical thesis is false, it does not establishes skepticism. Putnam says that if somebody is envatted and utters that he is in 'brain in a vat', then the sentence 'brain in a vat' is false because it does not refer to the real "vat" and the utterance come through causal interaction with the world. And if he, without being envatted, utters the sentence that he is 'brain in a vat' then his sentence 'brain in a vat' is false because he is not brain in a vat. It seems that only with moderate version of realism, say internal realism in Putnam's words, skepticism loses its force. After reflecting on metaphysical realism we find that in the history of philosophy, philosopher took some distinctions which were further carried out without questioning them. These distinctions/divisions, being wrong, are burden on the philosopher. Some of these fundamental divisions are like, mind versus world, reality versus appearance, fact versus value, phenomena versus noumena, etc., which were taken by earlier philosophers in order to build their whole philosophy. Now the job of philosophers is to question these dichotomies, and if they are wrong, they should be abandoned. Metaphysical realism is also an offshoot of one of them, which are basically wrong.

I have tried to show that metaphysical realism is an extra burden on philosophy which leads to internal realism. Internal realism, as an alternative to metaphysical realism, will be discussed, in short, in the second section and in detail in the third section.

2.2 Relativism and Conceptual Relativity

Putnam tried to save metaphysics and epistemology which, according to him, had collapsed after Kant's noumenal/phenomenal distinction of reality. This distinction implies that transcendental

reality has the status of "real" and phenomenal reality is merely empirical or an appearance. Embracing this dichotomy of noumena and phenomena implies further that there is a distinction between the properties which things themselves have and the properties which we project upon them. Putnam's reflection over these projected properties is something like this, "thinking of something as having properties it does not have."[13] While transcendental properties can never be available to us. Our every attempt to conceptualize them renders the entire effort to be merely perspectival.

According to Putnam, transcendental realism maintains that any conception and belief about reality and truth might go wrong due to reality being entirely independent of any human conception and belief. Putnam opposes such a form of realism which claims that all our efforts to cognize the reality within our conceptual scheme are bound to go in vain. As opposed to this, Putnam endorses conceptual relativity and argues that it is ridiculous and senseless to talk about totally independent transcendental reality. We can only meaningfully talk about what appears to us, what we view from within our conceptual schemes. Putnam writes,

> . . . *what objects does the world consist of*? is a question that it only makes sense to ask *within* a theory of description[14].

Putnam does not hold like Kantian transcendental realist that reality as conceived, viewed, believed and known is not the same reality. He does not grant that the world as it appears is constructed by our mind, while the world as in itself is independent of the mind. Rather he holds that the conceptualized world is the same as the objective world. And it is not that the world we know is entirely an imposition of our mind. For Putnam transcendent realism and constructivism are both unacceptable, because none fits his project. That is excellently put by Strawson, when he says that it is

[13] Putnam (1987), p. 11.
[14] Putnam (1981), p. 49.

> a truly empiricist philosophy, freed on the one hand, from the delusions of transcendent metaphysics, on the other, from the classical empiricist obsession with the private contents of consciousness.[15]

In Kant's philosophy, reason is not allowed to have the vanity of knowing the transcendental reality – things in themselves. However, how one can know the objects which are accessible to our experience? In such an epistemology, freed from the classical empiricist obsession with private contents of consciousness, one cannot be supposed to acquire knowledge reaching out to external objective world of durable objects.

The unbridgeable gap between fleeting sense impression and constant objects, according to Kant, cannot be bridged by imagination as Hume had suggested. Kant turns to *a priori* concepts and principles, the use and application of which make knowledge of constants external objects possible. The *a priori* has special connotation in Kant's epistemology. It is not just that which is not derived from and is independent of experience and certainly not what yields an infallible intuitive grasp of objects inaccessible to sense experience. This *a priori* has to be understood in a transcendental sense, i.e., in the sense of being something which is the necessary condition of the very possibility of knowledge of empirical objective world. And these concepts and principles are *a priori* also in the sense that they stem from our mind, for the concepts and principles which are *a priori* are integral parts of the structure and working of minds of human beings like ourselves. These *a priori* concepts and principles which help us in acquiring knowledge of the external objects are inbuilt parts of our mind, and hence are not imposed upon mind from outside.

Putnam is highly influenced by Kant and accepts the Kantian idea of relativity of the phenomenal or empirical reality to human thought and conceptual scheme. But he rejects the absoluteness of a single conceptual scheme and its *a priori* character. Putnam does not believe in the capacity of transcendental condition of mind regarding the knowledge of the world. Along with this Putnam also rejects the independent existence of a noumenal world. Putnam embraces Kant's immanentism in terms of conceptual relativity of reality to human conceptual scheme. He

[15] Strawson (1975), p. 19.

does think like Kant that our object of knowledge is not transcendent but inherently linked to our way of conceiving it. But Putnam does not think that there is only one way of conceiving it. What appears to us as real is one thing and what we conceive to be real, due to our being made in a certain way to perceive it, is a different thing. We can say that it is in the second case it seems that the way the real turns out to be a case depends upon how we are made. Hence, though our minds manufacture it in a sense that does not mean it is unreal. This is what Putnam's internal realism or, in other words, immanentism in Kantian sense, exalts conceptual relativity, but excludes absolutism and constructivism.

Some philosophers reject Putnam's position, because they think that according to internal realism objects are dependent on conceptual scheme, and hence, no way Putnam can maintain realism. Putnam says,

> 'Objects' do not exist independently of conceptual schemes. We cut up the world into objects when we introduce one or another scheme of description. Since the objects *and* the signs are alike *internal* to the scheme of description, it is possible to say what matches what . . . 'objects' themselves are as much made as discovered, as much products of our conceptual invention as of the 'objective' factor in experience . . .[16]

Such remarks made by Putnam have led many philosophers to label him as an antirealist or relativist. But this reading of Putnam cannot be sustained. Contemporary philosophers like Thomas Kuhn, Feyrbend and Michel Foucault have argued for some form of relativism while Richard Rorty, Nelson Goodman and Michael Dummett have accepted antirealism or constructivist antirealism. And they think that Putnam's conceptual relativity is a disguised form of relativism or antirealism. Putnam thinks that relativism is false. At the same time he defends conceptual relativity not as a proposition of relativism, but as an explanation of realism within conceptual scheme, which, in turn, is as objective and independent as reality as such.

I may now turn to Thomas Kuhn's relativism and contrast it with Putnam's realism to show that relativism could not survive against the sustained attack by Putnam. Kuhn rejects both theory-independent observation as well description of the world. According to him, there is

[16] Putnam (1981), pp. 52–54.

no such observation which is free from any theory. Thus, he switches to 'techniques of mass persuasion', in his later writing, from mere observation as a key factor in theory-choice, as he did in his earlier works. However, convictions and unanimous judgments of trained specialists were taken into consideration. But in either case the new locus of scientific rationality was sociological.

Kuhn realized that there would be epistemological impediment in choosing between two conflicting and competing paradigms, if there were no external theory-independent criteria. So, improving his position, Kuhn writes,

> . . . if there is no way in which the two (incommensurable theories) can be stated in a single language, then they cannot be compared, and no arguments from evidence can be relevant to the choice between them.[17]

Kuhn also admits, taking in view the criticisms posed by Putnam and Davidson,

> . . . talk about differences and comparisons presupposes that some ground is shared. And insofar as the 'incommensurability' thesis denies this, it is incoherent.[18]

Though he still wants to save incommensurability, Kuhn is aware of the tension between two competing paradigms and the irrationality of not allowing communication between them in order to overcoming this tension and establishing one over other as more near to 'truth'. He thinks that communication could not be established through standard epistemic modes on the basis of shared experiential evidence, or through translation, but by 'the very different process of interpretation and language acquisition'. He claims, that process held the clue to an understanding 'not only of translation and its limitation, but also of conceptual change'. Chhanda Gupta, in connecting Kuhn, writes,

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[17] Kuhn (1983) (as quoted by Chhanda Gupta in her Realism versus Realism, p. 172)
[18] Ibid.

> . . . this purely interpretive and hermeneutic manifesto can achieve only half of what it promises. It addresses the problem of *translation*, not the problem of understanding theory change, especially change that leads to scientific progress.[19]

As opposed to Kuhn, Putnam has shown that despite the incompatibility of conceptual schemes, description given by one can be translated into the language of the other, provided these descriptions are equivalent. Kuhn fails to explain how interpretation succeeds where translation is not possible. Kuhn argues that the progress of science goes on by introducing new conceptual schemes arising one after another which are incommensurable. This 'incommensurability' of schemes cannot make sense unless there is comparison between them, which would explain failure and success of one over the other. The story of conversion in science, as Putnam believes, is a "story of continuous change of belief, not ... a story of successive meaning change.'[20] And if this continuity is expunged, Kuhn's response in defence of 'incommensurability' would certainly fail to refute the old criticism that incommensurability leads to incomparability and incomparability to irrationality. So what relativism claims is that there are many conceptual schemes as there are many worlds, which are different from conceptual relativity of Putnam. It does permit of many worlds as there are many conceptual schemes, but all conceptual schemes have shared single reality.

Putnam thinks that according to the above form of relativism 'anything goes'. He tries to show his form of conceptual relativity does not allow for the extreme view that every conceptual scheme is just as good as any other scheme. Putnam gives an example to make his point clear. Suppose someone, foolish enough, believes that there is a conceptual scheme which admits that we could fly and he acts on it by jumping from the window. He would see, if he is lucky enough to survive, the weakness of this conceptual scheme. For Putnam, nothing is uncontaminated by conceptualization, even our sensation on which epistemology is based is not free from conceptualization, but that does not mean it is merely so.

[19] Gupta (1995), p. 173.
[20] Putnam (1981), p.

> . . . they are conceptions of something real. They define a kind of objectivity, *objectivity for us*, even it is not the metaphysical objectivity of the God's Eye view. Objectivity and rationality humanly speaking are what we have; they are better than nothing.[21]

It seems that relativist's argument is self-refuting, one cannot consistently stick to one position if while accepting others to be equally true. Putnam mentions what Alan Garfinkel says to his California student,

> You may not be coming from where I'm coming from, but I know relativism isn't *true for me*' . . . If any point of view is as good as any other, then why isn't *the point of view that relativism is false* as good as any other?[22]

Putnam himself argues like Wittgenstein that it cannot

> . . . make any sense of the distinction between *being right* and *thinking he is right*; and that means that there is, in the end, no difference between *asserting* or *thinking*, on the one hand, and *making noises* on the other. But this means that I am not a *thinker* at all but a *mere* animal. To hold such a view is to commit a sort of mental suicide.[23]

In the next section, I shall try to explain Putnam's idea of realism within conceptual scheme as opposed to metaphysical realism on the one hand as well as relativism on the other hand.

2.3 Realism within Conceptual Scheme

It is now our turn to show that the alternative to metaphysical realism is what Putnam calls 'internal realism' – realism within conceptual scheme. As we have seen, metaphysical realism is imperfect because it attracts global skepticism and ceases all possibility to acquire knowledge about the world. Metaphysical realism, in principle, does not allow for human being's cognitive capacity to know the reality due to its acceptance of the deep divide between the noumenal and

[21] Ibid., p. 55.
[22] Ibid., p. 119.
[23] Ibid., p. 122.

phenomenal world. And we have also seen that internal realism is not a relativism just because it accepts conceptual relativity.

Internal realism claims that the world is ontologically dependent on human mind though it is causally independent. It is important to show how internal realism is compatible with causal independence of the world. Just as our knowing or not knowing of the world does not affect the very existence of the world and its inherent structures, any conceptual scheme does not cause things to exist, but tries to cut them into pieces, objects, properties, facts and events. I will try to show, following Putnam, how ontological dependence and causal independence are compatible. Gabor Forrai says,

> The crucial idea is that those things between which causal relations may or may not hold presuppose the human mind: it is in virtue of the human mind that they exist as *separate* entities, i. e. entities with boundaries, entities as distinguished from other entities. It makes no sense to speak as if the world had an inherent structure, as if objects, properties, facts, events etc. were simply out there, waiting for the mind to recognize them.[24]

The categorization, classification, and individuation of properties, events, facts are not inherent to the world itself, rather are imposed by mind. Such organization, classification, division and selection all come from human mind. Forrai calls this 'the organization picture'. And this organization picture is done through application of different conceptual schemes over quasi-unconceptualized reality. Thus, Putnam says,

> 'Objects' do not exist independently of conceptual schemes. *We* cut up the world into objects when we introduce one or another scheme of description. Since the objects *and* the signs are alike *internal* to the scheme of description, it is possible to say what matches what.[25]

Words are not themselves meaningful but when we put them in certain causal relation to objects, they become pregnant with meaning. When we give description of any event, we give it in terms of concepts. Without concepts event cannot be described. Fore example, if we want to describe the revolt of 1857 in India it needs concepts of "revolt," "time," and "space," so even talk of any

[24] Forrai (2001), p. 23.
[25] Putnam (1981), p. 52.

event presupposes deployment of concepts, in order to identify the event. But if we believe that any conceptual scheme is already in the structured universe, not imposed by human mind, then we have to say that certain events are ontologically independent of the human mind. That is what Gabor Forrai says, "Causal independence is thus a 'surface' phenomenon, which is parasitic upon ontological dependence."[26]

Taking ontological dependence in the above manner raises some problematic issues. If this organization picture is totally dependent on human mind, then the possibility of being mistaken about the adequacy of conceptual scheme ceases to exist. If there are no objective constraints to check the adequacy of any conceptual scheme and the limits of it, we can never go wrong about our conceptual scheme. Thus, if conceptual schemes go without objective constraints and if there is no way of verifying the right conceptual scheme, internal realism falls into relativism. We are often mistaken the way we conceptualize reality and the scheme turns out to be inadequate. Hence, the need is felt for the objective constraints on our conceptual scheme. Thus, Putnam says,

> Internalism does not deny that there are experiential *inputs* to knowledge; knowledge is not a story with no constraints except *internal* coherence; but it does deny that there are any inputs *which are not themselves to some extent shaped by our concepts*, by the vocabulary we use to report and describe them, or any inputs *which admit of only one description, independent of all conceptual choices.*[27]

Putnam tries to reduce the possibility of many conceptual schemes which could be true independent of any objective constraints. But in maintaining a distance from relativism internal realism may slip into metaphysical realism. One say that in order to check the adequacy of conceptual schemes, we have to admit that there are objective structures inherently built into unconceptualized reality. And finding an adequate conceptual scheme, which is inherent in the structure of reality, is merely a copying of inherent structure of reality through our own linguistic conceptual scheme. So the right sort of conceptual scheme in the presence of objective constraint is determined at the cost of sacrificing internal realism. And if we accept many conceptual

[26] Forrai (2001), p. 24.
[27] Putnam (1981), p. 54.

schemes which are true by themselves, then they do not need verification for their adequacy, hence, it is to take a leap into relativism.

Now one may think of a solution of this problem in Kantian manner. In Kantian scheme, knowledge is possible through sense perception. And in every perception the object perceived conforms to the forms of sensibility, that is, space and time. These forms of sensibility are so inevitable that they are present in every sense perception. There is no way to escape from them in our experience. But in our thinking we can go beyond to think of entities without forms of sensibility, or, a thing in itself, or, a noumenon – which is only thinkable and not knowable. In Kantian sense, noumena cannot, in principle, be given in our experience, our concepts have limits only to phenomenal experience. Noumena lie outside of the human cognitive apparatus. Every phenomenal experience is bound to be located in spacio-temporal order and thing in itself strictly falls outside of it. Thus, we cannot grasp noumena with the help of any category. Since, sense experience has some forcible element to cause itself in our mind, which is the sole cause of its validity that we are not radically and universally mistaken about our phenomenal knowledge and skepticism is out of place in Kantian phenomenal knowledge. Kant says that the appearances are appearances of something, and are not merely figments of our imagination. So, this "something" appearance of which is caused in our mind and knowledge seems to be forced from this "something." It means thing in itself is also functioning in our phenomenal knowledge.

The world we know is ontologically dependent on human mind and orchestrated by conceptual scheme. Such conceptualized knowledge presupposes that there is a "stuff" free from all conceptual schemes waiting to be conceptualized. But as Putnam admits it may seem that conceptualized and unconceptualized realities are different but they are not different. Only difference is that this unconceptualized stuff helps conceptual schemes to be deployed on its own in a certain manner for the adequacy of the conceptual scheme. And this is the only objective constraint which does not permit us to think that there are only conceptual schemes all the way down or that conceptual schemes, literally, create the world. Rather conceptual schemes are in a certain manner connected with something outside which is independent of our hold.

In Kantian scheme of knowledge, objective constraint does neither affirm nor deny the existence of some definite mind independent structure. The so called noumena or stuff to be conceptualized is not considered the possible object of knowledge. We cannot know whether reality in itself has any inherent structure and if it has then what kind of structure it is also unknowable.

For internal realism, the main challenge is to show how our conceptual schemes are projecting real knowledge and not only fiction or mere linguistic construction estranged from objective constraints.

> The solution was to invoke the idea of experience as something given. Concepts must enable us to deal with what we experience. And what we experience is shaped by the quasi-noumenal, which is ontologically independent of mind.[28]

The idea behind conceptual scheme is not that there would be constraint from the perspective of the external world or unconceptualized reality, but the constraints will be from experience itself. Though, experience is not free from concepts; nevertheless such experience is given to us as objective phenomena because experience is pressing on our mind from quasi-noumena. What would the notion of truth in such an internal-realistic framework? In an answer Putnam says,

> 'Truth', in an internalist view, is some sort of (idealized) rational acceptability – some sort of ideal coherence of our beliefs with each other and with our experiences *as those experiences are themselves represented in our belief system* – and not correspondence with mind-independent or discourse-independent 'states of affairs'.[29]

It has become obvious that verification or correctifying statement or whole system of statements depends on the other statements loaded of experience/s. Because every experience is bound to be dressed up in linguistic concepts, unlikely, the reduction of the reality into mere conceptual structures themselves. No conceptual scheme just exists for itself but for something beyond its linguistic representation.

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[28] Forrai, (2001), p. 28.
[29] Putnam (1981), pp. 49–50.

The relevance of conceptual scheme lies in the fact that it indicates something objective beyond mere linguistic construction. Possessing a concept is not to possess a mental object. It is better thought of as a capacity.[30] Each and every concept is understood in a certain relation with thing and this relation is established through a causal interaction with object. It depends on our ability to recognize a particular thing. For example, if we use word 'dog', we must be able to identify the dog or we must be able to recognize dogs. This individuation comes through the classification principles and criteria of identity, which are also embedded in human abilities. Therefore, criteria of identity and principles of classification are, fundamentally, abilities and they are characteristic features of human minds. So it all depends on human mind to refer to certain things by certain concepts. Words do not refer to anything intrinsically; inevitably there is human mind in between. ". . . "objects" and reference arise out of discourse rather than being prior to discourse . . ."[31] The structure of the world, objects, events, classes, facts, etc., are constituted by the use of language. One cannot distinguish one object from another if he does not posses the ability to use the words for certain things. But what does this ability involve? It involves the ability to use the word in a way that differs from the use of other words. This ability consists in acquiring the 'justification conditions' or 'assertibility conditions' of some simple sentences in which the words we intend to use, appears. If one could not have mastered the concept of dog he would not be able to refer to a dog.

The justification conditions are just the criteria of identity for the things words refer to. The identification of 'dog' needs a set of justification conditions constituted by human minds. If we believe that these justification conditions are of thing in itself, not constitution of human mind then there may be a serious mismatch between the justification conditions grasped by mind and the conditions inherent to reality itself. Even if such match is luckily correct it would be only contingent, and we cannot epistemically say anything about its correctness. Putnam says,

> 'Epistemically ideal conditions', of course, are like 'frictionless planes': we cannot really attain epistemically ideal conditions, or even be absolutely certain that we have come sufficiently close to them. But frictionless planes cannot really be attained either, and yet talk

[30] Ibid., pp. 17–21.
[31] Putnam (1987), p. xvi, (Introduction).

of frictionless planes have 'cash value' because we can approximate them to very high of approximation.[32]

So truth is not something infallible but a maximum approximation with ideal condition and that is what we are bound to accept. We cannot acquire a completely ideal condition, yet our knowledge is true and true within conceptual scheme. We have only concepts to form our understanding about the world. And such conceptualized knowledge is not a detached knowledge from the world in itself. But our own conditions are such that we cannot know what the world is without employing our concepts. Putnam says that this conceptual world is not different from what the world is in itself. But it is the same world, only we know through this inevitable human process.

Conclusion

In this chapter we tried to evaluate Putnam's position about realism against popular metaphysical realism. In the current time philosophers are tending towards more practical version of realism which is rooted in our daily life that only can make sense to us. It establishes that metaphysical realism from human perspective is senseless and self-refuting. It attracts global skepticism and falls into a nihilism. All human efforts to make sense of the world go in vain. Internal realism brings back meaningfulness of human cognitive enterprise in order to make sense of the world. Embracing internal realism, Putnam more or less seems to be successful against the attack launched by some contemporary philosophers. His internal realism is not any sort of relativism or antirealism, it is 'realism with a human face'.

[32] Putnam (1981), p. 55.

Chapter 3

Meaning and Truth

Introduction

In the present chapter 'Meaning and Truth', first I shall try to evaluate the rejection of analytic and synthetic distinction. And I shall see, in the face of arguments launched by Putnam, whether this distinction is worthy of keeping or rejecting in the manner Quine did. Quine argued that analyticity is misconceived with reference to meaning of proposition. Quine, influenced by science, claims that there is no proposition which are, in principle, immune to revision. Though, Quine accepts that in natural language there are propositions which seem to be analytic but they are analytic only in terms of convention, they can be revised if we change our convention. But his claim that analyticity is misconceived and hence there are no analytic propositions, makes other contemporary philosophers like, Grice and Strawson, as well as Putnam, uncomfortable. Putnam's claim is that we can save analyticity of one form which is not of philosophical import but in trivial sense. For Putnam, analyticity does not have any philosophical import because there are no analytic statements regarding matters of fact. Analyticity is only useful in a linguistic sense to talk of word-meaning, not in making any philosophical claim about rality. Putnam maintains that such analyticity in the linguistic sense is not problematic. For Quine, concept of analyticity is not well explained as it is further defined circularly with the help of synonymy and the notion of synonymy itself is problematic. Analyticity, for Quine, is a tight synonymy of concepts. Quine is suspicious of intentional entities like meaning and synonymy. Thus, it is important to compare Quine's position with that of Putnam's.

Davidson, in Tarskian style, puts his theory of meaning close to his theory of truth claiming that theory of meaning is at the same time a theory of truth. For Davidson, theory of meaning of a language is just the truth definition for that language and to understand a language is to know implicitly the recursive truth definition for that language. Putnam objects that it seems that Davidson is following correspondence theory of truth, for,

> . . . the *understanding* of the English sentence does seem to consist in the grasp of the conditions for the sentence to be true, or, rather, in the grasp of the definition which generates a T-sentence which specifies that condition.[1]

Putnam does not think correspondence theory of truth is plausible, so he disagrees with Davidson and follows that truth is an idealization of justification. In this chapter, I shall examine the relation between truth and meaning with regard to Quine and Davidson and see what Putnam's position is in this debate.

3.1 Rejection of Analytic/Synthetic Distinction

Quine's famous article "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in its first part, argues that no analytic/synthetic distinction exists, a distinction which is at the root of traditional empiricism. Quine argues that such a distinction itself is based on shaky grounds; it cannot be substantiated by strong arguments. This is why he regards it as one of the two great dogmas of empiricism.

Quine takes up Hume's distinction between relation of ideas and matters of fact, and Leibniz's distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact as precursor to Kant's distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments. According to Leibniz, truths of reason are those which are true in every possible world. Quine, in tune with Leibniz, defines analytic statement as that whose rejection is contradictory because there are no possible worlds in which it can turn out to be false. Quine here makes a point that,

> . . . this definition has small explanatory value; for the notion of self-contradictoriness, in the quite broad sense needed for this definition of analyticity, stands in exactly the same need of clarification as does the notion of analyticity itself. The two notions are the two sides of a single dubious coin.[2]

[1] Putnam (1983), p. 81.
[2] Quine in Martinich (ed.) (1985), p. 26.

Quine tries to explain that the explanation of analyticity falls in the vicious circle because definition of analyticity needs self-contradictoriness and self-contradictoriness needs analyticity, one notion can only be defined in terms of the other. This is the first disturbing point for Quine.

As a background to analyticity, Quine considers Kant's analyticity as a statement of subject-predicate type in which predicate gives the information which is already conceptually contained in the subject term. Quine says that such a formulation of analyticity is limited to subject-predicate statements, whereas there are several other kinds of statements in our language which can be considered as analytic. An analytic statement is further understood as a form of statement that is true by virtue of meanings of its terms and is independent of facts. It claims that a statement can be understood without taking any help from our experience of what is the matter of fact.

Quine argues that there are two types of analyticity; first of which are those statements which are logically true.

(i) No unmarried men are married.

Such statements, Quine says, are true and are true not only when they are stated but they remain true in every situation and with all reinterpretations of "man" and "married." Quine says,

> If we suppose a prior inventory of *logical* particles, comprising "no," "un-," "not," "if," "then," "and," etc., then in general a logical truth is a statement which is true and remains true under all reinterpretations of its components other than the logical particles.[3]

Quine explains that our language consists of some logical elements such as they render the statements true, we do not need to go and check whether our statement is really according to facts.

There is a second type of analytic statement which is as follows:

[3] Ibid., p. 27.

(ii) No bachelor is married.

Quine explains that this second type statement, which can be turned into a logically true statement by putting the synonym "bachelor" for "unmarried man," is not like the first type of statement. Second type statement is defined as true in terms of synonymy and synonymy is defined in terms of analyticity. Quine says that in the second type of analytic statement both terms are required independent clarification and explanation, one cannot be explained in terms of the other. This is where the problem arises. Quine feels that this analytic statement is prone to fallacy of circularity. Quine asks how and who can define this synonymy of "bachelor" and "unmarried man"?, he goes on to enunciate several arguments to show that "bachelor" cannot be defined as "unmarried man" in each and every case. All attempts to show and define synonymy – by lexicography and philology – are insufficient.

For, Quine holds,

> There is also, however, a variant type of definitional activity which does not limit itself to the reporting of pre-existing synonymies. I have in mind what Carnap calls *explication* – an activity to which philosophers are given, and scientists also in their more philosophical moments. In explication the purpose is not merely to paraphrase the definiendum into an outright synonym, but actually to improve upon the definiendum by refining or supplementing its meaning.[4]

Quine shares his resentment with such definitional activity which is explained in cognitively synonymous terms or expressions estranged from experiential facts. Quine admits that synonymy of two linguistic terms may be understood in terms of their interchangeability in all contexts without changing their truth values, in Leibniz's sense, *salva veritate.*

But the notion of synonymy itself is ambiguous. Quine says that in one sense two linguistic terms are synonymous if they are same extensionally, like if "bachelor" and "unmarried man" are interchangeable *salva veritate* in extensional sense, both the terms refer to the same set of individuals. This leads us to say that analyticity of statements like, 'bachelors are

[4] Ibid., p. 28.

unmarried men', do not depend on the meaning of their terms like – "bachelor" and "unmarried man." Because the term "bachelor" may have different extensional value which cannot be equivalent to "unmarried man" depending on different contexts like, in "bachelor of arts", and "bachelor's buttons." But their synonymity depends on the matters of fact, so these terms may enjoy maximum behavioral unanimity of synonymy, but they cannot be asserted to be analytic. Quine comes back again to his earlier feeling that analyticity and synonymy exist interdependently. While explaining synonymy, we have to presuppose analyticity and vice versa. This leads Quine to conclude that the notion of analyticity is problematic, and hence the analytic/synthetic distinction is untenable.

To Quine's problem of analyticity, Putnam has responded in two long and detailed essays 'Two Dogmas Revisited' and 'The Analytic and The Synthetic', where Putnam endorses analyticity on some pragmatic grounds. Putnam acknowledges Quine's success regarding the arguments against analyticity in the history of philosophy. Thus, Putnam says,

> . . . Quine's importance does, I think, depend to a large measure upon his being right in a central claim, a claim which he expressed by saying that there is no sensible distinction between analytic and synthetic truths but which he should have expressed by saying that there is no sensible distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* truths.[5]

Putnam does regard that linguistic notion of analyticity, which has been widely accepted, has larger use in language, and thus cannot be abandoned as useless. According to him,

> . . . a mere demonstration of definitional circularity would hardly seem to be enough to overthrow as widely accepted and used a notion as the notion of analyticity.[6]

Overall Putnam is not satisfied with Quine's arguments to uproot analyticity itself against which he wants to save a particular kind of analyticity.

Now I shall turn to the arguments Putnam offers in favor of analyticity of a particular kind. He attacks the way philosophers have extensively abused analyticity to gain philosophical

[5] Putnam (1983), p. 88.
[6] Ibid.

mileage. This extensive abuse of analytic-synthetic distinction in philosophy has paved the way for and motivated Quine to argue against and reject such a useful distinction. In response to 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', philosophers like Grice and Strawson and some other contemporary philosophers felt a need to maintain the analytic/synthetic distinction. However, about them Putnam writes,

> Philosophers who do not agree with Quine have found themselves in the last few years in this position: they know that there *is* an analytic-synthetic distinction but they are unable to give a satisfactory account of its nature."[7]

So, Putnam tries to give such an account. Putnam is of the opinion that statements, like 'All bachelors are unmarried' and 'There is a book on this table' are of different sorts. No matter, however, we might fail to explain and clarify this distinction, it does not prove that the analytic-synthetic distinction ceases to exist. Quine's main problem with analyticity is that logical truths are analytic and that analyticity derives its logical truthfulness or necessity from 'linguistic convention'. So, for Putnam, logical necessity and linguistic conventions are not opposed to each other. According to Quine, linguistic conventions are arbitrary, they can never enjoy universal confirmation of experience. Though they can enjoy maximum unanimity of behavioral facts, they can never be claimed to be true come what may, rather they depend on contingent matters of facts. Putnam argues against Quine in the following way,

> I would even put the thesis to be defended here more strongly: ignore the analytic-synthetic distinction, and you will not be wrong in connection with any philosophic issues not having to do specifically with the distinction. Attempt to use it as a weapon in philosophical discussion, and you will consistently be wrong.[8]

Putnam is aware of the danger of this distinction being misused, and heavy use of this distinction in philosophy is an immense evidence for Putnam to be cautious about the distinction. Putnam again says,

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[7] Putnam (1975), p. 35.
[8] Ibid., p. 36.

> 'Bachelor' may be synonymous with 'unmarried man' but that cuts no philosophic ice. 'Chair' may be synonymous with 'movable seat for one with back' but that bakes no philosophic bread and washes no philosophic windows.[9]

Putnam takes an example of a hypothesis that the earth came into existence five minute ago. Taking into consideration of 'memory' and 'causal remains', this is a logically false hypothesis. Because in this hypothesis meaningfulness of the word 'time' presupposes the existence of past, but if we grant this hypothesis to be true, then the whole idea of using the word 'time' would be spoiled. Putnam holds that such a hypothesis is not merely empirically false but it is more than empirically false, because such a statement cannot be refuted by a single and isolated statement. Putnam argues such statement cannot be rendered true or false singly and by isolated experiment because they occur within a whole theory and to reject them we have to change the whole theory. Putnam writes,

> . . . while it is important to recognize that this is not the sort of hypothesis that can be confuted by *isolated* experiment, it is not, I think, happy to maintain that the existence of a past is analytic, if one's paradigm for analyticity is the 'All bachelors are unmarried' kind of statement.[10]

Putnam says that any statement which is not empirically dependent for its truth or falsity must depend on some 'rules of language'. Such statement should be committed to the 'rules of language' and should not be recalcitrant to the 'rules of language'. Quine outrightly rejects that there are such rules of language. Putnam says that the reasons Quine offers are almost acceptable but Quine himself accepts that there are no rules beyond the garden variety of rules. What Quine meant here is that there are some common rules which almost everyone knows not very typical and standard rules for functioning of a language which only philosophers can find out not lexicographer or a grammarian. Putnam holds,

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., p. 37.

> This is not to say that there are not some things which are very much *like* 'rules of language'. There is after all a place for *stipulation* in cognitive enquiry, and truth by stipulation has seemed to some the very model of analyticity[11]

Putnam maintains that stipulations have radically arbitrary character which becomes conventional and in time it is understood as characterizing truth. But he argues that stipulation is, in a strictest sense, arbitrary, and is the base of an analytic statement but that does not mean that every stipulation constitutes an analytic statement. He strongly holds that statements in science, like, $e = ½ mv^2$, and statement like, 'Bachelors are unmarried men' are not the same sort of statements, they differ in their status. He accepts that scientific statements have more systematic import than having high degree of convention, whereas classical analytic statement has high degree of convention than having systematic import. Linguistic conventions are arbitrary in the sense that they have been accepted at any point of time without their history being traced and then in the progress of time they become 'meaning postulate' and inevitable in our linguistic communication. Whereas scientific statements have a history and a certain regularities which provide support for their assertions, and hence have a more systematic import. Putnam holds,

> Someone who identifies conceptualization with linguistic activity and who identifies linguistic activity with response to observable situation in accordance with rules of language which are themselves no more than implicit conventions or implicit stipulations . . . We must not fall into the error of supposing that to master the total use of an expression is to master a repertoire of individual uses, that the individual uses are the product of something like implicit stipulation or implicit convention, and that the conventions and stipulations are arbitrary. (The notion of a nonarbitrary convention is of course an absurdity – conventions are used to settle the questions that are arbitrary.)[12]

Putnam seems to admit that our language is full of linguistically arbitrary conventions but there is no harm with that, after all that is how our language enriches. Thus he is able to express his ideas powerfully, and at the same time he fears that analyticity has been wrongly used by philosophers. Putnam only tries to save analyticity of the 'trivial' kind. Putnam writes,

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[11] Ibid., p. 38.
[12] Ibid., p. 41.

> . . . Quine is overwhelmingly right in his critique of what other philosophers have *done* with the analytic-synthetic distinction with the fact that Quine is wrong in his literal thesis, namely, that the distinction itself does not exist *at all.* In the latter direction lies philosophic progress. For philosophic progress is nothing if it is not the discovery of new areas for dialectical exploration.[13]

Putnam has gone a long way to discuss putative analytic statements which are not analytic statements in the classical sense of the term. He takes the sentence, 'Bachelors are unmarried men' in his paper 'The Analytic and The Synthetic' as an example. He maintains that there is something in this classic analytic statement which is an exceptionless 'law' associated with the noun 'bachelor' that says someone is bachelor if and only if he has never been married. Putnam argues,

> Moreover, this exceptionless law has, in each case, two important characteristics: (1) that no other exception 'if and only if' statement is associated with the noun by speakers; and (2) that the exceptionless 'if and only if' statement in question is a *criterion*, i.e., speakers can and do tell whether or not something is a bachelor by seeing whether or not it is unmarried man . . .[14]

There is a difference between an analytic statement and a scientific statement like, $e = \frac{1}{2} mv^2$. They do not have the same linguistic status. For kinetic energy, Putnam argues, it is a *law-cluster concept*[15], by law-cluster concept he means that such concepts are not constituted of group of properties rather constituted of different laws and together they constitute its identity or meaning not by individual law. Law-cluster concepts in the statements of modern science cannot be taken as analytic. Putnam argues,

> The reason is that it is difficult to have an analytic relationship between law-cluster concepts is that such a relationship would be one more law. But, in general, any one law can be

[13] Ibid., p. 42.
[14] Putnam (1983), p. 89.
[15] Putnam (1975b), pp. 50–53. Putnam explains that law-cluster concepts are different from the cluster concepts which are constituted by cluster of properties as general names like 'man'. Putnam mentions that Wittgenstein uses another metaphor instead of 'cluster', the metaphor of a rope with a great many strands, no one of which runs the length of the rope. What it explains is that even when all properties are constitutive of a meaning of a term but if in any case some properties are lacking, the concept still stands intact with prior meaning. Putnam argues the same is true for law-cluster concept, even if any law, which seems to be definitional or stipulative in character, changes but the identity of a concept is still retained.

> abandoned without destroying the identity of the law-cluster concept involved, just as a man can be irrational from birth, or can have a growth of feathers all over his body, without ceasing to be a man.[16]

Putnam says that most of the terms in the statements of science are constituted of law cluster concepts and they cannot be equated with analytic concepts. This law-cluster concept is different from historically used cluster concept for general terms. For example, any general term like, 'man' should be identical with a group of properties failing which extension of the term would radically be changed. But in law-cluster concept, if we lose any law for the term used in a statement, extension of the term will not be changed rather it remains the same. And statement 'Bachelors are unmarried' cannot be rejected unless we change the meaning of the word 'bachelor' and even then until we change it so radically as to change the extension of the term 'bachelor'. It may seem that statement "'kinetic energy' = 'kinetic' + 'energy'" is superficially of the same status like 'bachelors are unmarried'. Bur in the case of kinetic energy, we cannot talk about meaning change of kinetic energy unless we change the meaning radically of the term 'kinetic' and 'energy'. There is a difference between the statements in the following way: if one asks what is the meaning of the term 'bachelor' we can simply tell him that 'bachelor' means 'unmarried man', whereas if one asks what is the meaning of the term 'kinetic energy' we have to tell more than just giving a definition. We can enumerate the complex scientific theory and a cluster of laws which explain the term 'kinetic energy'. If by analytic statement, we mean that its 'truth by definition' and one cannot abandon it without forfeiting his claim to reasonableness, then '$e = \frac{1}{2} mv^2$' is not analytic. 'Bachelors are unmarried' is true in every possible context, if we take terms 'bachelor' and 'unmarried' in our language with their individual meanings.

Putnam maintains that such analytic-synthetic distinction can be drawn only in formalized languages, for formalized language presupposes an inventor who can give commands and so he formulates some statements and rules as 'meaning postulates'. Then it is an obligation on the part of users of formalized language to obey the rules of that language which qualifies the membership of that language. And if within that language there are certain statements which are true by definition or stipulation, estranged from experience come what may, then those statements are analytic in that language. Putnam cites Hempel's idea for such analytic statements,

[16] Putnam (1975b), p. 52.

> His answer is this: if by an analytic statement one means one which is not to be given up, then in science there are no such statements.[17]

Quine says that it is not only in formalized language that there are some statements which are 'true by stipulation', but in the history of science often there are statements which are 'true by stipulation' at one moment, but later seem to be true as statements which are accepted true through empirical confirmation. Putnam responds to Quine by saying that if we take 'true by stipulation' as explaining analyticity, then there are several points which we miss. Putnam says that analytic statements are true by stipulation only in a model. Putnam says that analyticity has been misunderstood by Quine in its strict sense but we can talk about analytic statements in natural language in its loose sense. In natural language, we often use certain words which are synonymous with other words, though they are synonymous by convention. But that does not affect analyticity of the kind Putnam accepts. In natural language, analytic statements are not generally true by stipulation, but as Putnam says, true in a metaphorical sense. Quine does not make a distinction between analyticity in natural and formalized language. For Putnam, without natural language a model statement has no point, because it is due to natural language we can talk about model statement in formalized language. Quine's problem is not that one cannot hold some statements that are immune from revision, but the problem is that science cannot do that. Putnam is well aware why Quine considers that no statement is free from revision because he holds the monolithic character of language, a language of only one kind which needs empirical confirmation for its assent and dissent about the world in question. With such argument, Putnam says that the question 'what is the nature of analytic/synthetic distinction?' ought to be replaced by the question 'why there ought to be analytic-synthetic distinction?'

Putnam, at last, offers a rationale for retaining analytic-synthetic distinction and for strict synonymy in a language. His answer to the question as to why should we have analytic statements in our language is, "why not?" To answer question he elaborates in the following way. He says that one advantage of having strict synonymy in our language is that they help in the *brevity* of the expressions which are very long and there is also a question of *intelligibility*. Putnam argues that if there are some statements immune from revision then this rule of the character of language will help people understand each other easily, irrespective of whatever

[17] Ibid., p. 55.

disadvantages this frozen character of language may have. One may predict in advance the uses of the other people while talking of the same language if it has some 'fixed points'. If there are some fixity and uniformity in language it will give extra edge to speakers regarding communication. Quine fears of the unrevisable statement for it may obstruct scientific enterprise and one may retain that scientific statement is fixed once and for all, irrespective of many advantages of some fixed points in language. Quine's worry is due to hard core faith in monolithic character of language. Putnam, regarding the question why there ought to be synonymies, argues,

> I have argued that this stipulation is convenient, both because it provides us with one more 'fixed point' to help stabilize the use of our hypothetical language, and because it provides us with an expression which can be used instead of the somewhat cumbersome expression 'male adult human being who has never in his life been married'; and I have argued that we need not be afraid to accept these advantages, and to make these stipulations, because it can do no harm.[18]

Putnam argues that his theory of meaning in terms of 'causal' theory of reference and what he calls stereotypes together provide an account of synonymy for natural kind terms. He says,

> It is on the basis of this research that I feel optimistic about the legitimacy and linguistic usefulness of the notion of synonymy, whether we have a good 'definition' or not.[19]

Here Putnam did not explicitly discuss whether the synonymy of a natural kind term is in the sense of strict synonymy as in a statement like, 'bachelors are unmarried'. Yet synonymy of natural kind term has a linguistic benefit and on pragmatic grounds we can use them as a synonymous. Putnam explains the point as follows:

> The idea, in a nutshell, is that there is an exceptionless 'law' associated with the noun 'bachelor', namely, that someone is a bachelor *if and only if* he has never been married; an exceptionless law associated with the noun 'vixen', namely, that something is a vixen *if and only if* it is a female fox; etc. Moreover, this exceptionless law has, in each case, two important characteristics: (I) that no other exceptionless 'if and only if' statement is

[18] Ibid., p. 59.
[19] Putnam (1983), pp. 89–90.

associated with the noun by speakers; and (2) that the exceptionless 'if and only if' statement in question is a *criterion,* i.e., speakers can and do tell whether or not something is a bachelor by seeing whether or not it is an unmarried man; whether or not something is a vixen by seeing whether or not it is a female fox; etc.[20]

Putnam suggests that there are words in a natural language which have this single 'if and only if' criterion. But most of the words in natural language are neither associated with exceptionless criteria nor with many criteria. Further Putnam says that all analytic statements in a language are offshoot of these former varieties of words.

3.2 Davidson's Theory of Meaning as Truth Condition

Davidson developed his theory of meaning as truth condition following upon the Polish logician, Tarski's account of truth. I shall first shortly look what Tarski's theory of truth is and then further develop Davidson's theory of meaning based on Tarski's theory.

Tarski develops his theory of truth in formal language and his theory of truth is also known as a "disquotational" theory of truth. Suppose, we take any example, say, *Snow is white* and we put the quotation marks around the sentence then sentence becomes part of the object language like, "Snow is white." Thus, "snow is white" is true if and only if *snow is white*. In other words we can say that to understand p is *true*, where p is a sentence in quotes, just 'disquote' p and the remaining part is the truth of the sentence in quotes.

In this definition of truth given by Tarski, 'true' is entirely a philosophically neutral notion. Such disquotational theory of truth is seen as an answer to what does it mean to say that something is 'true'. But it does not commit itself to saying how do we know that something is true or how are we to verify that something is true.

We will not go into the details of Tarski's theory of truth. But we would like to highlight that Tarski's theory of truth does not have any philosophical implication regarding the concept of

[20] Ibid., p. 89.

truth. It does not answer questions like, what it is for something to be true or what is the epistemic way of identifying something as true. Thus, Tarski has not touched on the philosophical issues related to the idea of truth. It is a highly formal and mathematical exercise of the definition of true that does not have any bearing on the notion of truth of natural language.

Davidson develops his theory of meaning in natural language in terms of truth conditions for the sentences in that language taking. In Davidson's own words, "To give truth-conditions is a way of giving the meaning of a sentence."[21] Davidson argues for a systematic theory of meaning for a natural language which can be accounted for by a theory that produces, for each descriptive sentence, a theorem that counts its truth-conditions. Davidson's theory of meaning has connection, to some extent, with Frege's theory of a sense of a sentence generated from its semantic value. But Davidson is not completely satisfied with his theory of sense or thought of any sentence in the way it is argued and defended by Frege. Davidson holds,

> Frege held that an adequate account of language requires us to attend to three features of sentences: reference, sense, and force. Elsewhere I have argued that a theory of truth patterned after a Tarski-type truth-definition tells us all we need to know about sense. Counting truth in the domain of reference (semantic value), as Frege did, the study of sense thus comes down to the study of reference (semantic value).[22]

What Frege maintains is that the sense of any sentence is determined by its semantic value (reference) but sense is an independent object or entity. Davidson agrees with Frege that there can be a theory of meaning which does not involve sense as an entity. Davidson does not disagree with Frege that a sense or thought of any sentence is procured by assigning the semantic value to the expressions of a sentence but that the truth-condition of a sentence is also wholly determined by the semantic values of expressions of a sentence. Davidson finds Frege's theory of semantic value unsatisfactory because it does not provide any useful account of how sentence-meaning can be a function of word-meaning. Davidson takes an example to illustrate its difficulty, if one takes a sentence "Theaetetus flies" and asks what this sentence means. Davidson explains,

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[21] Davidson (1984), p. 24.
[22] Ibid., p. 109.

> A Fregean answer might go something like this: given the meaning of "Theaetetus" as argument, the meaning of the "flies" yields the meaning of "Theaetetus flies" as value. The vacuity of this answer is obvious. We wanted to know what the meaning of "Theaetetus flies" is; it is no progress to be told that it is the meaning of "Theaetetus flies". This much we knew before any theory was in sight. In the bogus account just given, talk of the structure of the sentence and the meanings of words was idle, for it played no role in producing the description of the meaning of the sentence.[23]

The main point Davidson has here is that just the meaning of "Theaetetus" and the meaning of "flies" cannot render its truth-condition, though both expressions have their semantic values. Frege's notion of a sense of a sentence, dependent on references or semantic values of sentence's constituents, has difficulty in explaining properly the meaning of the sentence. For Frege, semantic values of predicates are 'unsaturated' entities and only a saturated entity can be true or false. Davidson finds such a theory unexplanatory. For, sentence needs some external conditions to be true. Davidson finds Tarski's truth theory a materially adequate, which prompted and motivated Davidson to get hold of it for further advancement of a theory of meaning.

First, Davidson draws a number of general conditions of adequacy for the theory of meaning for natural language, which any theory of meaning must satisfy. He further goes on to accept that any theory which meets these conditions can be taken as a theory of truth in Tarskian style or to say that a theory of meaning is at the same time a theory of truth. There are three general conditions of adequacy for any theory of meaning:

1. *The Extensional Adequacy Condition*: The theory of meaning must produce a theorem for the "account of meaning" of sentences of given natural language.

2. *The Compositionality Condition*: The theory should be compositional. A theory of meaning is compositional if and only if (i) it has only finitely many axioms, and (ii) each of the meaning-giving theorems is produced from the axiomatic base in such a way that the semantic structure of the sentence concerned is thereby exhibited.

[23] Ibid., p. 20.

3. *The Interpretation condition*: The theory of meaning is supposed to be able to allow us to interpret the speakers of that language, in accordance with constitutive principles governing interpretation.

In Davidson's theory, semantic properties or truth values of words or the expressions of a sentence are determined by axioms. And the semantic properties or truth values of sentences are determined by the theorems produced out of axioms which work for the theory of meaning. Compositional condition regarding the determination of sentence meaning tells us, how sentence meaning is dependent on the meaning of its constituents. That is where compositional condition comes in place effectively. Extensional adequacy condition has a role to set out the exact material condition in Tarskian sense or corresponding state of affairs to sentence at the time of utterance of any sentence. Davidson argues that compositional condition answers some pertinent questions regarding natural language, the three questions are as follows:

(i) How is it possible, given the finitude of their capacities, for speakers of a natural language to understand a potential infinity of sentences?

(ii) How is it possible to understand utterances of previously unencountered sentences?

(iii) How is it possible for a natural language to be learnable? (That is, how is it possible for explicit training with only a relatively small number of sentences to secure competence with a possibly very large set of sentences out of that initial set?)

Now I shall evaluate what Davidson takes to be theorem providing meaning of a sentence to be understood in its best sense. Davidson first takes a theorem of a form '*s* means *m*' which provides meaning for each sentence of a given language. Davidson explains that here '*s*' is taken as a name of a sentence and '*m*' as an expression which refers to the meaning of the sentence in question. In the above theorem, '*m*' is seen as having meaning with the entity equated with the name of a sentence. But this Fregean style of meaning, where meaning is supposed to be an entity, has its own problems. In such a theory of meaning, meaning of a sentence is explained in terms of other term or expression, and then the problem of circularity comes in. Davidson writes,

> The one thing meanings do not seem to do is to oil the wheels of a theory of meaning – at least as long as we require of such a theory that it non-trivially gives the meaning of every sentence in the language. My objection to meanings in the theory of meaning is not that they are abstract or that their identity conditions are obscure, but that they have no demonstrated use.[24]

Davidson again checks the axiom of the form of '*s* means that *p*' for rendering the theory of meaning in terms of external determination. Such theory of meaning should not postulate meaning as entity or intensional entity rather external condition for the meaning of a sentence. Davidson abandoned this theorem as meaning-giving theorem for its alleged difficulty to account for *intensional-context.* Miller presents Platts views upon this difficulty as,

> ". . . means that . . ." creates what is known as *intensional context,* a context in which the substitution of expressions having the same semantic value need not preserve the semantic value (truth-value) of the original sentence.[25]

Suppose if we take an example

"Jones is an oculist" means that Jones is an eye-doctor,

In the above example meaning of "Jones is an oculist" is expressed by another sentence having the same meaning.

It is no more than to say that both sentences have the same semantic value. But these two semantic values are their meaning in the sense of having the same intensional context not determined by state of affairs in external world. This shows that a theory of meaning that yielded theorems of the form 's means m' would presuppose the very notion that it is the purpose of a theory of meaning to elucidate. In such a theorem, meaning of a sentence is explained in the terms of intensional notion of expressions within sentence. Davidson argues that meaning of any sentence should be explicated by the theory of meaning which does not consider or postulate intensional entities rather gives meaning purely in extensional terms. And that it should be

[24] Ibid., pp. 20–21.
[25] Miller (1998), p. 250.

couched in such a language which itself does not contain intensional element for constituting meaning. For this external adequacy of constituting meaning, Davidson embraces Tarski's theory of truth condition.

Davidson gets Tarski's criterion (T) which in the formalized form gives it truth definition in the given language. It yields a theorem of the form:

'p' is true if and only if p,

which all the sentences, for the theory of meaning, must satisfy. This definition of true will yield all equivalences of the form:

'Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white.

Putnam says that Tarski's word 'true' has no epistemological and metaphysical bearing, so has no philosophical implications. Putnam goes on to explain that Tarski has used non-semantical terms or object language as understood and then he uses these non-semantical terms to explain the meaning of 'true'. But Davidson has proposed a reversal to this theory in his influential paper, 'Meaning and Truth,' Putnam writes,

> Davidson's idea is to *invert* Tarski's argument. Instead of taking 'true' as the word whose meaning is to be explained and the object language as understood, Davidson takes the object language as what is to be explained and 'true' (or whatever the word for truth is in the language in which the explanation is to be given) as what is already understood. In this way, any truth definition for a language (in Tarski's sense) can be viewed as a *meaning theory* for that language.[26]

In the above paragraph, Putnam seems to be focusing on the difference between understanding, truth and meaning. What is the nature of understanding and how understanding connects with theory of meaning and the theory of truth? Further how understanding can be accounted for through a theory of meaning and a theory of truth? To these questions, Davidson has very clear answer: If the theory of meaning of a language is embedded in the definition of truth for the same

[26] Putnam (1983), p. 80.

language, then the understanding which a speaker of any language has for that language is best elucidated in terms of knowledge of the inherent truth definition. This allows us to maintain that understanding of any natural language presupposes one to know the inherent recursive truth definition for that language. And this recursive truth definition strengthens the speakers of any natural language to assign the truth-conditions for infinitely many sentences of that language. Putnam shows his apprehension to Davidson's theory at this point by saying that it offers nothing more than a correspondence theory of truth. The truth definition for English language tells any speaker of that language that 'Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white. Now it is very obvious that speaker must know the state of affairs corresponding to the sentence in question which he attempts to know the meaning of. Putnam suggests,

> . . . the *understanding* of the English sentence does seem to consist (if Davidson is right) in the grasp of the conditions for the sentence to be true, or, rather, in the grasp of the definition which generates a T-sentence which specifies that condition.[27]

Putnam rightly points out that the correspondence theory of truth presupposes that the world consists of mind-independent objects and facts. Correspondence theory of truth claims to know this independent world through language. A sentence can be true if it is put in the right connection with the corresponding state of affairs, which makes it true. Thus, the understanding of our sentence consists in the grasp of what the corresponding mind-independent state of affairs is. Putnam says,

> Neither Tarski's theory of truth (which is plainly philosophically neutral) nor Davidson's theory of what a meaning theory is has any bearing on the truth or falsity of these metaphysical views (although some confusion is engendered by the fact that Tarski said *both* that his theory was a reconstruction of the correspondence theory of truth *and* that it was philosophically neutral).[28]

Putnam holds that if Davidson's contention is right that the understanding of any natural language consists in a knowledge of truth theory, then one must ask in what does this 'knowledge of the truth theory' itself consist? This problem ultimately shifts to the question how mind

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[27] Ibid., p. 81.
[28] Ibid.

makes sense of 'knowledge of the truth theory'. This is where the correspondence theory of truth has difficulty explaining how mind can have access to the mind independent-world. This is the philosophically charged and debated issue, where philosophers have long argued in favor of and against both. But further to this difficulty, one can raise another question. If the 'knowledge of the truth theory' is bound to fall on mind, then how does mind think of statements? Does mind think of them in words or some kind of thought-signs, or say, a mental representation? Or is it possible for mind to grasp that snow is white without the help of words or any mental representation? In answer, Putnam says,

> It will do no good to say, in its 'knowledge of truth conditions for the mental representation', for this will lead us immediately either to an infinite regress or to the recognition that some signs must be understood in a way for which the correspondence theory of truth gives no account . . . the second alternative is just the myth that we can compare a sign (e.g., the sentence 'Snow is white', or some mental representation which stands behind that sign) directly with unconceptualized reality. The notion that 'grasping truth conditions' (e.g., grasping *what it is for snow to be white*) is *prior* to understanding the corresponding signs (understanding the sentence 'Snow is white' or some representation with the same meaning) is absurd.[29]

Putnam, being an 'Internal Realist', asserts that Davidson fails to explain how one can go on to get meaning of some expression without taking into consideration truth conditions. And setting a relation between signs and unconceptualized reality is unintelligible, because mind has access only to mental contents, it cannot appropriate word to object in order to give meaning to the word. Putnam says that Tarskian formula creates tautology, if we understand the sentence 'Snow is white', as a sentence of English language, then we 'implicitly know' that truth condition of the sentence is that snow be white. Putnam suggests that Davidson has been unsuccessful in formulating the theory of meaning and truth, and at the same time how they are related to each other. Some may ask, in Putnam's perspective, does meaning have any bearing upon the notion of truth? What is the nature of understanding of any natural language according to Putnam? These issues will be discussed in the following section in detail.

[29] Ibid., p. 82.

3.3 Relation between Meaning and Truth

We have discussed above what are the views of Quine and Davidson regarding the relation between meaning and truth. Now we shall see what is the relation between meaning and truth, according to Putnam, by comparing and contrasting his position with that of Quine and Davidson. How can understanding a language be related to reference and truth? How reference, meaning and truth are connected to each other?

Quine has shown his suspicion whether there can be any theory of meaning. He argues that theory of meaning is explained in terms of synonymy and synonymy in terms of analyticity. Thus, there is circularity in the definition of meaning. It has been shown how the attack on analyticity also affects the notion of meaning. Quine's attack on the notion of analyticity is an attack on the idea that sentences have meaning. This is best explained in "Defense of a Dogma," a reply to Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," by Grice and Strawson:

> If talk of sentence-synonymy is meaningless, then it seems that talk of sentences having a meaning at all must be meaningless too. For if it made sense to talk of a sentence having a meaning, or meaning something, then presumably it would make sense to ask "What does it mean?". And if it made sense to ask "What does it mean?" of a sentence, then sentence-synonymy could be roughly defined as follows: Two sentences are synonymous if and only if any true answer to the question "What does it mean" asked of one of them, is true answer to the same question asked of the other . . . If we are to give up the notion of sentence-synonymy as senseless, we must give up the notion of sentence-significance (of a sentence having meaning) as senseless too. But then perhaps we might as well give up the notion of sense.[30]

What this says is that to give up the philosophical distinction between analytic and synthetic statements is one thing but to reject outrightly that sentence can have meaning is another thing. Quine could not explain why we cannot talk of sentence having meaning. Quine becomes radical in his version of meaning-skepticism, and argues that there is no fact of the matter to say what any given sentence or linguistic expression means. This apprehension about sentence-meaning,

[30] Grice & Strawson (1989). p. 146.

or, for that matter, meaning of any expression is explained in "Indeterminacy of Translation." According to Quine, when a linguist hears a native speaker's utterance as 'gavagai' and tries to translate it as 'rabbit' in English on the basis of observational fact available to both, that cannot be taken as an adequate constraint for exact translation. Quine accepts empiricism as an evidence theory for compatible translation as well as for theory of meaning. Thus, Quine is suspicious of any theory of meaning as well as correct theory of truth. It seems that Quine's idea of meaning and truth is connected with each other. For Quine, as I understand, truth conditions for sentences determine their meanings. And since truth conditions of sentences are not graspable, so is meaning.

In response to Quine's outright rejection of analyticity and acceptance of meaning skepticism, Grice and Strawson argue for linguistic usefulness of the concept of analyticity. Grice and Strawson write,

> If, as Quine says, the trouble is with "analytic," then the trouble should doubtless disappear when "analytic" is removed. So let us remove it, and replace it with a word which Quine himself has contrasted favorably with "analytic" in respect of perspicuity – the word "true". Does the indecision at once disappear? We think not. Does the indecision over "analytic" (and equally, in this case, the indecision over "true") arises, of course, from a further indecision: viz., that which we should feel when confronted with such questions as "should we count a point of green light as extended or not?" As is frequent enough in such cases, the hesitation arises from the fact that the boundaries of application of words are not determined by usage in all possible directions. But the example Quine has chosen is particularly unfortunate for his thesis, in that it is only too evident that our hesitations are not here attributable to obscurities in "analytic."[31]

Grice and Strawson try to show that Quine has problem with analyticity like when we say "Everything green is extended" is analytic. But even if we do not talk about analytic, we can talk about such statements meaningfully, as "Everything green is extended" is a meaningful sentence. Here "extended" constitutes a part of meaning of "Green." Thus, Quine's Socratic assumption that it must rest on the non-cognate concepts or legitimacy of concepts, appears to be unreasonable and unmotivated. The fact that analytic does not meet that requirement does not

[31] Ibid., p. 153.

establish that it is unintelligible, no more than the failure to refer to "red," "green," and so on, the unintelligibility of our color concepts. Quine fails to explain why analyticity and its cognate concepts are unintelligible.

Putnam thinks that the notion of analyticity is closely related with the notion of meaning. Therefore, he finds Quine's views going against his attempts to understand the notion of meaning. Putnam argues that we can hold that there are certain stereotypes for "tiger" and these stereotypes are part of meaning for the term "tiger." Being striped is part of meaning of "tiger" but that does not follow that "tigers are striped" is analytic, because, as Putnam holds, that if mutation occurred, all tigers might be albinos. Putnam says,

> Communication presupposes that I have a stereotype of tigers which includes stripes, and that you have a stereotype of tigers which includes stripes, and that I know that your stereotype includes stripes, and that you know that my stereotype includes stripes, and that you know that I know ... (and so on, a la Grice, forever). But it does not presuppose that any particular stereotype be *correct*, or that the majority of our stereotypes remain correct forever. Linguistic obligatoriness is not supposed to be an index of unrevisability or even of truth; thus we can hold that 'tigers are striped' is part of meaning of 'tiger' without being trapped in the problems of analyticity.[32]

So, a stereotype attached to any term plays a significant role in communication. One needs to have a stereotype of an object to tell the meaning of that term in order to identify the object referred to by the term. We acquire some more information as we acquire the word 'tiger' to enrich our vocabulary. When speakers acquire a word 'tiger' they acquire stereotype such as 'big-cat-like', 'black stripped' etc., and when speakers teach other the use of word 'tiger', they teach with stereotype attached to that term. And further it is an obligation of learner to follow the same procedure. And Putnam says,

> Information about the minimum skills required for entry into the linguistic community is significant information; no circularity of the kind Quine criticized appears here.[33]

[32] Putnam (1975b), p. 256.
[33] Ibid., p. 257.

In the first section of this chapter we have discussed why Putnam argues that analyticity of a trivial kind is useful in our linguistic domain. He emphasizes on fixing the meaning of some words to initiate communication, otherwise we can never start discussion of any kind. Though he agreed with Quine in rejection of analyticity as traditionally understood by philosophers, but at the same time he is aware of its usefulness in linguistic behavior.

Now we shall turn to Putnam's reaction to Davidson's semantic theory of natural language where he argues for his theory of meaning in terms of truth definition for a natural language. Davidson prioritizes sentence-meaning over word-meaning in natural language. For, Davidson's contention is that even words are short sentences, like the word 'snow' is equivalent to 'that is snow'. Putnam notes that Davidson's suggestion involves a set of rules specifying:

1. Under what conditions each word under what conditions that word is true of something (for words for which the concept of an extension makes sense; all other words are to be treated as syncategorematic);

2. For sentences longer than a single word, a rule is given specifying the conditions under which the sentence is true as a function of the way it is built up out of shorter sentences.[34]

Putnam agrees with Davidson that definitely such rules can give meaning of some words and structures. But he raises a question, "what reason is there to think that the meaning of most words can be given in this way, let alone all?"[35] Now the difficulty, Putnam argues, is that there are words for which truth definitions can be given, but which is in no sense a theory of meaning of a word. For example, *'water' is true of x if and only if x is* H_2O. Putnam further explains that most of the speakers do not know that water is H_2O. It means they do not know the meaning of the word water. Putnam says,

[34] Ibid., p. 259.
[35] Ibid.

> It might be of interest to a chemist, but it doesn't count as a theory of the meaning of the term 'water'. Or, it counts as a theory of the *extension* of the term 'water', but Davidson is promising more than just that.[36]

Davidson was well aware of the difficulty raised by Putnam. He answers it in a way by proposing that we need to develop a theory of translation. Putnam argues, theory of truth of sentences could be incompatible with theory of translation, simultaneously. If Davidson is right, then the truth definition for 'water' as H_2O could be unacceptable, for it is not good for the translation of x is water (in a prescientific community), even if water = H_2O happens to be true.

Putnam argues that Davidson's truth definition for sentence constrained by theory of translation cannot be a theory of meaning. Even in the case of sentence connected with 'and', 'or' etc., the meaning of the truth functional connectives can be given by the stereotype connected with them. Putnam writes,

> . . . Davidson certainly made an important contribution in pointing out that linguistics has to deal with inductively specified truth conditions. But in the great majority of words, the requirements of a theory of truth and the requirements of a theory of meaning are mutually incompatible, at least in the English-English case. But the English-English case – the case in which we try to provide a significant theory of the meaning of English words which is itself couched in English – surely the basic one.[37]

Putnam points out that what Davidson thinks as a theory of meaning, in any serious sense of the term, cannot be a theory of meaning at all rather it seems to be a theory of translation. Davidson's idea that 'water' is true of x if and only if x is water is the only possible theory of meaning, then he seems to be mistaken about the notion of word meaning. Putnam apprehends,

> . . . if Davidson's 'theory' is just Quinine skepticism under the disguise of a positive contribution to the study of meaning, then it is bitter pill to swallow.[38]

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., p. 260.
[38] Ibid., p. 262.

Davidson has shown that the meaning of any sentence is the truth condition about state of affairs the sentence refers to. It means whatever is true of any word or sentence is the meaning of that term or sentence. One can say, in Davidsonian sense, meaning is connected with truth or truth is with meaning. Though, Putnam does not accept such relation between meaning and truth rather he talks about meaning of a word, in general, which may have no relation with truth. Putnam notes,

> It is noteworthy that the procedure that Quine and Davidson claim is the only *possible* one – going from whole sentences to individual words – is the *opposite* of the procedure upon which every success ever attained in the study of natural language has been based.[39]

Now we shall focus on Putnam's idea about the notion of truth and meaning. Putnam's idea of meaning of a word is stereotype attached to a word - conceived as a minimum amount of information associated with words. For Putnam, notion of meaning is not directly related to the notion of truth and reference, as in the other theories have been conceived. Putnam says,

> The notions of truth and reference may be of great importance in explaining the relation of language to the world without being as central to meaning theory (in sense of understanding-of-language theory) as they are in, for example, theories that *equate* understanding with knowledge of truth conditions.[40]

Putnam argues that those who believe that understanding language is to be explained as knowing its truth conditions. It means understanding presupposes implicit truth condition for that statement in a given language. This theory leads to say that truth is prior to meaning, which Putnam does not accept. Putnam holds,

> . . . one does not need to *know* that there is a correspondence between words and extra-linguistic entities to learn one's language. But there is such a correspondence none the less, and it explains the *success* of what one is doing. *After* one has learned one's language one can talk about *anything* – including the correspondence in question.[41]

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Putnam (1978), p. 100.
[41] Ibid., p. 111.

It is explained that the correspondence of a word is not primarily fixed by meaning of a word – stereotype associated with word, reference of a word is fixed by experts using criteria that are not 'part of the meaning' in any sense. The stereotype associated with word is worthless for fixing the extension. Putnam says,

> *Language is not only used to verify and falsify and classify*; it is also used to *discuss*. The existence of standardized stereotypes, and hence of meaning, is a necessity for *discussion*, not for classification.[42]

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have tried to show that, according to Putnam, rejection of analyticity by Quine is not well explained. Though, Quine's arguments regarding the misuse of analytic statements are mostly correct. But Quine could not show why we need to abandon the analyticity itself. Grice and Strawson also argued for analytic statements to be saved, but Putnam says that though Grice and Strawson argue for analytic statements, they could not offer adequate reasons why they ought to be retained. For Quine, analytic statements are based on circular definition and hence they are not well explained. Quine's rejection of analytic statements also has broader implications for a theory of meaning. He shows his apprehension as to whether any theory of meaning is possible. This problem has led Quine to be skeptic about the possibility of a theory of meaning. Putnam argues for the saving of analytic statements, but only from the perspective of linguistic which helps us in communication. Putnam gives reasons for analyticity of trivial kind in order to save fixity of meaning of some words for initiating the discussion.

Then we took Davidson in order to see what his theory of meaning and truth is. We have seen that he argues that theory of meaning is at the same time a theory of truth. For Davidson, truth condition for any sentence is the meaning of that sentence. Putnam does not accept such view of the theory of meaning. He says that there is no relation between meaning and truth of a word or sentence. According to Putnam we can talk of meaning of a word without knowing what

[42] Ibid., p. 116.

its truth condition is. But he also cautions that it does not mean that words and sentences do not have their reference and truth.

Finally we can say that Putnam has convincing arguments to save the analytic statements as well as theory of meaning from the attack of Quine. He also has convincing arguments to establish a theory of meaning which is free from truth and reference as opposed to Davidson. Putnam successfully reverses the relationship between sentence meaning and word meaning, claiming the priority of word meaning over sentence meaning. And he runs the opposite but not completely divergent journey from Quine and Davidson for a theory of meaning.

Conclusion

After examining the notions of meaning, truth and reality in the context of Putnam's philosophy of language, we would like to sum up our findings regarding his approach to these notions. What were the compelling factors, for Putnam, to opt for internal realism and semantic externalism in order to understand the notions of reality and meaning respectively? Which philosophers have been influencing factors in order to shape his thoughts in a particular way regarding the notions in question? And finally whether his arguments are cogent enough to make his position tenable as opposed to the available counter theories?

Putnam started his career as a philosopher in the 1950s when logical positivist movement was on its full swing; almost in every field of philosophy logical positivism was a determining factor. As we know logical positivism holds on to verificationist principle according to which any field of research is meaningful if its statements are experientially verifiable. It also tried to apply methods of science in philosophy. Putnam was not happy with the positivists. Positivism had excluded realism as a viable philosophical position, which Putnam wants to bring back into the philosophical discourse. First, Putnam was inclined towards metaphysical realism which he sometimes called scientific realism, due to its ability to explain the success of science. Thus, the main motivation for dissatisfaction of Putnam with verificationists is their rejection of realism, because verificationism, due to its rejection of realism, fails to explain the success of science. If truth is based on verification of sentence alone and not on some correspondence to things in the world, then the immense success that science has achieved in explanation and prediction would be mere a miracle. But having after adopted metaphysical realism he realizes that it also fails to explain the success of science. Putnam writes,

> My own view is that the success of science cannot be anything but a puzzle as long as we view concepts and objects as radically independent; that as long as we think of 'the world' as

an entity that has a fixed nature, determined once and for all, independently of our framework of concepts . . . [1]

Further he was attracted to pragmatism, which was celebrated in America in the early 1900. Pragmatism also has an anti-metaphysical spirit. C.S. Peirce says that the meaning of an 'intellectual conception' is identical with the 'sum' of its 'practical consequences', since, he believes that this is the idea that forms the basic proposition for his philosophy. The thrust of pragmatism is its fallibilism, which is the idea that in spite of finding a final solution to a question, fresh evidences may alter or bring change to our views about the question. Putnam was impressed by its fallibilism because it makes space for being mistaken and for further advancement. So pragmatism by its very nature embraces philosophy as a human endeavour exercised in a community and that is what appeals to Putnam.

Though Putnam was influenced by these two doctrines of philosophy and to a great extent they shaped his ideas in philosophy, he never adhered himself completely to any of these two principles. He distances himself from complete acceptance or rejection of anyone of these two strands which shaped his mind. He criticizes positivists' operationalism where philosophy is reduced to a study of language and technicalities of science. And he also criticizes pragmatism's approach that we make up the world. Thus, this gradual evolution of ideas within his framework of philosophy is best introduced by Putnam,

> . . . what I just described as 'changing my mind' is not a matter of 'conversion' from one view to another; it is rather a matter of being torn between opposing views of the nature of philosophy itself. When I was a scientific realist I felt deeply trouble by difficulties with scientific realism; having given up scientific realism, I am still tremendously aware of what is appealing about the scientific realist conception of philosophy. I hope that the present book at least partly reveals this 'being torn'. [2]

So, development of Putnam's position is not a convergence because convergence is often understood as a new beginning whereas evolution marks changes within a continuous frame. It is

[1] Putnam (1990), p. xx.
[2] Putnam (1988), p. xii.

the gradual evolution rather than convergence of his position that marks the trajectory of his philosophical development. Therefore, while a metaphysical realist is able only to explain the success of so-called *hard sciences* like physics. Putnam's internal realism accommodates all human sciences within its range. Though, it should be noted that he has changed his position from internal realism to direct realism to strengthen his philosophical position. This new trajectory has not been taken up for discussion here due to certain limitations of our project. According to Putnam this direct realism is not outrightly contrary to internal realism.

Now we shall focus on the notion of meaning, truth and reality. By now it is amply clear that these three notions are interconnected. Notion of meaning explains how a word is related with the object. Notion of reality tells us the way language takes up reality to portray. Notion of reality, within a language, already has a kind of metaphysics of the world at hand which language tends to express. Once we agree to the notion of reality, we can proceed to the notion of meaning, because for Putnam, notion of meaning has a reality involving character. Notion of meaning does not directly have any metaphysical commitment but depends on the notion of reality a language has. Once we accept a kind of realism, the notion of truth has the only job of telling whether any given sentence is according to the fact or not.

Putnam's notion of meaning focuses on the natural kind terms in a way Kripke has talked about proper names. Putnam advances his theory of meaning against the traditional theories of meaning which he finds full of discrepancies. From Plato to positivists, philosophers have thought that meaning of a term is an intension or group of properties which determine or fix the reference of the words. Frege thinks that meaning is an abstract entity which is independent of one's mind. Traditional theory of meaning in its nature has difficulty of explaining how intension can fix the reference which is independent of any one's mind. Putnam highlights two unchallenged assumptions which were taken up by traditional theory of meaning: one is that knowing the meaning of a term is just being in a certain psychological state and second is that the meaning of a term determines its extension. These two assumptions jointly cannot be satisfied by any notion of meaning. Putnam rightly picks out the underlying assumption of traditional theory of meaning holding on to which, according to Putnam, is basically flawed. For, if it is true that meaning is an intension and grasping the meaning consists in being in a particular psychological

state, then it is a methodological solipsism according to which no psychological state presupposes the existence of any individual other than the subject to whom the state is ascribed.[3]

Putnam shows this by the Twin Earth thought experiment that people on different planets can be in the same mental state when they utter the term "water" but they refer to different substances in their planet. Putnam is exactly right by pointing out that two different things may have same intension but different extension. This is best explained by Putnam by introducing the examples of "elm" and "beech" tree, "aluminium" and "molybdenum" and "water" on different planets. It is also because when we use words we always mean something non-linguistic entity which the word is used for. And using a language to mean something other than its linguistic expression becomes public affair because language is a collective enterprise not an individual accomplishment. At this juncture Putnam privileges reference of a term over that of a sentence as a main component in fixing the meaning. This brought forth a big shift from internalism to externalism in the semantic theory. Reference is determined by collective linguistic endeavour of human beings. So Putnam rightly rejected the view that meaning is in the head.

Putnam uses the causal theory of meaning for fixing the reference of a term. For this reference fixing mechanism, he sufficiently deploys the concept of division of linguistic labour, environmental factor and indexicality. These three factors which we have discussed in the first chapter suffice for the notion of meaning. Division of linguistic labour excludes determination of meaning by individual and introduces collective enterprise, and thus helps in escaping from methodological solipsism. Indexical element is derived from the work of Kripke, brings in directly the object in question referred by a word.

The basic question is how in our ordinary practice we get to know the objects, if we do not have concepts regarding different terms? Putnam's answer is adequate that we have concepts or properties attached to the words which help in fixing the reference. Often they are necessary criteria to be there to identify the object referred by a term, but mostly they are weak and cannot necessarily uniquely pick out the object. These concepts are stereotypes, for Putnam, connected

[3] Putnam (1975), p. 220.

to the terms. For example tiger has a stereotype as a four footed animal, fierce, feline, black stripped and flesh eating animal but if any tiger loses its one leg but it is still a tiger. What is important with stereotype is that they help in ordinary practice of individuating an object. A charge against Putnam that his division of linguistic labour is compatible with meaning being relativized to present day science, speaker and time is not fair because meaning, for Putnam, does not change as our science grows more and more complex; it only discovers more knowledge about the term but meaning remains the same due to its reality involving character through indexical element. Putnam's position regarding meaning seems tenable and well substantiated. It has also brought a revolution into the semantic theory by bringing the collective participation in determining the reference.

Internal realism is a revolt against metaphysical realism and its belief in overpowering human capacity. Putnam argues that metaphysical realism fails to explain the notion of reference and truth. Accepting metaphysical realism and claiming that our concepts refer to the objects is certainly bound to an acceptance of a magical theory of reference. We cannot know how our words come in a certain connection with the objects which are free from our cognitive access. Furthermore metaphysical realism leads to global skepticism into picture. Putnam's argument is absolutely correct that it is not the problem of our epistemology that we are unable to have clear knowledge free from the possibility of being deceived, rather it is the difficulty brought in by a certain metaphysical project we have embraced. In the history of philosophy, philosophers did not pay attention to this inherent problem of our metaphysics and tried to solve problem in epistemology. Of course, their endeavours were to be in vain. They could not achieve any solution to that problem.

Putnam embraces a version of realism which prevents the deep bifurcation of word and object, it is a realism within a conceptual scheme, conceptual scheme which helps in evolving the world into pieces, like river, tree, man and so on. Only within such a scheme we can talk of reference. It is certainly possible to talk of reference and truth in internal realistic framework. What internal realism claims is that there is no deep dichotomy between word and object. It claims that the world does not have any reality from God's eye point of view but it is what our words are about. Putnam's position has been misconstrued by several philosophers and they have

labelled him as a constructivist. But it is not the case, conceptual scheme does have objective constraints on it.

Putnam is highly influenced by Kant, he derives his internal realism form Kant's phenomenal world but criticizes him for his acceptance of noumenal world, which for Kant is out of reach from our cognitive capacity. What Kant accepts as a phenomenal experience Putnam accepts it as a real experience, because it is the only experience we have. We cannot claim about that which we, in principle, cannot know. He also denounces Kant's idea of one and universal conceptual scheme; rather he accepts the possibility of many conceptual schemes. Conceptual relativity creates some confusion among philosophers and led some to believe that he is a pluralist about reality as Thomas Kuhn believes that there are many worlds. Putnam is against any sort of relativism. It is clear that he is not a relativist. Conceptual relativity does not permit relativity because as Putnam says that all conceptual schemes have the same underlying reality. It seems that conceptual scheme which introduces the objects objectively is only in a sense that we possess a capacity to use our concepts correctly in a referential sense not that our concepts give them any inherent meaning.

Realism about the world has to be understood by imposing concepts on them and only in this way we are able to refer correctly. So, we need to understand internal realism only in this sense. And of course, it is a realism because we succeed in predicting certain things about the world and our actions are successful regarding the world and human beings. Accepting internal realism also saves us from global skepticism. Internal realism brings back hope for human beings to cognize the reality and allows us to predict human behaviour and things in the world.

Putnam argues against Quine for his rejection of analyticity of any kind. Putnam envisages the use of analyticity in its linguistic sense which helps us to initiate the talk of word meaning. He tries to save analyticity of a trivial kind. Putnam agrees with Quine that there is no such analyticity which we can use for philosophical purposes. But there is an analyticity inherent in linguistic use. What appeals about Putnam's argument about analyticity is that to discus about linguistic meaning we have to accept some fixed points otherwise we cannot proceed in our discussion. Putnam is right to accept the use of linguistic analyticity as opposed to Quine who is

ready to abandon analyticity of any kind. Quine's rejection of analyticity also implicates a theory of meaning; he becomes skeptic about the possibility of any kind of theory of meaning, which again is rejected by Putnam.

Davidson, according to Putnam, is wrong to portray theory of meaning in terms of meaning of a sentence, word meaning being parasitic upon sentence meaning. Davidson also says that meaning of any sentence is its truth-condition. If we know the truth-condition that a sentence has then we would know the meaning of that sentence. Putnam argues diametrically opposite to Davidson by emphasizing that we can talk about the meaning of words or sentence without knowing its truth conditions. Putnam also prioritizes the word meaning over sentence meaning as against Davidson. According to him, until and unless words are true of certain things we cannot use them in a sentence to produce certain meaning. Now meaning of words are free from knowing their truth-conditions, but that does not mean that words do not have their reference. But using the words at appropriate situation is different thing from knowing their meaning which does not involve reference. For example, we can discuss that the word "water" means tasteless, transparent, thirst quenching without necessarily able to fix its reference. These stereotypes help fixing reference but do not involve reference itself. Reference is not an individual's task, it is a collective responsibility. So it is obvious that there is no relation between truth and meaning.

Now we can summarize Putnam's position by putting his stands in a nutshell:

- Putnam is an externalist about meaning as opposed to an internalistic account of it.
- Reference is not determined by individual but through collective linguistic enterprise.
- Meaning is not relativized to present day science, speaker and time.
- His internal realism is neither objectivism nor relativism but it is realism within a conceptual scheme.
- His realism is a realism with a human face.
- He is not opposed to analyticity of any kind rather he saves analyticity of linguistic usefulness.
- For him, there is no explicit relation between meaning and truth.

A study of Putnam's philosophy of language brings us humanistic understanding of the world against the obsessiveness of metaphysics which is beyond our cognitive reach. It brings hope for us by putting suspension to the cease of human cognitive capacity and also any final understanding (meaning of natural kind terms) of the things. It helps us to predict certain things in the world which further help to run our life. And fallibilistic element in our understanding of the world and human affair lies in our continuous grasp and advancement of knowledge, it is not similar to 'no knowledge of the world.'

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