In philosophizing, I have to bring my own language and life into imagination. What I require is a convening of my culture's criteria, in order to confront them with my words and life as I pursue them and as I may imagine them; and at the same time to confront my words and life as I pursue them with the life my culture's words may imagine for me: to confront the culture with itself, along the lines in which it meets in me.

Stanley Cavell

Words and Life

Hilary Putnam

Edited by James Conant

Introduction by James Conant

Any philosophy that can be put in a nutshell belongs in one.

Hilary Putnam

In a number of the essays in this volume, the author discourages us from taking a certain view of his thought. He says that what he is offering should not be taken for a philosophical *theory* in the traditional sense. He is not setting forth a *position,* but attempting to sketch a *picture* (sometimes one he deplores, sometimes one he recommends as a corrective to some coercive alternative picture); and he has some things to say about what pictures are and how to use and abuse them. He also goes out of his way, at various points, to explain what he now finds misleading about this or that label he has in the past applied to his own views, saying that he has now discarded the label because he no longer wishes to invite the impression (which the label made irresistible) that his rejection of one philosophical thesis was meant to imply his endorsement of its traditional antithesis.

Even if the reader were eager to conclude that the author is quite mistaken about all this—that he is as deep in questionable theses and theories as he ever was—the reader would still be hard put to conclude that the essays here all form part of a single system. Not only were they written at different times and for very different occasions,[1] but often one essay will devote itself to tearing out individual pieces from the overall puzzle that another happily assumes still remain firmly in place. Thus some essays clearly represent earlier, and others later, way stations along a single winding journey of thought.

Having thus cautioned the reader not to expect from this introduction an overview of the author's system, I will now proceed to proffer a handful of nutshells, each of which affords (I hope) some glimpse of—but none of which contains—the philosophy of Hilary Putnam.

Putnam and Baudelaire

> I have tried more than once to lock myself inside a system, so as to be able to pontificate as I liked. But a system is a kind of damnation that condemns us to perpetual backsliding; we are always having to invent another, and this form of fatigue is a cruel punishment. And every time, my system was beautiful, big, spacious, convenient, tidy and polished above all; at least so it seemed to me. And every time, some spontaneous unexpected product of universal vitality would come and give the lie to my puerile and old-fashioned wisdom . . . Under the threat of being constantly humiliated by another conversion, I took a big decision. To escape from the horror of these philosophical apostasies, I arrogantly resigned myself to modesty; I became content to feel; I came back and sought sanctuary in impeccable naïveté. I humbly beg pardon of academics of every kind . . . for only there has my philosophic conscience found rest.
>
> Charles Baudelaire, "The Universal Exhibition of 1855"

In recent years, Putnam appears to have taken "a big decision"—not unlike the one Baudelaire reports himself as having taken, and for not altogether dissimilar reasons. Putnam has become increasingly disenchanted with putting forward new philosophical "positions" of his own (or revamping ones to which he was previously committed), and increasingly concerned with articulating his dissatisfactions with the prevailing forms of orthodoxy in Anglo-American philosophy (some of which he himself was instrumental in ushering on to the scene). Investigating the sources of these dissatisfactions has become an abiding preoccupation of his recent work. But this preoccupation has, in turn, led to a more positive and constructive concern—a concern not only with the structure and history of the philosophical controversies which he himself has participated in, but also, more generally, with the nature of philosophical controversy *überhaupt:* with what fuels it and with what might allow it to attain and confer satisfaction. This shift in the focus of his work has only gradually become fully explicit and self-conscious. The shift is reflected in a change in the tone of his work: from the authoritative tone of someone explaining the solution to an outstanding problem (functionalism, the causal theory of reference, and so forth) to the unhurried tone of someone who is concerned above all to convey an appreciation of the *difficulty* of the problems. The change in philosophical voice is from that of someone who is excited to be able to announce that we are on the verge of a revolution (in our thinking about the nature of mind or language or whatever) to that of someone who has become distrustful of such an-

nouncements and impressed with how—to paraphrase one of Putnam's heroes[2]—those who are unfamiliar with the history of a problem (even its *recent* history) are condemned to repeat that history.

None of the essays in the present volume begins by announcing a solution to a long-standing philosophical problem. This is not to say that Putnam has come to despair of the possibility of making progress in philosophy. But his conception of the form in which he himself is able to contribute to the achievement of such progress has evidently undergone some transformation. Several of the essays in this volume begin with a historical prelude (often in order to illustrate how a popular contemporary "solution" to a philosophical problem is a disguised version of a much older proposal).[3] Some of the essays begin on an autobiographical note (tracing the development perhaps of Putnam's own present, usually ambivalent, attitude to a particular philosophical school, author, or doctrine).[4] Some of them begin with a dialectical overview of a philosophical controversy (often in order to try to bring out how the crucial presuppositions are ones which both parties to the dispute share).[5] The proximate goal of these essays therefore is not to attempt to have the last word about a philosophical problem, but rather to give the reader a sense of the *shape* and the *depth* of the problem—of how, for example, in a particular philosophical dispute, thesis and counter-thesis bear one another's stamp and how each of the pair comes with its own false bottom, hiding the true dimensions of the problem from view.

The opening remarks of Putnam's most recent work suggest he has come to see in stretches of the history of philosophy a version of Baudelaire's vision of a kind of damnation that condemns one to perpetual backsliding:

> The besetting sin of philosophers seems to be throwing the baby out with the bathwater. From the beginning each "new wave" of philosophers has simply ignored the insights of the previous wave in the course of advancing its own . . . I want to urge that we attempt to understand, and to the extent that it is humanly possible overcome, the pattern of "recoil" that causes philosophy to leap from frying pan to fire, from fire to a different frying pan, from different frying pan to a different fire, and so on apparently without end.[6]

The essays collected in the present volume should be read as addi-

tional piecemeal contributions to such a project of attempting to understand—and, to the extent that it is humanly possible, overcome—this characteristically philosophical oscillation from one source of excessive heat to another.

Many of the essays in the present volume offer criticisms (and, in some cases, official recantations) of views that Putnam himself has previously held. Indeed, in many cases, what is under indictment is a philosophical view which not only continues to be widely associated with Putnam's name (generally because he either originated or helped to originate it), but which also continues to exert considerable influence within analytic philosophy. Every essay here seeks in some way to bring into sharper focus an "unexpected product of universal vitality" whose existence "gives the lie" to some piece of wisdom to which Putnam himself was previously strongly attracted. Thus, if there is a single over-arching doctrine—a single teaching which underlies every essay here—it would seem to be that one's ability to make progress in philosophy depends, above all, on one's continuing willingness to reexamine the grounds of one's philosophical convictions.

The parallel between Putnam's (most recent) metamorphosis and the one which Baudelaire reports extends not only to the resolve no longer to lock oneself inside a system, but also to the resolve arrogantly to resign oneself to modesty and return to "sanctuary in impeccable naïveté." In Chapter 14, "Realism without Absolutes," Putnam formulates the problem which that essay seeks to address in the following terms: "The difficulty is in seeing how such a move in the direction of deliberate 'naiveté' can possibly help after three centuries of modern philosophy, not to mention a century of brain science and now cognitive science. The problem now is to *show the possibility* of a return to what I called 'deliberate naiveté' . . . it seems to me that that is the direction in which we need to go." Putnam is here describing a philosophical move which he finds in Wittgenstein and which he himself wishes to emulate. It is, he says, a move which seeks to head off our tendency, when philosophizing, to repudiate our ordinary ways of talking and thinking ("we can't actually *see* physical objects, all we really see are appearances"), and to restore our conviction in such ways of thinking and talking.

Before we further explore what is involved in cultivating such a "deliberate naiveté" in philosophy, we need some further sense of the nature of Putnam's dissatisfaction with traditional forms of philosophical sophistication; and we might as well begin at the beginning.

Aristotle *after* Wittgenstein?

I never thought that Anaxagoras, who said that such things were directed by the Mind, would bring in any other cause for them . . . This wonderful hope was dashed as I went on reading and saw that the man made no use of Mind, nor gave it any responsibility for the management of things, but mentioned as causes air and ether and water and many other strange things. That seemed to me much like saying that Socrates's actions are all due to his mind, and then in trying to tell the causes of everything I do, to say that the reason I am sitting here is because my body consists of bones and sinews . . . If someone said that without bones and sinews and all such things, I should not be able to do what I decided, he would be right, but surely to say that they are the cause of what I do, and not that I have chosen the best course, even though I act with my mind, is to speak very lazily and carelessly. Imagine not being able to distinguish the true cause from that without which the cause would not be able to act as a cause!

Socrates, *Phaedo*

Some problems won't go away. The topic of Socrates' quarrel with Anaxagoras—whether when "I act with my mind" the true cause is something in my body—is one such problem. It recurs in the pages that follow in a number of guises, perhaps most provocatively in the guise of a quarrel between Aristotle and contemporary cognitive science—a quarrel in which Putnam always awards the last word to Aristotle.

The opening essay of this volume begins with the question whether the subject of Aristotle's *De Anima,* the *psyche,* is to be identified with what we now call "the mind." Here is how Putnam explains the motive behind this sudden departure on his part into matters of classical philology:

In this century people talk as if the mind is almost a self-evident idea. It is as if the phenomena themselves required us to classify them as mental or physical in the way we do. Yet the present notion [of mind] is not very old, or at least its hegemony is not very old. The words *mind* and *soul,* or their classical ancestors, the Latin *mens* and the Greek *psyche,* are of course old. The habit of identifying notions which are actually quite different leads us to think that therefore the present notion of the mind must be equally old, but nothing could be more false . . . My hope is that whatever our interest in the mind—whether as philosophers or as psychologists or as "cognitive scientists" or just as curious and puzzled human beings—we may find that this bit of intellectual history may also have the benefit of making

of thinking about our "mental phenomena" seem less

...goes on to argue that nothing in Aristotle's thought corre-...nds to "the mind." Aristotle's notion of *psyche* is considerably ...more comprehensive, and his notion of *nous* much narrower, than the ...modern notion of mind. *Psyche* is the "form" (which Putnam para-phrases, somewhat controversially, as the "functional organization") ...of the whole living human organism (encompassing digestion and re-production, as well as desire and thought); while *nous* is an exclu-sively intellectual faculty (which Putnam paraphrases, less controver-sially, as "reason") which does not encompass either sensation or desire. Putnam's preoccupation with these matters derives from his interest in wanting to show that the mind/body problem is of rela-tively recent vintage. Hence the significance he attaches to the follow-ing observation: "One can generate questions about how *nous* is re-lated to body, how *psyche* is related to body, and so on, within the Aristotelian system; and Aristotle says things about those questions (for example, he says 'active *nous*' is separable from body but the *psy-che* as a whole is not), but one cannot find the modern 'mind/body problem.'"

One of the aims of the essay as a whole is to argue that "each pre-vious period in the history of Western thought had a quite different idea of what such a term as 'mind' or 'soul' might stand for, and a correspondingly different idea of what the puzzles were that we should be trying to solve." Thus, along the same lines, Putnam goes on to develop a claim about the relation between our contemporary views and those of Thomas Aquinas, this time focusing on the ques-tion where to locate the faculty of *memory*. Here, too, Putnam argues that we tend to read our contemporary conceptions back into our pre-decessors. We read the idea that memory is a mental faculty back into earlier writers because "it has come to seem such a central function of the mind to us." To us it seems simply *obvious* that memories are in the mind. Whereas, Putnam claims, Aquinas's view was that—unless they happened to be in the process of being actively recalled—it was obvious that memories were in the body (that is, the brain). This fact—that the answer to this question seemed as obvious to Aquinas as it now does to us—helps prepare the way for one of the conclusions of the essay: "If there is one value which a historical survey of what

has been thought on these matters can have, it is to caution us against thinking that it is obvious even what the questions are."

Putnam has an additional interest, however, in giving us a brief tour of the history of thought about (what we now call) "the mind." It is his conviction that there is not only something arbitrary and acciden-tal about our contemporary philosophical way(s) of drawing the con-tours of the realm of the mental, but also something coercive and con-fused:

> The *nous*/body distinction that Aquinas would have drawn is not at all the same as the modern mind/body distinction. Yet, when I think about it, it doesn't sound worse than the modern one! *Is it* obvious that there is something called the mind whose contents include all of my memories, whether I am actively recalling them or not, but whose functions do not include digestion and reproduction? Or are we in the grip of a picture whose origins are somewhat accidental and whose logic, once examined, is not compelling?

Putnam's claim that neither Aristotle nor Aquinas drew the modern mind/body distinction may not come as a shock, especially in light of the widely disseminated notion that it is, above all, Descartes who should get credit for first elaborating the distinction in its modern form. On one influential version of this story, Gilbert Ryle traces (in order then to criticize) what he takes to be the modern idea of mind—the idea that the mind exists in the body as a ghost in a machine—back to Descartes's conception of *res cogitans* (and of its relation to *res extensa*). Putnam, however, wishes to contest the standard ac-count in three respects, claiming (1) that the modern notion of the mind is of even more recent vintage—its origins should be traced to developments within the history of *empiricist* thought; (2) that the standard account fails to interest itself sufficiently in certain develop-ments internal to the history of the modern notion of the *body*—the reason the mind/body problem has come to seem so intractable is that the ghost has received all the blame while the machine has escaped suspicion; and (3) that the direction of progress in our thought about the relation of mind to body lies in large measure in a *return* to Aris-totle—a recovery of a moment in the history of thought prior to the rise of modern science. I will briefly review each of these claims.

Putnam suggests that the source of our contemporary puzzles about the nature of mind should in part be traced to the emergence of a

conception of mind according to which the paradigmatic mental phenomena are sensory. For Aristotle and Aquinas, it was reason *(nous)* which was most unlike body, while sensation was held to be "clearly on the side of matter and body". Descartes, according to the interpretation that Putnam favors, held that sensations were modes neither of *res cogitans* nor *res extensa,* but of that organic unity known as the human being (or, in Descartes's technical vocabulary, "the substantial union of mind and body").[7] Sensations, Descartes thought, have a dual ontological status, possessing both a corporeal and a mental aspect. In this respect, Descartes's conception appears to stand poised halfway between that of Aristotle (who locates sensation firmly within the body) and that of Hume (who locates it firmly within the mind). Putnam argues that there is a sense, nonetheless, in which Descartes should be placed squarely within "the tradition that goes back to Aristotle, the tradition of thinking of sensations as 'material.'" For the features of sensation which most preoccupied the empiricists—for example, their affinity with images—belonged for Descartes to their corporeal aspect. For Descartes, insofar as they were considered under this latter aspect, sensations were "material images in the body rather than 'mental' phenomena in the Cartesian sense" (where the term "Cartesian" is now taken by Putnam to name a conception of mind Ryle opposes rather than one Descartes espouses). Thus our contemporary philosophical conception of the mind remains in the thrall of a post-Cartesian "Cartesian" picture.

In this same essay, after reviewing some of his own earlier arguments for functionalism, Putnam writes:

What interests me when I read the writing of my former self is how obvious it seemed to me that the mind/body problem concerned, in the first instance at least, *sensations,* and how the "usual arguments for dualism" were all arguments against identifying sensations with anything physical. Nor was I alone in this impression ... Everybody "knew" the mind/body problem had to do with whether sensations were material or not. Obviously something had happened in philosophy—at least among English-speaking philosophers—between Descartes's time and ours to bring this about.

What happened? Without reviewing the steps by which Putnam arrives at his conclusion, let me jump to the end of the story. The real villains turn out to be Berkeley and Hume:

Since British empiricism virtually identified the mind with images (or "ideas" as they were called in the seventeenth century), *we* have come to think of images as paradigmatically "mental," and—unless we are materialists—as immaterial . . .

Berkeley did not think the world consisted *only* of "ideas," however . . . There were, for Berkeley, also the *subjects* of the "ideas" . . . the world consists of "Spirits and their Ideas" . . . For Hume, however, a Spirit is nothing but a bundle of Ideas . . . With Hume's step of identifying the mind with a "collection" (that ambiguous word!) of sensations and feelings and images, the transformation of the mind/body problem into what I knew it as in 1960, and into what my teachers and my teachers' teachers knew it as, was complete.

The mind/body problem has become (among English-speaking philosophers) the problem of the relation of these apparently immaterial sensations (now thought of as the paradigm of the "mental") to the physical world.

After a brief interlude of relative lucidity, English-speaking philosophy, Putnam claims, "reverted to its traditional empiricist way of conceiving mind/body issues." The reversion was due to the advent of logical positivism (and the concomitant decline of idealism and pragmatism), the interlude of lucidity to the English-speaking world's first try at assimilating Kant's philosophy. Putnam credits Kant not only with launching a powerful *ad hominem* critique of the British empiricist tradition, but also with having addressed to that tradition "the central Kantian question." Putnam's first crack at formulating this question (in Chapter 1) runs as follows: if I confine myself to the sort of description of the nature of thought which is appropriate to a scientific discipline (such as empirical psychology)—that is, if I describe the phenomena as a sequence of representations ("images or words with certain causes and effects")—then how am I to discover that I am dealing with a *rational* being ("that I am dealing with something which has truth, value, freedom, and meaning, and not just causes and effects")? Later in this volume, Putnam reformulates "the central Kantian question" as follows: how can an investigation (say, into the nature of thought) which confines itself to examining the realm of natural law—that is, the realm of entities governed by law-like relations of cause and effect—ever bring within its view the realm of freedom (the realm in which we act and think and mean what we say)?

As Putnam sees it, the crucial aspect of the shift from Aristotle's conception of *psyche* to our present conception of mind is the shift in the respective underlying conceptions of *nature*.[8] On the modern conception, the mind is anything but at home in the natural world. It has been cut adrift and is in search of some form of accommodation. The only place in the body where the mind might still seem to belong is "in the head"—somewhere between the ears—but it can also seem as if there isn't quite enough room in such cramped quarters for both it and the brain. Aristotle's conception of nature, by contrast, is one in which our mental capacities are at home—one according to which body and mind "fit" together. Thus Martha Nussbaum and Putnam (in "Changing Aristotle's Mind," Chapter 2) write: "The soul is not a thing merely housed in the body; its doings are the doings of the body. The only thing there is one natural thing . . . the soul's natural and best home is in the body . . . It is not in the body as in a prison, nor is it impeded by it from some better mode of cognition . . . The body's matter fits it, *does its actions,* through and through."

At this point, some readers may find themselves thinking: however difficult the questions may appear in their contemporary form, surely, going back to Aristotle can't be the answer. As we all know, you can't just turn back the clock. Myles Burnyeat has leveled a scholarly version of this charge against Nussbaum and Putnam.[9] Due to (what Burnyeat presumes to be) their unfamiliarity with the truly alien (and hopelessly pre-scientific) character of Aristotle's thought, Nussbaum and Putnam seem to fail to realize that Aristotle cannot help them with their dissatisfactions with contemporary philosophy of mind. In particular, according to Burnyeat, they fail to realize (1) that Aristotle cannot avail himself of the modern conception of nature; (2) that we moderns, of course, cannot do without the modern conception of nature; (3) that the modern conception of nature cannot accommodate Aristotle's conception of mind; and (4) that therefore we have no choice but to "junk" Aristotle.[10] The second essay in this volume is a response to Burnyeat. The strategy is essentially to reply (1) that a good philosophy of mind doesn't need to presuppose an up-to-date physics; (2) that thus we can accept Aristotle's views on the nature of mind without undermining our commitment to modern physics; (3) that the modern conception of nature cannot accommodate the *modern* conception of mind either; and (4) that the modern conception of mind is forced on us not by the rise of modern science, but by a phil-

osophical understanding of what science has shown us—that the modern conception of nature (which is so inhospitable to mind) is the legacy not of modern science but of modern metaphysics.

Nussbaum and Putnam do indeed differ substantially with Burnyeat over some fundamental questions in the interpretation of Aristotle.[11] They attribute the crux of their dispute with him, however, not to differences over questions of scholarship, but rather to differences over questions of metaphysics. They take Burnyeat to be a victim of an endemic form of post-scientific common sense. They enter the following remark of Burnyeat's as evidence on behalf of this claim: "To be truly Aristotelian, we would have to stop believing that the emergence of life or mind requires explanation."[12] Nussbaum and Putnam's rebuttal takes the form of suggesting that Burnyeat's sense of the inappropriateness of looking for philosophical assistance from Aristotle is forced on him by (1) his conception of what we (sophisticated moderns) should be prepared to count as a real (that is, scientifically respectable) *explanation* of the "emergence of mind"; (2) his thinking that only a post-Aristotelian physics can supply the resources for "explanations" in this freighted sense of the word; and (3) his (British empiricist) assumption "that *of course* the 'emergence of mind' (as if it were clear what that is!) requires explanation." Nussbaum and Putnam locate the virtue of Aristotle's conception precisely in its ability to make such a project of "explaining" the "emergence of mind"—the necessity of which Burnyeat is so reluctant to stop believing in—no longer seem obligatory. Aristotle, on their reading, offers us a view of our powers of mind that no longer makes it seem puzzling that such powers are natural to us. Aristotle's "solution" to the problem takes the form of trying to show us that there is no problem of the sort which we imagined. But it may be thought that Nussbaum and Putnam manage here to sidestep one charge of anachronism only to face another. For Burnyeat's charge (that their reading of Aristotle requires him to have *per impossibile* mastered the teachings of modern physics) may seem to give way to the charge that, on their reading, Aristotle must have already mastered the teachings of the later Wittgenstein. This time, however, Nussbaum and Putnam plead guilty as charged: "We suggest that Aristotle's thought really is, properly understood, the fulfillment of Wittgenstein's desire to have a 'natural history of man' . . . As Aristotelians we do not discover something behind something else, a hidden reality behind the complex unity that

we see and are. We find what we are in the appearances. And Aristotle tells us that if we attend properly to the appearances the dualist's questions never get going."

The modern conception of nature saddles us with an unbridgeable dualism of the mental and the physical, or—as Putnam tends to prefer to put it—of the intentional and the nonintentional. The response to this dualism which the essays in this volume are most concerned to criticize is the fashionable one of attempting to eradicate it by simply eliminating one of its two poles (that is, by attempting to reduce the intentional to the nonintentional). Putnam thinks that the varieties of this response currently available on the philosophical market tend simply to paper the problems over with sheafs of unfulfilled (and probably unfulfillable) promissory notes.[13] (Hence his enthusiasm for John Dewey's quip that the old soul/body or mind/body dualism still survives in a scientific age as a dualism between "the brain and the rest of the body.")[14] Philosophical reductionists tend to rush on to the stage promising to make the mind disappear by dissolving it in matter—by bringing it within the fold of (what Putnam, following McDowell, calls) "disenchanted nature"—but, at the end of the performance, we're left staring at the same props that were sitting on the stage at the outset.

Putnam sees the two most popular current trends in the philosophy of mind—reductionism and eliminativism—as instances of the characteristic way in which modern philosophy attempts to bridge a dualism by overcoming the appearance of a gulf.[15] Nussbaum and Putnam propose an alternative to these trends which they call "an Aristotelian attitude" to the problems:

When the computer revolution burst upon the world, it was widely expected that computer models would clear up the nature of the various sorts of "intentional" phenomena. In effect, people expected that a reductive account of the various subheadings included under the chapter heading "intentionality" would sooner or later be given. Now that this has not proved so easy, some thinkers . . . are beginning to suggest that it is not so bad if this can't be done; intentionality is only a feature of "folk psychology" anyway. If a first-class scientific account of intentional facts and phenomena cannot be given, that is not because scientific reductionism is not the right line to take in metaphysics; rather it is because there is, so to speak, nothing here to reduce. The "Aristotelian" attitude, in the present context, is that both attitudes are mistaken; that intentionality won't be

reduced and won't go away . . . we can have nonreductionism and the explanatory priority of the intentional without losing that sense of the natural and organic unity of the intentional with its constitutive matter that is one of the great contributions of Aristotelian realism.

Putnam argues, later in this volume, that one source of our contemporary perplexities is our tendency to think of the mind as *inside* the head, as some kind of an *organ* with which we think. This leads to a picture in which the primary relation between mind and world is a causal one: the world first causally acts on the mind, providing it with mere (nonconceptual) sensory input, which the mind then processes into output of the appropriate (conceptualized) form. On this picture, there is always a gap between mind and world which stands in need of mediation: "this picture . . . is disastrous for just about every part of metaphysics and epistemology. The key element responsible for the disaster is the idea that there has to be an 'interface' between our conceptual powers and the external world; our conceptual powers cannot reach all the way to the objects to themselves."

Two of the chapters in this volume, "Realism without Absolutes" and "The Question of Realism," are concerned to argue for a conception of the relation of mind and world on which the appearance of such a gap—and hence the need for some mediating interface—need not arise in the first place. The first of these papers urges a philosophy of mind and language which does not leave us uncomfortable with the idea that the mind is not inside (or outside) the head. The essay's primary target is the assumption that "seeing an object is a two-part affair"—of which the first part occurs outside the head (as a physical interaction between the object, light rays and the eye), and the second part inside the head (as processing in the brain/mind). Part of the solution, Putnam urges, lies in seeing that the mind is implicated throughout the whole affair, and thus accommodating ourselves to a conception of mind on which "the mind is neither a material nor an immaterial organ but a system of capacities."[16] "The Question of Realism" urges a philosophy of perception and conception which does not leave us uncomfortable with the idea that our perceptual and conceptual powers "reach all the way to the objects themselves."[17] The second half of the paper takes a step in this direction by arguing against the assumption that "thinking is essentially a matter of manipulating symbols" (which have no intrinsic relation to what is outside

the head). The first half of the paper, to which I will now turn, is concerned with why some contemporary philosophers have come to believe that "representing the world as it is" is something we cannot do. It is in these pages that Putnam distances himself most from his own earlier formulations of internal realism.

A Mirage of Impotence

The great difficulty here is not to represent the matter as if there were something one *couldn't* do.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

Putnam's reasons for not wishing his arguments against a particular philosophical thesis to be construed as arguments in favor of its antithesis—his increasing reluctance to take sides in the current debates (between realists and antirealists, for example)—are perhaps most illuminatingly discussed in "The Question of Realism." The essay is in large measure a contribution to an ongoing effort on Putnam's part to distance himself from the views of Richard Rorty.

Both Putnam and Rorty have been concerned to criticize metaphysical realism on the grounds that it involves an illicit appeal to the idea that we can "stand back" from our current forms of thought and language—that we can, as Putnam was once fond of putting it, "step outside our skins"—and thereby compare our thought and language with the world (seen "from a God's-eye point of view") in order to ascertain whether the former adequately "represents" the latter. We should instead, Putnam has written, "accept the position we are fated to occupy":[18] one of being unable to "stand back" from our thought and language. This way of putting the matter encourages the idea that what we need to do is resign ourselves to our inability to surpass some limit (imposed on us by the nature of our thought or our language or our "practices")—a limit which metaphysical realism misguidedly imagines we can surpass. Thus Putnam has endeared himself to Rorty (and others) with pronouncements such as the following: "The important thing, it seems to me, is to find a picture that enables us to make sense of the phenomena from within our world and practice, rather than to seek a God's-eye view."[19]

Given his enthusiasm for such pronouncements (which can be found throughout Putnam's work), Rorty professes himself to "have long been puzzled" by what keeps him and Putnam apart. In a recent

article (which is devoted to identifying the points at which he and Putnam diverge),[20] Rorty begins by listing—in the form of passages drawn from Putnam's work—five points on which he "wholeheartedly concurs with Putnam." Here, by way of a sample, are the first two passages which Rorty cites:

> (1) Elements of what we call "language" or "mind" penetrate so deeply into what we call "reality" that the very project of representing ourselves as being "mappers of something language-independent" is fatally compromised from the start. Like Relativism, but in a different way, Realism is *an impossible attempt* to view the world from Nowhere [my emphasis].[21]

> (2) [We should] accept the position we are fated to occupy in any case, the position of beings who *cannot have a view of the world* that does not reflect our interests and values, but who are, for all that, committed to regarding some views of the world—and, for that matter, some interests and values—as better than others [my emphasis].[22]

I have drawn attention to the idea, present in each of these passages, that the flaw in metaphysical realism lies in its attempting to do something "impossible"—in its striving after "a view of the world" which "we cannot have." Since Putnam is no longer fully able to concur with himself on either of these points (with which Rorty wholeheartedly concurs), he is able to locate the point at which he first begins to diverge from Rorty at an earlier juncture than Rorty himself does.

Putnam himself was formerly quite happy to express his rejection of metaphysical realism in terms of the idea that we run up against a certain kind of limit beyond which thought or language is unable to carry us—in terms therefore of an impossibility claim, a claim to the effect that there is something we *cannot* do. We cannot view the world in *this* way. Putnam formulates the putative impossibility in "The Question of Realism" as follows: It is impossible to stand outside our thought and language and compare our thought and language, on the one hand, with the world, on the other. This formulation seems to invite us to consider a particular possibility (viewing the world in this way, rather than some other way) and to conclude that *that* is something that cannot happen.

Putnam now wishes to identify this way of expressing one's rejection of metaphysical realism as already succumbing to the decisive move in the philosophical conjuring trick. Rorty's skepticism about

the possibility of representation is a result of his failure to ponder what is at issue in his own talk of "impossibility":

> I think the trouble . . . comes when one does not properly explore the sort of "impossibility" which is at issue when one concludes—with Rorty—that such a guarantee is indeed impossible. What I want to emphasize is that Rorty moves from a conclusion about the unintelligibility of metaphysical realism (we cannot have a guarantee—of a sort that doesn't even make sense—that our words represent things outside of themselves) to a skepticism about the possibility of representation *tout court.* We are left with the conclusion that there is no metaphysically innocent way to say that our words *do* "represent things outside of themselves." Failing to inquire into the character of the unintelligibility which vitiates metaphysical realism, Rorty remains blind to the way in which his own rejection of metaphysical realism partakes of the same unintelligibility. The way in which skepticism is the flip side of a craving for an unintelligible kind of certainty (a senseless craving, one might say, but for all that a deeply human craving) has rarely been more sharply illustrated than by Rorty's complacent willingness to give up on the (platitudinous) idea that language can represent something which is outside of language.

We pass from the (metaphysical realist's) perception of us as being *able* to step outside of our skins to a perception of us as being *unable* to do so. We now see ourselves as forever sealed *within* our skins: confined, as it were, to *our* forms of language and thought. Rorty, Putnam now thinks, trades on such a sense of confinement (one which Putnam's own earlier formulations of "*internal* realism" helped to some extent to encourage).[23] This sense of confinement—of being trapped inside something (language, thought)—draws its life, Putnam now suggests, from the temptation to express the failure of metaphysical realism in terms of the idea that there is something we cannot do.

Putnam's overarching concern in "The Question of Realism" is to take issue with Rorty's claim that the collapse of metaphysical realism carries with it the moral that certain commonplace notions about representation—in particular, "the whole idea that our words and thoughts sometimes do and sometimes do not 'agree with' or 'correspond to' or 'represent' a reality outside themselves"—ought to be rejected as entirely empty.[24] The commonplace which Putnam is most concerned to rescue is the one Wittgenstein expresses as follows: "When we say, and *mean,* that such-and-such is the case, we—and

our meaning—do not stop anywhere short of the fact."[25] Rorty can hear this remark—about our words not stopping anywhere short of the fact—only in the metaphysical realist's way. Putnam sees Rorty as representative of much contemporary philosophy in being unable to recover a (naive) pre-philosophical sense of the uses to which certain words (the ones most overworked in philosophy) can be meaningfully put in ordinary discourse—our sense (before we fell into philosophical perplexity) that thoughts can be about the world, that language can represent the world, that our beliefs can be justified by how things stand in the world. It can come to seem, after a little philosophy, that one can assent to such platitudes only if one does so advisedly when speaking with the vulgar[26] (strictly speaking, the world is well lost).[27] Putnam takes Rorty's inability to construe these platitudes in a metaphysically innocent way to be an indication that his thought continues to be controlled by the very picture he is concerned to reject.

In "A Comparison of Something with Something Else," Putnam also contests Rorty's claim that Rorty is following in Wittgenstein's footsteps:

> Wittgenstein never suggests that our ordinary ways of talking and thinking—our *ordinary* talk of "following a rule," or our *ordinary* talk of "seeing as," or our *ordinary* talk of "understanding"—are shown to be mere *mythology* by the fact that our accounts of what it is to follow a rule, or to see something as a duck, or to understand a sentence run thin . . . We walk on thin ground, but we do walk. Rorty, on the other hand, does suggest that even ordinary talk of objectivity, or rational acceptability, or truth is somehow mythological.[28]

Putnam sees the metaphysician as having hijacked words such as "language," "thought," and "world," depriving us of a clear view of the ways in which we ordinarily call upon them (when we're not under the pressure of philosophy). He quotes in this connection[29] Wittgenstein's remark that "if the words 'language,' 'experience,' 'world' have a use, it must be as humble a one as that of the words 'table,' 'lamp,' and 'door.'"[30] Putnam sees his aim as that of trying to recover the original humble uses of these words—the uses we are able to put them to before they become harnessed to the metaphysical stories we tell ourselves when we seek to answer questions such as "how does language hook on to the world?" Under the pressure of such a question,

the connection between language and world takes on the appearance of a puzzling *achievement,* needing explanation; in giving such explanations, we are led to sublime the senses of our ordinary words. Thus Putnam writes in "The Question of Realism": "While I agree with Rorty that metaphysical realism is unintelligible, to stop at that point without going on to recover our ordinary notion of representation (and of a world of things to be represented) is to fail to complete that journey 'from the familiar to the familiar' that is the true task of philosophy."

On Putnam's view, what is representative about Rorty's way of rejecting metaphysical realism is his picture of what our philosophical options are; they are essentially exhausted by the following two choices (which Putnam finds equally unattractive): (1) rehabilitate some version of metaphysical realism, or (2) give up on the (naive) idea that beliefs can be justified by how things stand in the world (and opt for either some sort of coherence theory or some form of skepticism). Rorty opts for a version of (2). For Rorty, "representation" is the name of a metaphysically suspect relation between language and world. The only relation which Rorty is prepared to countenance between the world and sentences (or thoughts, or beliefs) is a causal one. Putnam wants to trace such an insistence (upon keeping thought and belief from entering into anything but causal relation with the world) to the idea that the collapse of metaphysical realism carries in its train a *discovery*—a discovery about the relations in which thought and world can and cannot stand to one another.

What conjures up the appearance that we have made an important discovery (about the nature of the relation of thought and world) is our inclination to express our rejection of metaphysical realism in the form of an opposing thesis. That is, we take ourselves to have discovered that metaphysical realism is *false;* thus we (naturally) conclude that its negation is true. Putnam believes he can now head off certain widespread misunderstandings concerning his own views (misunderstandings which he freely admits that he himself is partially responsible for encouraging) by drawing his reader's attention to *how* he wishes to express his rejection of metaphysical realism, questioning not its truth but rather its *intelligibility.*[31] If the problem with metaphysical realism is that in the end we find that we are unable to make sense of its thesis, then we should be equally unable to make sense of its antithesis. If we can rescue either member of the pair from un-

intelligibility we should be able to rescue its opposite number as well; if we wish to conclude that one member of the pair is unintelligible, we lack the option to affirm the truth of the other. "If the notion of an absolute point of view is unintelligible, then not being able to speak from the absolute point of view is no incapacity."[32]

Rorty professes to accept Putnam's arguments concerning the incoherence of metaphysical realism; but he goes on to formulate what these arguments show in terms of a very general claim about what we cannot do (compare thought and language, on the one hand, with the world, on the other). It is this transition—from a demonstration of the incoherence of a philosophical position (concerning the relation between thought and world) to a substantive eye-opening conclusion—which Putnam now seeks to call into question. Putnam's initial way of putting the worry in "The Question of Realism" takes the following form: "If we agree that it is *unintelligible* to say 'We sometimes succeed in comparing our language and thought with reality as it is in itself,' then we should realize that it is also unintelligible to say 'It is *impossible* to stand outside and compare our thought and language with the world.'" Putnam thinks he detects an ambivalence in Rorty's (and his own former) attitude to the central thesis of metaphysical realism. Putnam sees Rorty as wanting, on the one hand, to argue that what the metaphysical realist says is nonsense, and yet wanting, on the other hand, to be able to grasp the thought which the metaphysical realist is *attempting* to express—at least to be able to grasp it with sufficient clarity to draw substantive consequences from its failure. The crucial mistake here, from Putnam's point of view, is the idea that we can make out what it is that a piece of nonsense is trying to say (if it were only able to say it). If Rorty really were able to grasp the thought behind metaphysical realism sufficiently clearly to be able to draw substantive consequences from its failure, then clearly it would not be nonsense. Conversely, if what the metaphysical realist is trying to say really is *unintelligible,* then nothing follows (from the fact that it is empty) about what kinds of things are or are not possible. Putnam summarizes this point in "The Question of Realism" as follows: "Rorty seems to be telling us of an Impotence, in the way the physicist tells us of an Impotence when he says 'You can't build a perpetual motion machine,' but it turns out on examination that the Impotence is a mirage, or even less than a mirage—that it is chimerical."

As long as we continue to conceive of the failure of metaphysical

realism in terms of our *inability* to attain a certain ("non-perspec-tival") standpoint, we continue "to remain in the grip of the meta-physical realist's picture" (even if we imagine that we are rejecting it).

Rorty, however, may seem to be less open now to an objection of this form from Putnam than he perhaps once was. For Rorty has become increasingly disinclined to formulate the charge against meta-physical realism in terms of a complaint about its intelligibility. He has moved instead to expressing the issue in terms of whether re-alism presents us with a vocabulary which enables us to "cope better" or not:

> I should not speak, as I sometimes have, of "pseudo-problems," but rather of problematics and vocabularies that might have proven to be of value, but in fact did not. I should not have spoken of "unreal" or "confused" philosophical distinctions, but rather of distinctions whose employment has proved to lead nowhere, proved to be more trouble than they were worth. For pragmatists like Putnam and me, the question should always be "What use is it?" rather than . . . "Is it confused?" Criticism of other philosophers' distinctions and prob-lematics should charge relative inutility, rather than "meaningless-ness" or "illusion" or "incoherence."[33]

To charge the metaphysical realist's conception (of what it would be to represent the world as it is) with relative inutility, as Rorty now proposes, would seem to presuppose its intelligibility. It makes sense to dismiss something on such a ground only if one has first ascertained what "it" is. Ordinarily, when one responsibly levels such a charge, one takes oneself to know what has been proposed (for example, rep-resenting the world in such-and-such a way) and to have concluded that it is *that* which one deems lacking in utility. Such a charge presup-poses the applicability of the question: In what respect is the item in question lacking in utility? (Rorty seems to want to answer here: Let's not worry about exactly how it is lacking in utility; it is just lacking in utility *altogether,* so let's move on to something else. But such a re-sponse seems to cut the concept of "utility" free from its ordinary moorings. It appears to be functioning as a mere pretext for drawing the conclusion Rorty is after anyway.) If what the metaphysical realist's vocabulary brought to light (contrary to his original inten-tions) was that we really cannot do something which we would like to do (and which it does make sense to think we might be able to do), it

is not evident that the distastefulness of this insight would, in and of itself, constitute a sufficient reason for rejecting the vocabulary which made this insight available. If the point is a *fully intelligible* one—if what has been brought to light is a *genuine* impotence—we need to understand why we should blind ourselves to this discovery and de-prive ourselves of the resources for expressing it. Our simply finding a discovery inconvenient or oppressive is not generally considered an intellectually defensible reason for wishing no longer to attend to it. Its "lacking in utility" (whatever that means) might be such a reason. But when Rorty turns to the task of giving principled reasons for being suspicious of metaphysical realism, considerations of relative utility do not seem to be what is at issue. Rorty's original disenchant-ment with metaphysical realism, in his earlier writings—and not obvi-ously *only* his earlier writings[34]—was expressed in the light of an ap-preciation of the confused character of its demand (that we be able to represent the world in a certain way)—a sense, on Rorty's part, that there was something wrong with this demand.[35] Rorty now wants a way of dismissing metaphysical realism that does not even commit him to the claim that it is in some way "confused." He now just wants to be able to conclude—through a vague appeal to what helps us "cope better"—that, since the vocabulary of the metaphysical realist forces us into a skeptical problematic (the upshot of which is that "we cannot represent the world as it is"), we are better off chucking that vocabulary altogether.

From Putnam's point of view, this is progress in the wrong direc-tion. To cite "relative inutility" as one's reason for eliminating the term "representation" from one's lexicon, as Rorty now does, is to fail to explore the character of the frustrations it seemed to impose on us. It is the expression of a desire to just run away from the whole irritating issue as fast as possible, so that one doesn't have to think about it any more. The presumption behind such an approach is that the best direction in which to run will be the one which allows one to get as far away as possible from the terms—the "vocabulary"—of the original problem. The reason such impatience is philosophically disas-trous, Putnam thinks, is that the problem lies not simply with the "vo-cabulary" of the metaphysical realist, but with what becomes of that vocabulary in his hands. Rorty continues to allow the metaphysical realist to hold the concept of representation hostage to certain ("meta-physically inflated") demands and then—despairing of a satisfying outcome to the metaphysical realist's demands—gives up on the ordi-

nary concept along with its metaphysically sublimed counterpart. For Putnam, any satisfying diagnosis of both what is compelling and what is confused about metaphysical realism requires an appreciation of how the metaphysical realist's employment of the concept of representation superficially mimics the grammar of the ordinary concept while completely draining it of its content. A recovery of the ordinary concept depends upon seeing how the metaphysical realist only appears to continue to employ that concept meaningfully. An insight into the emptiness of metaphysical realism is therefore, for Putnam, the only way to escape its seductive coils. Only when metaphysical realism has been made to disappear completely does it cease to cast a shadow.

Putnam thus traces Rorty's inclination to give up on the whole idea of representation to the hold that the metaphysical realist's picture continues to exert on him even as he tries to escape from it. In "The Question of Realism," as part of an attempt to diagnose where he thinks Rorty goes wrong, Putnam suggests that Rorty and the metaphysical realist share a certain "craving": "Why is Rorty so bothered by the lack of a *guarantee* that our words represent things outside of themselves? Evidently, Rorty's craving for such a guarantee is so strong that, finding the guarantee to be 'impossible,' he feels forced to conclude that our words don't represent anything. It is at this point in Rorty's position that one detects the trace of a disappointed metaphysical realist impulse." This is tied to a refrain which runs throughout the essays collected here: "Metaphysics . . . frequently appears disguised as the rejection of metaphysics."[36] The essays in this volume devoted to logical positivism (in Part II) and to contemporary trends in philosophy inspired by cognitive science (in Part VI) are largely concerned to document various instances of metaphysics disguised as the overcoming of metaphysics. Putnam suggests, at a number of junctures, that this remarkable robustness of metaphysics—its capacity to return to life and haunt its undertakers—is due to the depth of a craving which expresses itself through the metaphysical impulse: "a craving for an unintelligible kind of certainty (a senseless craving, one might say, but for all that a deeply human craving)." Putnam calls this craving a form of "intellectual yearning" which is "deeply rooted" in us. Whatever one thinks about this as a claim about *us,* it is difficult not to credit Putnam's claim that he finds this craving to be deeply rooted in himself. His attitude toward the craving seems to be as ambivalent as it is complex, regarding it with both respect and suspi-

cion—as the expression of something noble in the human spirit, and as the wellspring of persistent deep confusion.

Neither Naked nor Dressed

One can . . . say that "I shall know a good solution when I see it"—and in that respect . . . [philosophical] problems are like riddles . . . I can recognize, even before I have . . . a way of deciding . . . such questions (and in that way fixing their sense), that . . . [some proposed answer] is *not* the answer. But *what* it's not, is only as yet a form of words. The rejection of an answer, like the question itself, seems not quite to grasp its own sense, seems to exist, as it were, on borrowed sense, on an advance from the solution to the problem.

Cora Diamond, "Riddles and Anselm's Riddle"

Of the essays collected here, the one which represents the most striking departure in Putnam's recent thought is probably "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity" (Chapter 12).

In a previous striking departure from his earlier views, in a paper entitled "There Is at Least One A Priori Truth,"[37] Putnam had sought to argue that there are, after all, a priori truths (in exactly the sense that a still earlier Putnam and W. V. Quine had famously been concerned to deny that there could be). At least one truth is unrevisable, Putnam declared, in the sense that it would never be rational to give it up. Putnam's candidate for such an a priori truth was the minimal principle of contradiction, the principle that not every statement is both true and false. Putnam's strategy was to try to argue that there are no circumstances under which it would be rational to give up this principle, and therefore that it provides us with an example of at least one "absolutely, unconditionally, truly, actually a priori truth."[38] Putnam adduced in the course of the paper a number of arguments[39] purporting to show that the principle of minimal contradiction plays a role in our reasoning which is "prior to anything that might be offered as an explanation of its truth," and hence also prior to anything which might count against its truth.[40] Putnam had been concerned to argue therefore that at least one logical law (the minimal principle of contradiction) represented an absolutely unrevisable a priori truth. Putnam has, in this volume, continued to retain his hostility to the idea that the laws of logic are simply empirical truths, but he has substantially modified his strategy for arguing against such an idea. In "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity," Putnam now wishes to claim that the ques-

...iple (for example, the minimal principle of ...ified or not is one which we are simply unable ...e of.[41]

..."Mathematical Necessity," Putnam asks us to con-...ing riddle: "A court lady once fell into disfavor with ...easily imagines how.) The king, intending to give her a ...impossible of fulfillment, told her to come to the Royal Ball ...naked nor dressed.'"[42] Putnam goes on to divulge the solution ...riddle (she came wearing a fishnet) and to ask us to compare ...to certain philosophical questions (concerning the revisability of the laws of logic). He then goes on to remark: "Concerning such riddles, Wittgenstein says that we are able to give them a sense only after we know the solution; the solution bestows a sense on the riddle-question. This seems right."[43] This remark comes at the end of a paper in which Putnam attempts to distance himself from some of Quine's views (another abiding preoccupation of this volume as a whole) and in which he advances some rather surprising claims—some unorthodox interpretive claims about how to understand a tradition of thought about logic, as well as some provocative philosophical claims about what is involved in attempting to think the negation of a logical truth. His concern here is to attack the view (which he and Quine made popular) that the laws of logic are—at least in principle—revisable and to defend a conception of logical necessity which he (now) claims to find in later Wittgenstein.

Putnam says at the outset of the paper that he presently sees contemporary philosophy as faced with two equally unsatisfying alternatives—alternatives he associates with the names of Carnap and Quine, respectively: a linguistic conventionalism, on the one hand, according to which the laws of logic are analytic truths, and a naturalized epistemology, on the other, according to which they are synthetic a posteriori and hence not dissimilar in kind to ordinary empirical truths (only—so the mixed metaphor goes—far more deeply entrenched in our web of belief). After canvassing these standing alternatives, Putnam turns his attention to what he calls "a very different line of thinking—one which goes back to Kant and Frege." He continues: "This line is one I believe Carnap hoped to detranscendentalize; and in Carnap's hands it turned into linguistic conventionalism. My strategy in this essay will be to suggest that there is a different way of stripping away the transcendental baggage, while retaining what I hope is the insight in Kant's and perhaps Frege's view, a way which has features

in common with the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein rather than with Carnap."

The paper is typical of a number of the essays in this volume in seeking to offer a heterodox account of some chapter drawn from the recent history of philosophy, not only in order to set the historical record straight, but also out of the conviction that important philosophical lessons remain hidden from view by Whiggish textbook accounts of philosophy's recent past. Elsewhere in this volume, Putnam tries to rescue Peirce, James, Dewey, and Reichenbach from the fate of having to remain the figures who—according to historians of philosophy's recent past—they're supposed to be. In each case, Putnam's revisionist reading comes with a philosophical punchline he wishes to commend to our attention. "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity" is, however, perhaps the most ambitious of these revisionist exercises, in that (at least with respect to their thought about logic) Putnam wants to redraw the portraits of four different philosophers: Kant, Frege, early Wittgenstein, and later Wittgenstein. More specifically, Putnam's aim is to try to trace the roots of Wittgenstein's later views on the nature of "grammatical propositions" through a tradition of thought about logic which begins with Kant and runs through Frege and the *Tractatus*. This is how Putnam outlines the first part of the story he wants to tell:

> What interests me . . . is to be found in *The Critique of Pure Reason* . . . as well as in Kant's *Logic,* and that is the repeated insistence that illogical thought is not, properly speaking, thought at all . . .
>
> It is this that brought home to me the deep difference between an *ontological* conception of logic, a conception of logic as descriptive of some domain of actual and possible entities, and Kant's (and, I believe, Frege's) conception. Logic is not a description of what holds true in "metaphysically possible worlds" . . . It is a doctrine of *the form of coherent thought.* Even if I think of what turns out to be a "metaphysically impossible world," my thought would not be a thought at all unless it conforms to logic.
>
> Indeed, logic has no metaphysical presuppositions at all. For to say that thought, in the normative sense of *judgment which is capable of truth,* necessarily conforms to logic is not to say something which a metaphysics has to *explain.* To explain anything *presupposes* logic; for Kant, logic is simply prior to all rational activity.

Putnam then goes on to trace this conception of logic (as the form of coherent thought) through Frege, the *Tractatus,* and the later

Wittgenstein. We are thus offered a capsule history of an entire tradition of philosophical thought about logic—one which Putnam thinks has been unjustly neglected (despite the prestige of its original proponents). The historical component of the essay can be summarized in the following seven claims: (1) Kant held that illogical thought is not, properly speaking, a kind of thought at all; (2) Frege inherited this view from Kant; he held that the laws of logic prescribe "the way in which one ought to think if one is to think at all";[44] (3) Frege held another view of logic as well—one according to which the laws of logic are the most general laws of nature; (4) these two views of logic are in tension with one another; (5) the early Wittgenstein's view (that the propositions of logic are *sinnlos*) should be read as attempting to resolve this fundamental instability in Frege's philosophy;[45] (6) the *Tractatus* shows that Kant's and Frege's formulations of the Kantian insight (that illogical thought is impossible) do not meet the conditions which they themselves wish to impose on coherent thought; and (7) Wittgenstein's early and later works represent different attempts to address and resolve this problem.

After developing these historical claims, Putnam goes on to propose that there is an important idea which is developed and refined within this tradition of thought which he himself wants to argue for—the idea that logical truths do not have negations that we are able to understand. The negation of a logical proposition involves a form of words which presents us with a mere appearance of sense. It is not that such "propositions" present us with a coherent thought that we are able to grasp and then reject as false; rather, "we are simply unable to make sense" of these propositions. We are unable to formulate them in such a way as to allow the question of their truth or falsity to arise.[46] As Putnam puts it at one point: "the negation of a theorem of logic violates the conditions for being a thinkable thought or judgment."[47] Putnam says he wants to follow the later Wittgenstein in trying to tease this idea free from its original setting in Kant's and Frege's ("metaphysically inflated") accounts of the unrevisability of the laws of logic:

My suggestion is not . . . that we retain . . . [the] idea of a nature of thought (or judgment, or the ideal language) which metaphysically guarantees the unrevisability of logic. But what I *am* inclined to keep from this story is the idea that logical truths do not have negations

that we (presently) understand. It is not, on this less metaphysically inflated story, that we can say that the theorems of logic are "unrevisable"; it is that the question "Are they revisable?" is one which we have not yet succeeded in giving a sense.

Putnam, following up certain suggestions of Cora Diamond's, thinks we should compare the question "Are the laws of logic revisable" to the king's command to the court lady that she appear before him "neither naked nor dressed." We are only able to give the king's words a sense once we know the solution to the riddle. Similarly, Putnam wants to say of the question "Are the laws of logic revisable?" that it too seems not quite to grasp its own sense.[48] Its sense is "borrowed," as Cora Diamond puts it, "on an advance from the solution"—on an advance, that is, from the specification of a wider setting which enables us to discern a pattern of sense in the riddle's question (and thus determine *what* question it is that these words form). When we first hear them, the words of the riddle—as they stand—appear to enunciate a paradox. A good solution gratifies us by dissipating the sense of paradox. We recognize the solution to a riddle by its capacity to suddenly make sense of what appeared to be (and, in a sense, until that moment, was) nonsense. For something to count as a solution it has to fit snugly into place and gratify our expectation that this was what these words were trying to express all along. This is just what Putnam thinks we have not yet succeeded in doing for our philosophical talk about "revising" logic: "A question may not have a sense . . . until an 'answer' gives it a sense, . . . I want to suggest that, in the same way, saying that logic may be 'revised' does not have a sense, and will never have a sense, unless some concrete piece of theory building or applying *gives* it a sense."

There is a parallel here between Putnam's criticisms of Quine's (and his own former) views about logical necessity and his criticisms of Rorty's (and his own former) views about metaphysical realism. In both cases, Putnam wants to show how an apparently exciting philosophical thesis—about the *impossibility* of doing one thing (representing the world as it is in itself) or the *possibility* of doing another (revising a law of logic)—borrows its aura of intelligibility from the very position it wishes to reject as unintelligible. Putnam quotes the following famous remark (about the revisability of the laws of logic): "Any statement can be held true come what may, if we make drastic enough

...nts elsewhere in the system. Even a statement close to the ...ery can be held true in the face of recalcitrant experience by ...ng hallucination or by amending certain statements of the kind ...ed logical laws. Conversely, by the same token, no statement is ...mmune to revision."[49] In the closing pages of "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity" Putnam argues that the "cans" in these famous sentences of Quine's "are not intelligible 'cans.'" If Rorty's postulation of an inability on our part derives from a mirage of the impotence of human knowledge (to transcend the conditions of thought or language), Quine's postulation of an ability on our part (to revise the laws of logic) derives from a mirage of the omnipotence of future experience (to overturn *any* statement). As things stand, we have no clearer conception of what it would be to entertain the falsity of a logical law, Putnam thinks, than we have of what it would be to view the world from a God's-eye point of view—not because the laws of logic are "unrevisable," but because we have not yet given sense to our talk of "revisability" in this context. We have heard the riddle many times, but we have yet to hear something which has that power to dissipate the appearance of paradox which is the touchstone of a good solution.

The Interpretation of Wittgenstein

For Wittgenstein, philosophy comes to grief not in denying what we all know to be true, but in its effort to escape those human forms of life which alone provide the coherence of our expression. He wishes an acknowledgment of human limitation which does not leave us chafed by our own skin, by a sense of powerlessness to penetrate beyond the human conditions of knowledge.

<div align="right">Stanley Cavell, "The Availability
of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy"</div>

The one philosopher whose name occurs at some point or other in almost every essay in this volume is Wittgenstein. Often Putnam will digress from the main argument of an essay for a paragraph or two in order to clear up some point about the interpretation of Wittgenstein's thought. Putnam's dissatisfaction with the standard interpretations of Wittgenstein is tied to his sense that Wittgenstein seeks a form of "acknowledgment of human limitation" which is not haunted by *skepticism.*

Putnam—employing a terminology which is bound at first to con-

...se some readers—suggests that, from Wittgenstein's point of view, ...hilosophers such as Rorty, Quine, Carnap, and Donald Davidson ...all of whom, each in their own way, take themselves to be attempting ...to defeat skepticism) are really at bottom advocating "*forms* of skepticism." Skepticism, in this sense, is an instance of what Putnam calls a *metaphysical picture*—one which he sees informing not only the classical forms of philosophical despair over the possibility of knowledge (conventionally known as "skepticism"), but equally the various classical (and often mutually opposed) strategies of allaying that despair (such as rationalism and empiricism, foundationalism and coherentism, and so forth). Putnam takes skepticism, employing here a terminology which he borrows from Cavell, to be the expression of a natural human disappointment with the reach of knowledge. Putnam sees the position of thinkers such as Rorty (who insists upon our confinement within—our fatedness to—*merely* human forms of knowledge) as marked by such a sense of disappointment. Here is Putnam's explanation of Cavell's use of the term "skepticism":

In the conventional usage, skepticism is the denial of knowledge. It is traditionally supposed to be easy to tell who is and who isn't a skeptic (the skeptic says, "You don't have any knowledge," or "You don't know what is going on in any one else's mind," or "You don't have any empirical knowledge," right?); and traditional metaphysical realism and positivism are seen as alternative *answers* to skepticism. How can answering skepticism be tantamount to skepticism? In the case of positivism, it is not hard to see how. The positivist's strategy can be described thus: *to concede the correctness of almost everything the skeptic says* (e.g., we don't have any moral knowledge, we don't know anything about other people except their behavior, we don't know that there are any objects except our own sense-data and constructions therefrom) in the hope of keeping back from the skeptic the claim to some minimal sort of "scientific knowledge." In the case of metaphysical realism, it is true that we are alleged to know more than the skeptic (in the conventional sense of the term) or the positivist would admit that we know, but this knowledge . . . is knowledge of a "true world" which has little resemblance to our quotidian world of common sense objects and fellow passengers to the grave. In sum, both the "skeptic" and his "opponents" deny the primacy and reality (or better, the primacy of the reality) of the life world. The ordinary human world is what they are one and all skeptics about; skepticism . . . is a perpetual dissatisfaction with

the human position . . . It is this downgrading of the human position, this aspiration to be outside our own skins . . . that Cavell calls "skepticism."[50]

Putnam sees Cavell's use of the term "skepticism" as helping to highlight the difference between two alternative ways of acknowledging human limitation: the metaphysician's way (which leaves us feeling there is something we cannot do—we cannot step outside our own skins) and Wittgenstein's way (which seeks to leave us not feeling "chafed by our own skin," haunted by "a sense of powerlessness to penetrate beyond the human conditions of knowledge"). On this reading of Wittgenstein, what is most significant is the perception—shared by both the traditional skeptic and the antiskeptic—that our natural state is one of being sealed within our skins. (Where the traditional skeptic and antiskeptic differ is over how incurable our natural condition of confinement is.)

The readings of (both early and later) Wittgenstein which Putnam (now) wishes to take issue with are all readings which understand Wittgenstein to be calling upon us to acknowledge the existence of certain *limits* (the limits imposed on thought by the logical structure of language, or the limits imposed on knowledge by the contingent nature of our forms of life). Wittgenstein (according to the readings Putnam opposes) shows us how to acquiesce in—rather than chafe against—these limits. Most of the readings of Wittgenstein which are presently in circulation (however much they may otherwise differ from one another) are of this variety, counseling us to resign ourselves to our inability to transcend the conditions of human knowledge. The readings of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations* that Putnam himself (now) urges are ones which take Wittgenstein to be concerned to show that the limit against which, in our philosophizing, we (imagine ourselves to) chafe is an illusory limit. On this reading of Wittgenstein (as Putnam puts it in "The Question of Realism"), "we cannot know the world as it is 'in itself' . . . not because the 'in itself' is an unreachable limit, but because the 'in itself' doesn't make sense."

Toward the end of Chapter 12, "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity," Putnam writes: "If it makes no sense to say or think that we have discovered that . . . [logic] is *wrong*, then it also makes no sense to offer a reason for thinking it is not wrong. A reason for thinking . . . [logic] is not wrong is a reason which excludes nothing. Trying to

justify . . . [logic] is like trying to say that whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent; in both cases, it only looks as if something is being ruled out or avoided." Putnam here connects the central topic of "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity" (is illogical thought a kind of thought?) with the question how one should interpret the famous closing line of the *Tractatus*: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." Putnam suggests that that line should not be read as debarring us from being able to say something. It should not be read as telling us that there is something we cannot do—a limit we cannot overstep. The contrapositive of that line is: "Whereof one may speak, thereof one can speak."[51] Putnam's reading of the line therefore suggests that if we are faced with a silence at the end of the book, this is so simply because (although there has been a great deal of noise) nothing has been said. Proponents of the standard reading of the *Tractatus* take the silence which is alluded to here to be one that guards the ineffable. What Wittgenstein is here drawing our attention to, they tell us, is the unsayable. These commentators hear this line (which speaks of silence) noisily declaring a substantive thesis: there are certain things which cannot be said and concerning them we must remain silent. What Putnam hears this line calling our attention to is: a silence.

Here is how Putnam (in Chapter 3) characterizes "the special kind of distance that the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* puts between himself and his own propositions":

> Wittgenstein tells us, both in his prefatory remarks and at the end of the *Tractatus,* that his own theory is nonsense (*unsinn*), and although some have seen this repudiation as weakened, if not altogether cancelled, by the Tractarian claim that there are things that one can "show" but not "say" . . . , others have argued (correctly to my mind) that it is an overuse of the "say/show" distinction to hold that the metaphysical propositions of the *Tractatus* are, at the end of the day, really supposed to express truths, or even thinkable thoughts.

On the reading of the *Tractatus* which Putnam favors, what happens is *not* that we (1) succeed in conceiving of an extraordinary possibility (illogical thought), (2) judge "it" to be impossible, (3) conclude that the truth of this judgment cannot be accommodated within (the logical structure of) language because it is about (the logical structure of)

language, and (4) go on to communicate these discoveries—by putting into words (under the guise of only "showing" and not "saying" "it") just what it is that cannot be said. Rather, what happens is that we are lured up all four of these rungs of the ladder and then: (5) urged to throw the *entire* ladder (all four of the previous rungs) away. On this reading, first we grasp that there is something which cannot be; then we see that it (that which we grasped concerning what can and what cannot be) cannot be said; then we grasp that if it can't be said it can't be thought (that the limits of language are the limits of thought); then we grasp that there is no "it" in our grasp (that that which we cannot think we cannot "grasp" either). The ladder we climb is one which draws us into an illusion of occupying a certain sort of a perspective—a perspective from which we take ourselves to be able to survey the possibilities which undergird how things are with us, holding our necessities in place—a perspective from which we can view the logical structure of the world "from sideways on."[52] But the point of the work as a whole is to show us—that is, to lead us up a ladder from the top of which we are able to see—that the "perspective" that we thus occupy is only an illusion of a perspective. So the only "insight" that the work imparts to its reader, in the end, is one about the reader himself: that he is prone to such illusions.[53]

Elsewhere in this volume one finds equally concrete suggestions about how one should read later Wittgenstein. In Chapter 13 Putnam picks a quarrel with the (widely accepted) view that in *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein advances a "use-theory of meaning." Putnam points out that in the famous passage in which Wittgenstein is supposed to have identified meaning with use what Wittgenstein actually says is: "For a *large* class of cases—though not for all—in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language."[54] Putnam then goes on to declare that it is a misreading of this (or any other) remark of Wittgenstein's to interpret it as proposing a theory of meaning: "The famous remark that, in a large class of cases, we may say that the meaning of a word is its use in the language is not a *theory* of meaning (although it is the expression of a point of view from which one can question whether it makes sense to ask for a 'theory of meaning,' in any sense in which a 'theory of meaning' might be metaphysically informative)." There is an evident parallel between the readings Putnam favors of the *Tractatus* and of the *Investigations:* in each case, the "theory" which

been attributed to the work (by most commentators) constitutes precisely the philosophical point of view which the work is most concerned to undermine. The commentators have mistaken the bait for the hook: the "theory" (which has been attributed to the work) is, indeed, according to Putnam, *in play* in the work—not as its doctrine, but as an expression of the philosophical temptation which the work as a whole seeks to enable us to overcome.

There is a sense therefore in which Putnam thinks that the bulk of the contemporary secondary literature on Wittgenstein has simply failed to encounter Wittgenstein's thought. His complaints about this body of secondary literature are perhaps most emphatic in Chapter 13. Putnam there discusses a cluster of interpretations of Wittgenstein's later work (variants of which were first proposed by Michael Dummett and Saul Kripke) which take Wittgenstein's interest in what he calls "language-games" to be an attempt to supplant truth conditions with assertibility conditions as the fundamental concept of a theory of meaning. Two recent versions of such an interpretation, those of Paul Horwich and Michael Williams, are accused of offering what Putnam calls a "positivist interpretation" of Wittgenstein:

On Horwich's view, as on Williams', a language-game is to be understood as consisting of sentences for which . . . there are "assertibility conditions." These conditions specify that under certain observable conditions a sentence counts as true or at least "confirmed." (Think of these conditions as stipulating that under certain observable conditions we are allowed to utter certain noises, or write certain marks, and also to expect certain observable events or certain reactions from others . . . The key idea (as in positivism) is that if you know under what conditions a statement is confirmed, you understand the statement . . .

The assumption that underlies this picture is that the use of words can be described in terms of what speakers are allowed to say and do in observable situations. "Use" is a theoretical notion, and there is a standard way of describing the use of expressions in an arbitrary language-game. Let me call this *the positivistic interpretation of Wittgenstein.* A very different interpretation . . . is the following: the use of the words in a language-game cannot be described without using concepts which are related to the concepts employed *in* the game . . .

Understanding a language-game is sharing a form of life. And forms of life cannot be described in a fixed positivistic metalanguage,

whether they be scientific, religious, or of a kind that we do not have in Western industrial societies today.

Putnam wants to argue that Wittgenstein's interest in investigating (what *Philosophical Investigations* calls) "the use of concepts" is not to be interpreted as an interest in providing a reductive naturalistic description of human linguistic activity (in terms of, say, dispositions to produce marks or noises under specifiable circumstances). On Putnam's reading, Wittgenstein's aim is, on the contrary, to try to help us to see what it is (about thought or language) that inevitably eludes the grasp of such a description.

Here, once again, Putnam sees Wittgenstein as following in Frege's footsteps. Thus, in Chapter 16, we find Putnam saying that contemporary attempts to naturalize the notions of truth and meaning are vulnerable to the very same arguments "that Frege deployed against the naturalism and empiricism of *his* day." Frege is concerned to argue against someone he calls "the psychologistic philosopher of logic." The psychologistic philosopher of logic maintains that the laws of logic are empirically established generalizations about our inferential habits. The sense in which it is "impossible" for us to deny a law of logic is construed on this account as a psychological fact about us: we cannot help but think in this way. Frege wants to show the psychologistic logician that his account is unable to make sense of the idea that two judgments can *disagree* with each other. This is how Putnam (in Chapter 16) summarizes Frege's argument against the psychologistic logician's account: "On such an account, we cannot genuinely disagree with each other: if I produce a noise and you produce the noise 'No, that's wrong,' then we have no more disagreed with each other than if I produce a noise and you produce a groan or a grunt. Nor can we agree with each other any more than we can disagree with each other: if I produce a noise and you produce the same noise, then this is no more *agreement* than if a bough creaks and then another creaks in the same way."[55] Frege's argument against the psychologistic logician flows from his commitment to the Kantian conception of logic—for which Putnam confesses much fondness in Chapter 12—which holds that the laws of logic set forth the most general principles of thought (which prescribe how we must think if we are to think at all). The possibility of judgment, on Frege's (Kantian) account, is tied to the ability to discern relations of agreement and disagreement between propositions; and it is the principles of

which provide the framework within which such discernment operates. The underlying claim which fuels Frege's argument[56] is that can recognize two judgments as being in conflict with each other only if the framework of logic is already firmly in place: the criteria by which we are able so much as to recognize (let alone adjudicate) an instance of disagreement presuppose the availability of this shared framework. The psychologistic logician's employment of the notion of "disagreement" is one in which the ordinary notion of "disagreement" must be drained of virtually all its sense. The psychologistic logician (if he does not wish to presuppose the very notion of "logical contradiction" which he is attempting to explain) must restrict himself to a notion of "disagreement" according to which disagreement is simply some form of causal incompatibility, that is, a species of difference which does not in any way involve the idea of *logical* conflict. But if the noises we and others make merely differ from (or are merely causally incompatible with) one another (and nothing further concerning their logical relation to one another can be said), then they are no more in disagreement with one another than are the moos of two different cows or the shapes of two different snowflakes. As long as his account labors under this restriction, the psychologistic logician has deprived himself of the resources for discerning *any* sort of logical structure in our utterances. The only sort of structure which such an empirical (psychological) investigation can hope to uncover is a structure of *causal* (as opposed to logical) relations. The psychologistic logician, Frege concludes, is unable to bring within his view the activity of judgment; all he can study are the relations which obtain among the various marks and noises we make.[57]

Putnam sees the later Wittgenstein as accepting the spirit of this argument while altering the letter of it. The Fregean claim which Wittgenstein accepts is that any purely "naturalistic"[58] account of thought (or language) will simply drain thought (or language) of its normative resources (for example, its capacity to express agreement and disagreement), leaving us (as the psychologistic logician does) with a structure of marks or noises in which we are unable to discern the expression of a judgment. The letter of Frege's argument, however, undergoes some modification. Putnam sees talk about "the fundamental nature of the laws of logic"—as that which provides the framework within which agreement and disagreement are possible—giving way, in the later Wittgenstein, to talk about "sharing a form of life." Thus Putnam is able to take Wittgenstein's famous remark that

"to imagine a language-game means to imagine a form of life"[59] to be directed against the very conception of what a language-game is (a game of making noises in certain observable circumstances), which serves as the point of departure for the standard (Dummett/Kripke) interpretation of the *Investigations*. What belongs to a language-game, for Wittgenstein, is not simply the sounds we utter in certain isolated circumstances; rather "what belongs to a language-game is a whole culture."[60]

Pictures and Philosophy

It is true that we can compare a picture that is firmly rooted in us to a superstition; but it is equally true that we always eventually have to reach some firm ground, either a picture or something else, so that a picture which is at the root of all our thinking is to be respected and not treated as a superstition.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*

In Chapter 8, "Pragmatism and Moral Objectivity," Putnam says that what he thinks is most "worth taking seriously" in the work of the American pragmatists is their "appeal to the primacy of practice." He tries to bring out what he takes the philosophical force of such an appeal to be by reconstructing various lines of thought he finds in their writings in terms of a series of "indispensability arguments." The targets of these arguments are philosophical views which attempt to impugn ways of talking and thinking which lie at the foundations of our ordinary practice on the grounds that these ways of talking and thinking fail to meet certain (metaphysically imposed) standards of "rationality" or "objectivity." The aim of these indispensability arguments is to demonstrate that these philosophical views can be seen to founder in incoherence. Putnam takes this strain of thought in the classical pragmatists to represent an important bond between their teachings and those of Wittgenstein.

Putnam has taken to referring to those ways of talking and thinking which are fundamental to our practices—the integrity of which Wittgenstein, the American pragmatists, and now Putnam himself are all concerned to uphold—as involving "pictures." This terminology may confuse the reader since Putnam's favorite pejorative term of philosophical criticism in this volume is (to say of someone that he or

in the grip of a picture." How can pictures be so good and yet, same time, so bad?

final section of Chapter 13 is entitled "Pictures and Philoso- It closes by quoting Wittgenstein's remark that "a picture which the root of all our thinking is to be respected." It opens as fol- s:

Consider the sentence "Caesar crossed the Rubicon." I think it is undeniable, as a fact about the lives we actually lead, that our ordinary linguistic practice in connection with such a statement is deeply informed by a "realist" picture . . . That the statement is just something we "utter" in response to *present-day* (or even present and future) "assertibility conditions" is an idea infinitely remote from our actual form of life . . . our "realism" (note the small "r") about the past, our belief that truth and falsity "reach all the way to" the past, and "do not stop short," *is* part of a picture, *and the picture is essential to our lives.*

Part of the point of describing the kind of realism which "is essential to our lives" (which lies "at the root of all our thinking") as a *picture* is to distinguish it from a fully developed philosophical view. Putnam draws our attention to the lower-case "r" here in his employment of the term "realism." One might well wonder: how much philosophical progress can there be in shifting the "r" in one's Realism from the upper to the lower case? Putnam draws attention to this orthographic detail in order to contrast the realist picture (which "our linguistic practice is deeply informed by") with Realism understood as a metaphysical conception—an interpretation of the nature of reality which is in competition with, say, idealism or empiricism. Putnam wants to claim that the picture which informs our lives is not seen for what it is if it is seen as a "position" situated in this space of competing interpretations. In the first chapter of *The Many Faces of Realism,* Putnam describes the relation between Realism and realism in roughly the following terms: under the pressure of philosophical scrutiny, we attempt to defend the realism implicit in our linguistic practice by calling upon the services of Realism.[61] We thus enter the labyrinth of competing metaphysical interpretations and are unable to find our way back out.

At the end of an essay in Putnam's earlier collection of papers, entitled "A Defense of Internal Realism," the following remarks occur:

I don't think it is bad to have pictures in philosophy. What is bad is to forget they are pictures . . .

Now, the picture I have sketched *is* only a "picture" . . . On the other hand, metaphysical realism is only a "picture." At a very abstract level, the debate between metaphysical realism and idealism is a standoff. Each side can truthfully say to the other, "You don't have a theory!"

In spite of this, I think that the idealist "picture" calls our attention to vitally important features of our practice—and what is the point of having "pictures" if we are not interested in seeing how well they represent what we actually think and do? . . .

Recognizing such [vitally important features of our practice] . . . is part of what might be called "rejecting 'realism' in the name of the realistic spirit." It is my view that reviving and revitalizing the realistic spirit is the important task for a philosopher at this time.[62]

This passage raises a number of questions. Why don't the metaphysical realist and the idealist each have a theory? What is the "realistic spirit" (the revitalization of which is *the* important task for a philosopher at this time)? What does it mean to reject "'realism' in the name of the realistic spirit"?

The materials for formulating an answer to the first question have already been touched upon: we've seen (through his exchange with Rorty) that Putnam's complaint about metaphysical realism is not that it is false, but that we are unable to make sense of it. Before attempting to answer the second and third questions, however, we should note that the concluding lines of the above passage allude to an article by Cora Diamond entitled "Realism and the Realistic Spirit."[63] That article is an extended exegesis of the following remark of Wittgenstein's: "Not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing."[64] What is initially puzzling about the remark is the occurrence of the word "yet": Not empiricism *yet* realism. Ordinarily, empiricism is thought to be opposed to realism. Empiricism names a philosophical attitude which seeks to stay close to the surface of experience and to minimize the significance—or altogether deny the intelligibility—of that which lies beyond experience. Whereas realism, in contemporary philosophical parlance, names a philosophical attitude which seeks to go beyond the surface of experience and emphasize the significance of that which is independent of human thought and experience. Thus some commentators have read Wittgenstein's remark as if what he must have meant were: "Not empiricism *ergo* realism."

[Wittgenst]ein's remark would suggest, however, that he is after a sense [of "realis]m" according to which empiricism is a species of realism. [Diamon]d writes, "The suggestion appears to be that empiricism is [someth]ing we get into in philosophy by trying to be realists but going [about i]t in the wrong way."[65] What does Wittgenstein mean by "real-[ism] here?

[Di]amond goes on to consider some nonphilosophical uses of the [term] "realism":

We may tell someone to "be realistic," when he is maintaining something in the teeth of the facts, or refusing even to look at them. Or again if he knows what the facts *ought* to be, either from a theory or wishful thinking, and will not take the world to be something capable of shaking his belief. We also speak of realism in connection with novels and stories; and here again we often have in mind certain kinds of attention to reality: to detail and particularity . . . We expect in a realistic novel something you might call a phenomenalism of character: it is built up out of observed detail, and in a sense there is nothing to it over and above what we are shown . . . once we look outside philosophy, the idea of connections between what is *there* called 'realism' and what we associate with empiricism becomes less puzzling . . .

Magic, myth, fantasy, superstition: in different ways are terms used in making contrasts with realism . . . with this non-philosophical use of "realism" there is a connection with empiricism, with its characteristic attempts to banish from philosophy (or from our thought more generally) myth, magic, superstition of various sorts, or what it sees as that.[66]

The context of Wittgenstein's remark bears out Diamond's interpretation. Wittgenstein contrasts realism with "obscurantism" and "moonshine."[67] This helps us to see how empiricism could be a species of realism, but it still leaves it somewhat obscure what Wittgenstein is after in calling for something which is "not empiricism and yet realism." If empiricism is, after all, a form of realism, then what has he got against it?

A clue to an answer is to be found in Wittgenstein's remark about what is not to be treated as a superstition. The wrong kind of realism—or better: a misfired attempt at realism—will lead us to treat even that which should be respected *as* superstition. Empiricism is, in this sense, an expression of the realistic impulse run amok. In its ea-

gerness to uncover every form of moonshine, it is unable to see even
in good money anything but counterfeit currency. Putting these two
remarks of Wittgenstein's together, we thus arrive at the suggestion
that the problem with empiricism is that it leads us to treat a picture
which is at the root of all our thinking—and which is to be re-
spected—as superstition. This still leaves us with the question: *how*
does it do this? By way of answering this question, Diamond develops
a contrast between "the metaphysical spirit" and "the realistic
spirit."[68] The characteristic activity of the metaphysical spirit, she
says, is *a laying down of* (metaphysical) *requirements* (about what
must be the case in order for something—reference, determinacy of
sense, knowledge of other minds, and so on—to be possible). In the
thrall of the metaphysical spirit, when one does finally turn to the task
of looking and seeing, what one sees is refracted through the lens of
the requirements one has imposed (about what *must* be the case). The
realistic spirit seeks to reverse the order of procedure and place the
activity of looking (at what we do and how we talk) first:

> The laying down of philosophical requirements, the characteristic
> activity of the metaphysical spirit, may be contrasted with looking at
> the use, looking at what we do. Thus, for example, there is on the
> one hand what we might lay down, in some philosophical theory, as
> essential to rule-following, to something's being in accordance with
> a rule; in contrast there is description of the face, the physiognomy,
> of what we call "obeying a rule" in everyday life, of all that belongs
> to that face. The philosophical theory lays down, without looking,
> what must be present in following a rule, while Wittgenstein's talk of
> what is possible is entirely different . . . The important thing then is
> not what answer you give, but your willingness to look, i.e. your not
> laying down general philosophical conditions.
>
> Only if we understand Wittgenstein's aim in relation to metaphys-
> ical requirements will we see the point of his urging us to look at
> what we do. We shall get a wrong idea of the sense in which philos-
> ophy "leaves everything as it is" if we ignore that aim . . . The sense
> in which philosophy leaves everything as it is is this: philosophy does
> not put us in a position to justify or criticize what we do by showing
> that it meets or fails to meet requirements we lay down in our philos-
> ophizing.[69]

We are now in a better position to understand Putnam's remark
that what he is doing might be called "rejecting 'realism' in the name

tic spirit." It is a rejection of forms of realism which—in
of what *must* be—obscure our view of "what we actually
do." Forms of (metaphysical) realism which lead us to treat
which lies at the root of all our thinking as a superstition are
cted for misrepresenting the role such a picture actually plays
ysiognomy of our practice. We have, for example, seen Put-
ge against Rorty that a preoccupation with metaphysical real-
n leave one unable to recover a clear view of our ordinary talk
what is the case. Our ordinary picture of what we mean when
y "such and such is the case"—our picture that what we mean
not stop anywhere short of the fact"—is to be respected and not
ted as a superstition. We have also just seen Putnam urge some-
ing similar with respect to the picture implicit in our ordinary dis-
urse about the past (against an analysis of such discourse in terms
of assertibility conditions).

In Chapter 13 Putnam sums up his discussion of this topic as fol-
lows: "As Wittgenstein himself puts it (in the *Lectures on Religious
Belief*), a picture can have human weight. That truth is not *just*
'disquotational,' that truth genuinely depends on what is *distant*, is
part of a picture with enormous *human weight*." Here is the passage
from Wittgenstein's *Lectures on Religious Belief* to which Putnam is
alluding:

> "God's eye sees everything"—I want to say of this that it uses a pic-
> ture.
>   I don't want to belittle . . . the person who says it . . .
>   We associate a particular use with a picture . . .
>   What conclusions are you going to draw? . . . Are eyebrows going
> to be talked of, in connection with the Eye of God? . . .
>   If I say he used a picture, I don't want to say anything he himself
> wouldn't say. I want to say he draws these conclusions.
>   Isn't it as important as anything else, what picture he does use? . . .
>   The whole *weight* may be in the picture . . . When I say he's using
> a picture, I am merely making a *grammatical* remark: [What I say]
> can only be verified by the consequences he does or does not
> draw . . .
>   All I wished to characterize was the consequences he wished to
> draw. If I wished to say anything more I was merely being philosoph-
> ically arrogant.[70]

Wittgenstein says that when he speaks of "the person using a picture,"
he doesn't want to say anything the person himself wouldn't say.

What is being proposed therefore is a discipline of *description*[71] (of accurately characterizing the consequences the person himself does and does not draw). The suggestion would seem to be that we will miss what weight the picture has in this life if we attempt to bypass this task of description in favor of immediately turning to explore some question which the picture appears to force upon us. Putnam comments:

> Wittgenstein is saying here that to say the religious person is using a picture is simply to describe what we can in fact observe: that religious people do employ pictures, and that they draw certain consequences from them, but not the same consequences that we draw when we use similar pictures in other contexts. If I speak of my friend as having an eye, then normally I am prepared to say that he has an eyebrow, but when I speak of the Eye of God being upon me, I am not prepared to speak of the eyebrow of God. But the impressive thing here is not what Wittgenstein says, but the limit he places on his own observation. Pictures are important in life. The whole weight of a form of life may lie in the pictures that that form of life uses.[72]

The consequences the religious person draws (that is, actually draws in his life with the picture) may not be "the consequences that we draw when we use similar pictures in other contexts." It is this fact about the pictures which inform our lives that allows the ways of the metaphysical spirit and the realistic spirit to diverge. If we consider the picture itself without first surveying the intricacies of its use, we may be led to ascribe to the person who uses the picture the belief that God has eyebrows.

Wittgenstein's suggestion here is that there are two ways to consider the use. One way involves simply looking and seeing how the picture informs the life. The pattern of its use may be quite unperspicuous and, indeed, perhaps completely invisible to someone in whose life such a picture plays no role and who is unable to imagine what a life informed by such a picture would be like. Another way of considering the use is first to consider the picture in, as it were, a vacuum. Wittgenstein suggests that this second way will lead to our seeing the use *through* the lens of a certain construal of the picture. When one turns from the picture to the question of its application, one's view will be shaped by certain requirements (derived from one's prior consideration of the picture) which are laid down as conditions for the

ate application of the picture. In the absence of any other seeing how the picture might inform our practice, our initial ration of the picture will tend to favor an excessively *literalistic* ual. This leads us to fill in the picture in particular ways. Our standing of what it is for the picture to have application is now lled by our antecedently filled-in version of the picture. We to have a view of what it would be *really* to have the eye of God one, next to which any other application of the picture seems, at , a wildly figurative and misleading form of expression.

This is one way into metaphysics: understanding the application of picture (which informs our practice) by being (unwittingly) *guided* by *the picture itself* (considered, that is, in abstraction from its actual role in use). When one allows oneself to be so guided, one arrives at a mistaken conception of what attachment to the picture entails and hence of what its role in informing use *ought* to be. One is led to insist that this (religious) person is *committed* to such and such (an ontology which permits him to quantify over divine eyebrows!) whether *he* realizes it or not. A refusal of interest on his part in certain questions (about, say, whether God has eyebrows)—while he wishes to continue to allow the picture to play a role in his life—can then appear (to someone whose view of the use is guided only by the picture) to be a failure on this person's part to reflect sufficiently on the nature of his commitments.[73] This example has been chosen by Wittgenstein because—in moving from an observation of a person's inclination (under certain circumstances) to call upon the words "the eye of God is upon me" to an insistence on ascribing to him an ontology which includes divine eyebrows—the confusion it illustrates is of a relatively transparent character. The importance of the example lies in its structural affinities with less transparent instances of such confusion. The significant cases in philosophy are the ones in which we are unable to see that—in laying down certain requirements—we have been misled by a picture in our language which forces itself upon us.

Wittgenstein's most famous and influential remark about pictures and philosophy is the following: "A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably."[74] Taken in isolation, this remark can encourage the idea that what Wittgenstein thinks about pictures is that they are simply a bad thing. Thus we arrive at the standard reading of Wittgenstein's view of pictures and philosophy: what is involved in freeing oneself from a picture (which holds one captive) is

doing away with it altogether—achieving a "pictureless" view of
things. After discussing various passages about pictures (including the
one above) from Wittgenstein's *Lectures on Religious Belief*, Putnam
remarks:

> These remarks seem to go totally against the idea that Wittgenstein
> was against pictures as such. When Wittgenstein attacks philoso-
> phers for being in the grip of a picture, the usual reading of this is
> that Wittgenstein opposes pictures—that pictures are bad. But
> Wittgenstein in his lectures during the 1930s repeatedly praises pic-
> tures in two ways: he praises them as good ways of explaining the
> meaning of words[75] . . . and, moreover, he speaks of pictures as hav-
> ing "weight," or of pictures' being "at the root of all one's thinking."
> Evidently, then, if certain philosophers are attacked by Wittgenstein
> for being in the grip of a picture, . . . what is wrong is not that pic-
> tures are bad.[76]

So it seems that we need to distinguish between simply "using a pic-
ture" and "being in the grip of a picture." It is not that "pictures are
bad"—indeed, they can be indispensable (can lie at the root of all our
thinking)—but that, under the pressure of philosophy, we are inevita-
bly misled by them. The pictures which "lie in our language" are es-
sential to how we represent things, and yet they lead us into perplexity
when we call upon them, in our philosophizing, to play a role—in
particular, an explanatory role—they cannot bear up under. Thus
Putnam writes: "Was not Wittgenstein telling us to reject *all* pictures?
. . . As Cora Diamond has pointed out . . . , the fact that a picture is
not an 'explanation' doesn't mean that the picture is *wrong*."[77] In the
essay of Diamond's which Putnam refers us to at this point,[78] we find
this:

> That it can be misleading is not to say that we should really give up
> using the picture, stop talking that way. It is no accident that we do;
> no mischievous demon has been at work in our language putting in
> misleading analogies which the philosopher can simply discard when
> he has seen through them. To give up thinking and talking in such
> terms would be to give up the life in which these figurative expres-
> sions do have an application (just as giving up the picture of our
> "inner" mental life would be giving up the kind of life in which that
> picture is applied).[79]

This is how Putnam glosses Diamond's remark about what would be
given up if we were to give up our picture of human beings as having

ental life: "Suppose . . . that I were to be convinced that
were just logical constructions out of my sense data (or,
that talk about other people is just a game that is just use-
dicting *my* future sense-impressions); this would make an
difference to my life. (The whole question of *hurting* other
ould be 'displaced'; and so would the whole question of com-
ip.)"[80]

philosophers nowadays are inclined to view talk of an "inner
life" as an outdated remnant of Cartesian metaphysics. Of
we often employ turns of phrase that presuppose such a pic-
the "inner"—we talk about her feeling of pain being some-
that happens *in* her—but that is because ordinary language is
through with Cartesian metaphysics. Commentators therefore
clude that Wittgenstein is hopelessly at odds with himself in wish-
g to free us from a Cartesian conception of the inner while wanting,
the same time, to insist that philosophy should not interfere with
ordinary language.[81] Is Wittgenstein at odds with himself?

Of course, *within philosophy*, discussions about "the inner life" are
shot through with a full-blown Cartesian metaphysics—a conception
of the inner as a self-standing private *realm*, completely independent
of the ("outer") public realm. Realism about the inner thus comes to
seem to involve a commitment to private mental *entities* (and thus our
ontology begins to swell again). Now if anyone is famous for attack-
ing such a conception of the inner it is certainly Wittgenstein. The
question whether Wittgenstein is at odds with himself (in his attach-
ment to ordinary language) boils down to the question whether the
picture implicit in our language is one which, in and of itself, commits
us to such a (metaphysical) conception of the inner. Diamond's previ-
ous remark alludes to the following passage from *Philosophical Inves-
tigations*: "*Certainly* all these things happen in you.—And now all I
ask to understand is the expression we use.—The picture is there. And
I am not disputing its validity in any particular case.—Only I also
want to understand the application of the picture. The picture is *there*;
and I do not dispute its *correctness*. But *what* is its application?"[82]
Wittgenstein affirms here just what the standard interpretation has
him denying: the correctness of the picture. He is not disputing its
validity in any particular case (in which it occurs in ordinary conver-
sation). What he says he wants to understand is the application of the
picture. It is, he thinks, the unhappy coincidence of two factors which
brings about our confusion here: (1) the complex and unperspicuous

nature of the application the picture actually has in our lives; and (2) the comparatively straightforward (until one tries to make sense of it!) metaphysical picture of an inside and an outside which the picture itself (considered in abstraction from its use) invites. The passage continues:

> There is a picture in the foreground, but the sense lies far in the background; that is, the application of the picture is not easy to survey ...
>
> In numberless cases we exert ourselves to find a picture and once it is found the application as it were comes about of itself. In this case we already have a picture which forces itself on us at every turn,—but that does not help us out of the difficulty, which only begins here ...
>
> A picture is conjured up which seems to fix the sense *unambiguously*. The actual use, compared with that suggested by the picture, seems like something muddied ...
>
> In the actual use of expressions we make detours, we go by side-roads. We see the straight highway before us, but of course we cannot use it, because it is permanently closed.[83]

What we need to see—the sense, that is, which our talk (about what goes on "inside" someone) actually has—lies far in the background, while the picture, which lies in the foreground, *forces itself on us* at every turn, railroading our view of the grammar of our talk about the inner. Wittgenstein tries to bring this out through the following example: "'While I was speaking to him I did not know what was going on in his head.' In saying this, one is not thinking of brain-processes, but of thought-processes. The picture should be taken seriously. We should really like to see into his head. And yet we only mean what elsewhere we should mean by saying: we should like to know what he is thinking. I want to say: we have this vivid picture—and that use, apparently contradicting the picture, which expresses the psychical."[84] A conflict arises between the picture and things we ordinarily say. The actual use seems to contradict the way in which the picture invites us to understand the sense of our everyday talk of the inner. Misled by the picture, we lay down requirements as to what would count as *really* seeing inside someone's head. We make the picture "vivid." Thus we come to be in the grip of a (literalistic) view of what it would be for the picture to apply, compared with which any other use of the picture seems merely figurative. It comes to seem as if we lay claim, in our ordinary discourse, to forms of knowledge which we are, strictly speaking, unable to attain. In ordinary language, when we say we

to see into his head, what we mean, Wittgenstein says, be expressed by saying: we should like to know what he is This is something that sometimes we do know. Sometimes what another person is thinking. In this (ordinary) sense, we times see into someone's head. The conception of the inner re forces on us leads us to a conception on which all we can is the *outside* of another person's head.[85] We see the straight ay before us, but it is closed to us: the road is blocked—so it to us, when held captive by the picture—because the outside of ad is in the way, obscuring our view of the inside. It is not that enstein thinks that there *is*—that is, that sense can be made of picture here of—a permanently closed highway. What he thinks rather, that we are induced to picture such a highway to ourves.[86] We need therefore, in a sense, to distinguish between two pictures: the picture implicit in our practice and the filled-in version of the picture. It is the former which is to be respected. It is the latter which holds us captive and which eventually induces us (through our misdirected attempts to free ourselves from its grip) to treat the former as a superstition.

Our view of what it would be to speak properly about the inner is thus controlled by a particular way in which the picture has been filled in (so as to include a view of a closed highway before us). We thus conclude: properly speaking, we can never know what's going on inside of someone. We are left feeling (once again) that there is something we cannot do. We cannot see inside another person. The resulting conception of the inner (as radically private) saddles us with the threat of skepticism concerning other minds. In an attempt to escape skepticism, we resort to various strategies. We give up on the highway and try (what seem to us to be) circuitous back roads: we concede that we can never have direct knowledge, but we comfort ourselves with the thought that we can still have *indirect* knowledge of another person's mind. No (nonmagical) sense, though, can be made here of the idea (which the filled-in picture imposes on us) of direct knowledge. But the comforting possibility of indirect knowledge derives its (appearance of) sense from its participation in a contrast with the idea of direct knowledge. Thus we do gradually come to see, in our philosophizing, that there is no highway here (open or closed), but the realization comes too late: we conclude that there are no roads to another mind. We are left now with a picture of an inner realm so remote that there is no route—direct or indirect—from the outside in. So, in the

in search of a way out of our problem, (rightly) unwilling to settle for a radically private realm accessible to only one person, we decide to throw away the picture of an inner world altogether. We come to look upon our ordinary idioms (which involve talk about the inner) as just so many expressions of metaphysical confusion. Hence we begin our search for a philosophically respectable substitute (perhaps in terms of assertibility conditions) for the ordinary idiom.

"Rejecting 'realism' [about the inner] in the name of the realistic spirit" therefore, for Putnam, does *not* mean: simply subtracting from the Cartesian conception (of the relation of the outer and the inner) the idea of an independent private mental realm, and thus abandoning ourselves to one side of the Cartesian dualist's divide. This simply leaves us with a hollowed-out public realm in which the human body can no longer be seen as *expressive* of anything inner. (This way of rejecting realism about the inner leaves us continuing to conceive of the human body as something which screens—rather than expresses— the human soul, but then concluding that there is nothing behind the screen). The same (filled-in, literalized) picture of the inner continues to control our thought when we "recoil"[87] from Cartesianism into anti-Cartesianism—into, that is, some form of phenomenalism about what the subject of meaningful talk about "the inner" (henceforth permanently consigned to scare quotes) must, in the end, *really* consist in (something which is to be constructed out of elements drawn exclusively from one side of the divide). The realistic spirit aims to recover the role that talk about the inner plays in our lives. "Rejecting 'realism' [about the inner] in the name of the realistic spirit" therefore means rejecting a metaphysically loaded conception of the relation of the inner and the outer (as two independent realms, the metaphysically private and the inexpressively public), while treating with respect a picture of the inner which has great weight in our lives (and in which the inner and the outer are inextricably entangled and intimately interdependent).

The Weave of Our Life

Metaphysics without ethics is blind.
Hilary Putnam, *Meaning and the Moral Sciences*

In Chapter 8, "Pragmatism and Moral Objectivity," we learn that Putnam sees both Wittgenstein and the American pragmatists (espe-

and Dewey) as helping to revive a claim which was central to the ancient Greek tradition of thought about ethics: "only the ... have an adequate idea of what virtue is" and "the person ... not engage in the *practice* of virtue cannot have a fully adequate ... of what virtue is." The arguments which Putnam himself ... for this claim are indebted to the manner in which "someone ... e this traditional view has been defended in a well-known ... f papers by John McDowell."[88] McDowell's own arguments ... d in part as an interpretation of Wittgenstein) were directed, in ... st instance, against non-cognitivist theories of ethics—theories ... h "hold that ascriptions of value should not be conceived as ... positions of the sort whose correctness . . . consists in their being ... descriptions of the world."[89] According to non-cognitivists, the ... plication of any concept to the world is governed solely by its "descriptive content"—that component of the concept which is free of any evaluative connotations. They held that it should, in principle, be possible to analyze any moral concept into two discrete components: a descriptive element and an evaluative element. For any moral concept, that is, one should be able to fashion a new concept which could pick out just the same features of the world while lacking any prescriptive force. The thrust of McDowell's arguments against this view turned on the claim that it is impossible to understand a moral concept unless one is able (at least imaginatively) to *share in the evaluative perspective* within which such a concept has its life. This is how Putnam summarizes the claim:

McDowell . . . argued that there is no way of saying what the "descriptive component" of a word like "cruel" or "inconsiderate" is without using a word of the same kind; as McDowell put the argument, a word has to be connected to a certain set of "evaluative interests" in order to function the way such [an] . . . ethical word functions, and the speaker has to be aware of those interests and be able to identify imaginatively with them in order to apply the word to novel cases or circumstances in the way a sophisticated speaker of the language would.

For example, someone who has studied how the word "cruel" is used without performing such an act of imaginative identification could predict that the word would be used in certain obvious cases, for instance, torture. But such a person would be baffled by the fact that some cases which seemed (from the same external point of view) to be cases of "kindness" would be described by us as "subtle forms

of cruelty," and by the fact that some cases of what he or she would describe as cruelty would be described by us as "not cruel at all under the circumstances." The attempt of non-cognitivists to split words like "cruel" into a "descriptive meaning component" and a "prescriptive meaning component" founders on the impossibility of saying what the "descriptive meaning" is without using the word "cruel" itself, or a synonym.[90]

In order to allow it to resonate with other aspects of Wittgenstein's thought, Putnam tends to paraphrase this claim of McDowell's (that in order to use an ethical concept one must allow oneself to identify imaginatively with the interests which guide its application) as the claim that one cannot acquire an ethical concept unless one participates (at least imaginatively) in the form of life in which such a concept has its evaluative point. When Putnam claims (echoing Wittgenstein) that "understanding a language-game is sharing a form of life," he is extending the application of the point McDowell makes about ethical concepts to *all* of our concepts. In order to grasp the point of a concept one must have a sense of what it would be to be caught up in the whole fabric of activity into which the thread of the concept's use is woven. A concept can be thought of as "a pattern which recurs, with different variations, in the weave of our life."[91] Putnam's claim that "the use of the words in a language-game cannot be described without using concepts which are related to the concepts employed *in* the game" is therefore, in a certain sense, a generalization of the ancient Greek claim about virtue: "the person who does not engage in the *practice* of virtue cannot have a fully adequate idea of what virtue is."

Putnam (again following McDowell) points out that we are quite likely to find the counterpart of the ancient Greek view of virtue a perfectly plausible thing to say about *music:* "the person who does not engage in musical practice cannot have a fully adequate idea what great music is." The reason the Greek theory of virtue has seemed attractive to some thinkers as a theory about virtue has in part to do with the way in which (at least certain) ethical concepts appear similar in this respect to musical concepts. Yet it is precisely this aspect of (at least certain) ethical concepts which has inclined certain philosophers (preoccupied with the goal of describing the world in terms of "maximally non-perspectival" concepts) to impugn the "objectivity" of concepts of virtue. Putnam argues in "Pragmatism and Moral Objec-

tivity" that what can be seen to be a relatively perspicuous feature of our aesthetic concepts and some of our concepts of virtue (the ways in which they are woven into the texture of a practice) is in fact a feature of all of our important concepts. Early in the essay, he develops this point briefly in connection with the concept of intelligence:

> An unintelligent person might not care about losing or gaining in intelligence; but an unintelligent person does not have a good idea of what intelligence *is*. What makes this example relevant . . . is that an ancient tradition in ethics, the Greek tradition, did in fact think that virtue was in these respects like intelligence; it held, on the one hand, that only the virtuous have an adequate idea of what virtue is, and that those who have an adequate idea of what virtue is do not *ceteris paribus* wish to lose their virtue. Perhaps most people do not believe any longer that the Greek tradition was right; but it is not clear that this disbelief is based on some piece of "scientific knowledge" that we have gained in the meantime.

Putnam tries to turn the tables on the non-cognitivist by arguing that all of our concepts are, in a sense, tied to concepts of virtue. The non-cognitivist argues that those concepts which are closely tied to action—that is, which are used centrally in answering questions concerning how we should act—are unsuited to the (scientific and philosophical) task of describing the furniture of the universe. The non-cognitivist seeks to sort our concepts into two categories: those which are (exclusively) "world-guided" and those which are (in addition) "action-guiding." His reservation about ethical concepts is that their evaluative component—the component which implies that we *ought* to act in a certain way—renders them incapable of depicting the world "as it really is." Putnam wants to argue not only that the normative and descriptive dimensions of our paradigmatically ethical concepts are hopelessly entangled (and cannot be separated into distinct "components"), but that, upon careful reflection, essentially the same point can be seen to apply to our most fundamental epistemic and scientific concepts as well. Individual essays in this volume (especially those on philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of science) develop this point with respect to different concepts (instrumental rationality, truth, warranted assertibility, reference, confirmation, and so on). If there is a single sentence somewhere in this volume which comes closest to summing up the collective burden of the numerous individual arguments threaded through this volume as a

whole, it is therefore probably the following: "Many of our key notions—the notion of understanding something, the notion of something's making sense, the notion of something's being capable of being confirmed, or infirmed, or discovered to be true, or discovered to be false, or even the notion of something's being capable of being stated—are normative notions, and it has never been clear what it means to naturalize a normative notion."[92]

If there is a single overarching theme in this volume it is that, on the one hand, without appeal to our basic cognitive values (consistency, coherence, simplicity, instrumental efficacy, and so on) we are not in a position to make philosophical sense of most of our adult activities in life (practical or theoretical), while, on the other hand, in most of our philosophizing about those activities we tend to lose sight of the ways in which "these values are arbitrary considered as anything but a part of a holistic conception of human flourishing."[93] Putnam sees this overarching theme as, in turn, closely tied to what he takes to be the heart of Wittgenstein's teaching: namely, that it is only through a perspicuous representation of the practices in which they are embedded that we can command a clear view of any of our concepts (moral or scientific, logical or theological). "What determines our judgment, our concepts and reactions, is . . . the whole hurly-burly of human actions, the background against which we see any action."[94] Putnam sees the most characteristic manifestation of the metaphysical impulse as lying in its tendency to attempt to grasp our concepts in isolation from the surroundings—the whole hurly-burly of human actions—in which they have their life. Each essay in this volume, while sympathetically acknowledging the felt pressure of such an impulse, seeks to recover some particular concept from a condition of metaphysically imposed isolation and to restore it to the surroundings in which it is at home.[95]

Notes

1. Most (about two thirds) of the essays in this volume were written between 1989 and 1993. Quite a few of them have not been published before. Those essays which are of less recent vintage have been selected either in deference to popular demand or because they are presupposed by one (or more) of the other essays in the volume. The oldest of them ("Reductionism and the Nature of Psychology") dates to 1974.

2. "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to fulfill it." George

Santayana, *The Life of Reason* (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1909), vol. 1, chap. 12.

3. Putnam's favorite version of this sort of point concerns the ways in which the history of logical positivism continues to be reenacted. He argues that some of the central research programs of logical positivism have been revived in forms which obscure the fact that they run into the same deadends as their predecessors (and often for the same reasons). He argues in Chapter 16, "On Truth," and Chapter 13, "Does the Disquotational Theory of Truth Solve All Philosophical Problems?" that contemporary analyses of truth (in terms of disquotation) and meaning (in terms of assertibility conditions) run into some of the same problems positivist theories of truth and meaning foundered on. In Chapter 20, "Artificial Intelligence: Much Ado about Not Very Much," and Chapter 24, "Why Functionalism Didn't Work," he sketches a similar point with respect to the parallels between certain contemporary research programs in artificial intelligence and certain efforts of the positivists to formulate an inductive logic.

4. See in this connection the three essays on the views of Putnam's former teacher Hans Reichenbach (Chapters 5–7).

5. Most notable in this regard perhaps are Putnam's discussions (especially in Chapters 14–17, "Realism without Absolutes," "The Question of Realism," "On Truth," and "A Comparison of Something with Something Else") of the relation between Richard Rorty's views and the views of those whom Rorty seeks to oppose.

6. "Sense, Nonsense, and the Senses" (The Dewey Lectures, forthcoming, 1994), p. 1.

7. Putnam's reading of Descartes is indebted to a pair of articles by Paul Hoffman. In "The Unity of Descartes's Man," *Philosophical Review*, 95 no. 3 (July 1986), Hoffman argues that "substantial union" for Descartes refers not only to a union of two substances but to a product of such a union which is itself a substance. The substantial union of mind and body constitutes that genuine individual *(ens per se)* known as the human being. In "Cartesian Passions and Cartesian Dualism," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 71 (1990), Hoffman argues that sensations are modes of the (substance) human being which (though themselves simple modes of a genuine unity) bear both a mental and a corporeal aspect.

8. Thus, in Chapter 14, we find Putnam arguing against "reductive forms of naturalism" and in favor of what he calls "a sane naturalism." Putnam opposes "a sane naturalism" to what he calls a "disenchanted naturalism." Putnam here (and elsewhere in this essay and in "The Question of Realism") is taking his lead from John McDowell's John Locke Lectures, *Mind and World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). McDowell writes: "Modern science understands its subject matter in a way that threatens . . . to leave it disenchanted, as Weber put it in an image that has

become a commonplace . . . According to the picture I have been recommending, our sensibility yields states and occurrences with conceptual concepts . . . Even though the logical space that is the home of the idea of spontaneity cannot be aligned with the logical space that is the home of ideas of what is natural in the relevant sense, conceptual powers are nevertheless operative in the workings of our sensibility, in actualizations of our animal nature, as such . . . this can seem to express a nostalgia for a pre-scientific world-view, a call for a re-enchantment of nature . . . If we rethink our conception of nature so as to make room for spontaneity, even though we deny that spontaneity is capturable by the resources of bald naturalism, we shall by the same token be rethinking our conception of what it takes for a position to deserve to be called 'naturalism' . . . The rethinking requires a different conception of actualizations of our nature. We need to bring responsiveness to meaning back into the operations of our natural sentient capacities as such . . . for Aristotle the rational demands of ethics are autonomous; we are not to feel compelled to validate them from outside an already ethical way of thinking. But this autonomy does not distance the demands from anything specifically human . . . They are essentially within reach of human beings. We cannot credit appreciation of them to human nature as it figures in a naturalism of disenchanted nature, because disenchanted nature does not embrace the space of reasons . . . we can return to sanity if we can recapture the Aristotelian idea that a normal mature human being is a rational animal, with its rationality part of its animal, and hence so natural, being, not a mysterious foothold in another realm." In one of the notes to Chapter 14, Putnam writes: "Although I do not wish to hold McDowell responsible for my formulations in the present lecture, I want to acknowledge the pervasive influence of his work."

9. M. F. Burnyeat, "Is an Aristotelian Philosophy of Mind Still Credible?" in *Essays on Aristotle's "De Anima,"* ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amalie Rorty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 15–26. Burnyeat's article is written in criticism of a reading of Aristotle which was originally advanced independently by Nussbaum and Putnam—by Nussbaum in *Aristotle's "De Motu Animalium"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) and by Putnam in "Philosophy and Our Mental Life," in *Mind, Language, and Reality, Philosophical Papers, vol. 2* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975). "Changing Aristotle's Mind," Chapter 2 of the present volume, is their co-authored response to Burnyeat's criticisms.

10. Burnyeat writes: "My hope is that a historical inquiry into what Aristotle believes about the physical basis of animal life will bring about a sense that the other half of Cartesian dualism, the matter half, remains intact in all of us. Our conception of the mental may be open for discussion and revision, but our conception of the physical is irreversibly influenced by the demolition of the Aristotelian philosophy through Descartes and others in the sev-

enteenth century . . . Aristotle's philosophy of mind is no longer credible because Aristotelian physics is no longer credible, and the fact of that physics being incredible has quite a lot to do with there being such a thing as the mind/body problem as we face it today . . . Aristotle has what is for us a deeply alien conception of the physical. If we want to get away from Cartesian dualism, we cannot do it by traveling backwards to Aristotle, because although Aristotle has a non-Cartesian conception of the soul, *we* are stuck with a more or less Cartesian conception of the physical. To be truly Aristotelian we would have to stop believing that the emergence of life or mind requires explanation. We owe it above all to Descartes that that option is no longer open to us. Hence all we can do with the Aristotelian philosophy of mind . . . is what the seventeenth century did with it: junk it. Having junked it, we are stuck with the mind body/problem as Descartes created it, inevitably and rightly so" ("Is an Aristotelian Philosphy of Mind Still Credible?" pp. 16, 26).

11. In particular, they accuse Burnyeat of seeing "no way of reading Aristotle but in a Frank Baumian way, and no way in which Aristotle *could be* relevant to anything we're interested in today": "In the world of Frank Baum, matter—the straw in the Scarecrow's head . . .—can have the property of . . . being the location of thoughts and feelings without having any other particularly relevant properties . . . On Burnyeat's reading of Aristotle, we are *all* like the Scarecrow."

12. Burnyeat, "Is an Aristotelian Philosophy of Mind Still Credible?" p. 26.

13. The closing pages of Chapter 1 of this volume ("How Old Is the Mind?") touch on two reductionist projects which are discussed in further detail in a number of the essays which follow. In the context of attempting to offer a historical diagnosis of the powerful appeal of such projects, Putnam expresses considerable skepticism about two booming philosophical research programs he himself originally helped to launch: (1) causal theories of the referential powers of the mind and (2) computational analyses of interpretive rationality. His doubts about the former, he says, stem from their reliance on "an ancient (in fact, an Aristotelian) notion of efficient causation which is no more clear than reference itself"; his doubts about the latter stem from his inclination to think that "human interpretive rationality is deeply interwoven" in the rest of the fabric of human rationality, and his further inclination to think that it is impossible to construct an algorithmic model of prescriptive rationality in general. The former topic is taken up by the chapters in Part V of this volume, the latter by those in Part VI.

14. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), p. 336. Quoted by Putnam in Chapter 15.

15. I am allowing myself here to echo formulations of Putnam's (in Chapter 14) which, in turn, echo formulations of John McDowell's. Here is an example of the kind of passage from McDowell's Locke Lectures (about mod-

ern philosophy's response to dualisms) that Putnam is drawing on: "modern philosophy addresses its . . . dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes its stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand. Of course there no longer seems to be a gulf" *(Mind and World)*.

16. See Chapter 14, note 6. In this connection, both here and in Chapter 15, Putnam expresses an indebtedness to John McDowell's "Putnam on Mind and Meaning," in *The Philosophy of Hilary Putnam, Philosophical Topics,* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 35–48. Both essays are in large part a response to this paper. Taken together, these two essays can also be read as an extended commentary on Wittgenstein's remarks in §§605–607 of *Zettel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), beginning with Wittgenstein's remark that "one of the most dangerous of ideas for a philosopher is . . . that we think with our heads or in our heads."

17. Putnam claims that we can find the seeds of such a philosophy of perception in the writings of William James and John Austin and its full flower in those of Wittgenstein and McDowell.

18. *Realism with a Human Face* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 28.

19. *Representation and Reality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), p. 109.

20. Richard Rorty, "Putnam and the Relativist Menace," *Journal of Philosophy,* 90, no. 9 (September 1993), 443–461.

21. *Realism with a Human Face,* p. 28.

22. Ibid., p. 178.

23. Gary Ebbs has suggested that certain misunderstandings and criticisms of Putnam's view are "encouraged by Putnam's unfortunate use of the word 'internal' to characterize his realism. For this word suggests that there is an 'external' alternative to internal realism, a legitimate perspective from which internal realism looks like an optional view . . . But this reaction rests on a failure (or refusal) to understand Putnam's realism . . . from Putnam's point of view, metaphysical realism is a thesis which has no genuine content. There is no legitimate perspective from which internal realism looks like an optional view of the relationship between our concepts of truth and rational acceptability" ("Realism and Rational Inquiry," in *The Philosophy of Hilary Putnam,* p. 26).

Putnam writes in "His Reply to Gary Ebbs": "I agree with Ebbs that the connotations of the word 'internal' have proved unfortunate; which is why, in later writings, I have tended to speak of 'pragmatic realism,' or simply 'realism with a small "r"'" (ibid., p. 353).

24. Putnam's criticisms (in Chapter 15) of remarks of Rorty's about represen-

tation ("we should give up the idea" that "our beliefs represent the world accurately") are provoked in large part by Rorty's essay "Pragmatism, Davidson, and Truth," as are the criticisms in Chapter 14 of Rorty's views on reference (we should give up the idea that there is a genuine relation of reference between words and objects in the world). Rorty's essay is in *Truth and Interpretation,* ed. E. LePore (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

25. *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), §95.

26. Rorty writes: "I have urged that we continue to speak with the vulgar while offering a different philosophical gloss on this speech than that offered by the realist tradition" ("Putnam and the Relativist Menace," p. 444).

27. See Rorty's essay "The World Well Lost," in *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

28. In the portion of this passage I have omitted, Putnam writes: "On this, there is a beautiful paper by Cora Diamond, 'Realism and the Realistic Spirit.'" I discuss below what Putnam takes from this paper.

29. In Chapter 15, "The Question of Realism."

30. *Philosophical Investigations,* §97. Quoted by Putnam in Chapter 15.

31. Rorty is not the only philosopher to read Putnam's earlier attacks on metaphysical realism—as set forth, for example, in his essays "Realism and Reason" (in *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* [Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1978]) and "Models and Reality" (in *Realism and Reason* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983])—as underwriting the conclusion that "the whole idea of representing something external to language has collapsed." Putnam now goes out of his way therefore in "The Question of Realism" (and elsewhere) to emphasize that the aim of his earlier essays had been to argue not that metaphysical realism was false, but that it was *incoherent*—a form of words masquerading as a thesis: "What is common to all versions of . . . metaphysical realism is the notion that there is—in a philosophically privileged sense of 'object'—a definite Totality of All Real Objects and a fact of the matter as to which properties of those objects are the Intrinsic Properties and which are, in some sense, perspectival. The chief aim of the essays of mine that Rorty cites was to argue that this metaphysical kind of realism is 'incoherent.' I did not mean by that that it is inconsistent in a deductive logical sense, but rather that when we try to make the claims of the metaphysical realist precise, we find that they become compatible with strong forms of 'antirealism.' Thus attempts at a clear formulation of the position never succeed—because there is no real content there to be captured. My aim in those essays, therefore, was not to argue for the truth of a metaphysical counter-thesis (one which could be identified with the negation of metaphysical realism), but rather simply to provide a *reductio ad absurdum* of metaphysical realism by teasing out the consequences of it own presuppositions."

32. Putnam, "Reply to Carolyn Hartz," in "Replies and Comments," *Special Issue on the Philosophy of Hilary Putnam, Synthese,* 34, no. 3 (May 1991), 404.

33. "Putnam and the Relativist Menace," p. 445. Rorty offers this passage as a response to a parallel Putnam draws between Rorty and Carnap centering on an observation about the "scorn" with which "Rorty rejects a philosophical controversy" (*Realism with a Human Face,* p. 20). In the sentence preceding this passage Rorty writes: "There *is* a tone of Carnapian scorn in some of my writings . . . and there should not be." Rorty has missed Putnam's point here. What he does in this passage is propose to express his scorn in a different way. Putnam's point was not about whether Rorty charged a philosophical view with confusion or with relative inutility. The point was not about which terms of criticism were applied, but about *how* they were applied. Putnam was drawing attention not to whether Rorty's terms of criticism resembled Rudolf Carnap's, but to whether his *tone* did. His point was about the *dismissiveness* of Rorty's tone—his eagerness to dismiss a philosophical controversy before having taken the trouble to ascertain carefully what should be rejected in it and what should not. The parallel between Carnap and Rorty had to do with their shared desire to be able to cut themselves free from certain philosophical knots without first having to take the trouble to untangle them. The fundamental difference between Rorty and Putnam lies in their respective views of whether it is possible without further ado just to cut oneself free from certain philosophical controversies, and whether anything—and, if so, how much—is to be gained by carefully examining the structure of such controversies.

34. Rorty still often expresses his dissatisfaction with traditional philosophical positions in terms of a worry about their intelligibility. Consider, for example, the following remark (about skepticism) from the introduction to his most recent book: "From a Darwinian point of view, *there is simply no way to give sense* to the idea of our minds or our language as systematically out of phase with what lies beyond our skins [my emphasis]" (*Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], p. 12).

35. One might want to question Rorty's recent claim that *now* his real reason for wishing to discard talk of representation is simply its relative inutility (and has nothing to do with his formerly thinking that such talk was in some way confused). What we have here is a change in rhetoric which seems to suggest—but in no way corresponds to—a change in view. For Rorty continues to counsel us to speak, in the course of our ordinary dealings, with the vulgar. This shows that he does think that such talk has sufficient relative utility to be retained for certain purposes. Rorty counsels us to retain this way of talking but to do so advisedly. Evidently, he thinks it "lacks utility" with respect to some further purpose. The inescapable

conclusion here is that Rorty thinks that we have philosophically compelling reasons to discard such ways of talking in certain limited contexts *despite their practical utility* in other contexts. The relative inutility of such ways of talking comes into play for Rorty when we turn to the task of making general theoretical pronouncements about the relation of language and world. To try to respond here that what this shows is that *for philosophical purposes* such ways of talking lack relative utility—aside from seeming to rely upon a strikingly unpragmatist separation of the philosophical from the practical—is just to try to hide behind a notion of "philosophical utility." What does a failure to bake philosophical bread come to for Rorty other than a failure to make certain kinds of sense? The philosophical inutility of metaphysical realism's talk of representing the world as it is in itself—to go no further than the considerations adduced in Rorty's own writings—would seem to lie precisely in the ways in which such talk is inherently confused. Rorty can say that he now prefers to speak of "relative inutility" rather than of "incoherence" or "confusion," but it is hard to see how this new way of speaking on his part amounts to anything more than a misleading surrogate for his old way of speaking.

36. See Chapter 13, "Does the Disquotational Theory of Truth Solve All Philosophical Problems?"

37. Collected in *Realism and Reason,* pp. 98–114. Putnam's paper is followed by a note in which he writes that the paper which precedes the note is actually only "a first draft of a paper I never finished." In the note Putnam goes on to complicate, and to some extent retract, the view put forward in the body of the paper. The note is followed by a "Note to supersede (supplement?) the preceding note." This document seems to retract other aspects of the main paper and some of the preceding note's retractions. Some of Putnam's remarks in these appendixes anticipate aspects of the line of thought he elaborates in this volume.

38. Ibid., p. 101.

39. Here is an example of one: "The statement . . . 'This sheet of paper is red and this sheet of paper is not red' . . . simply asserts what *cannot possibly* be the case. And the reason that 'when I open the box you will see that the sheet of paper is red and the sheet of paper is not red' does not count as a prediction, is that we know—know a priori—that it *can't possibly* turn out to be the case [my emphases]" (ibid., p. 105).

40. Putnam summarizes the conclusion of the paper as follows: "The idea is that the laws of logic are so central to our thinking that they define what a rational argument is. This may not show that we could never change our mind about the laws of logic, i.e. that no causal process could lead us to vocalize or believe different statements; but it does show that we could not be brought to change our minds *by a rational argument* . . . [The laws of logic] are presupposed by so much of the activity of argument itself that it

is no wonder that we cannot envisage their being overthrown . . . by ratio-
nal argument" (ibid., p. 107).

41. This development is anticipated to some extent by the last sentence of the
"Note to supersede (supplement?) the preceding note" tacked on to the end
of his earlier paper: "if it is always dangerous to take on the burden of
trying to show that a statement is absolutely a priori, . . . it is not just dan-
gerous but actually wrong to make the quick leap from the fact that it is
dangerous to claim that any statement is a priori to the absolute claim that
there are no a priori truths" (ibid., p. 114).

42. In his telling of it here, Putnam has revised the original Grimms' fairy tale
(referred to by Wittgenstein) "The Peasant's Wise Daughter."

43. Putnam acknowledges a debt here to Cora Diamond's "Riddles and
Anselm's Riddle," chap. 11 of *The Realistic Spirit* (Cambridge: MIT Press,
1991), for the riddle, for drawing the (unpublished) Wittgenstein passage
in question to his attention (quoted by Diamond on p. 267), and for her
discussion of it.

44. Gottlob Frege, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic* (Berkeley: University of Cali-
fornia Press, 1967), p. 12.

45. The last three claims are summarized by Putnam as follows: "While I
would not claim that Frege endorses this view of Kant['s], it seems to me
that his writing reflects a tension between the pull of the Kantian view and
the pull of the view that the laws of logic are simply the most general and
most justified views we have. If I am right in this, then the frequently heard
statement that for Frege the laws of logic are . . . [the] 'most general laws of
nature' is not the whole story . . . At times it seems that their *status,* for
Frege as for Kant, is very different from the status of empirical laws. (It
was, I think, his dissatisfaction with Frege's waffling on this issue that led
the early Wittgenstein to his own version of the Kantian view.)"

46. I am here simply allowing myself to paraphrase some of Putnam's own
remarks. His considered view, however, is considerably more nuanced than
these formulations suggest. The nuance arises from the fact that Putnam
does not use the terms "sense" and "meaning" as synonyms. Putnam
writes: "The word 'sense' in questions like 'In what sense do you mean
that?' is much more flexible than the word 'meaning' as used in
philosophers' talk of 'translation manuals' and 'recursive specifications of
meaning.' To use an example due to Charles Travis, suppose someone
paints the leaves on my Japanese ornamental tree (which has copper-col-
ored leaves) green. If someone who doesn't know what happened remarks
that my tree has 'green leaves,' is that right or wrong? We may reply that it
all depends on what sense we give to 'green leaves'; but I don't think this
shows that either 'green' or 'leaves' has two *meanings*. Rather it shows that
given the (dictionary) meanings of the words, we do not always know what
a particular sentence *says* (if anything). The content of a token sentence

depends on the meaning of its words in the language, but it also depends on
a multitude of features of the context" (*The Philosophy of Hilary Putnam,*
p. 375).

Putnam wants to claim that we are not at present in a position "to give
sense" to the *assertion* of the negation of a law of logic. But he does not
take this to entail that the denial of a law of logic "has no meaning." He
wishes, for example, to regard sentences which contain such denials as sub-
sentential components as meaningful. He therefore wishes to drive a wedge
between a sentence's "having a meaning in the language" and our being
able to make sense of the sentence as the assertion of a *claim:* "Thus when
I suggested that Frege was attracted to and Wittgenstein actually held the
position that the negation of a law of logic violates the conditions for being
a thinkable thought or judgment, I was not excluding contradictions from
'meaning' in the sense of well-formedness in the language, or saying that
they have no use at all . . . My point was rather that a contradiction cannot
be used to make an intelligible claim" (ibid., p. 376). Putnam offers, by
way of example, a pair of historical cases in which he thinks we should say
that, at a certain time, certain sentences "had a meaning in the language"
but that they did not (yet) express "understandable claims": "someone
says, before anyone has succeeded in conceiving of a coherent alternative to
Euclidean geometry, that a plane triangle may have two right angles as base
angles. I think it is fair to say that we would not find this *intelligible* in that
cognitive situation. Learning Riemannian geometry enables us to *give sense*
to those words; that doesn't mean that we are *stipulating a new meaning*
for one or more of the words of the sentence in question. It means that we
can now see how that sentence can be used to make a claim, whereas before
we could not. We understand 'in what sense' such a triangle is possible.
Similarly, 'Momentum is not exactly mass times velocity' once had no
sense; but it is part of Einstein's achievement that the sense he gave those
words now seems inevitable. We read old physics texts homophonically for
the most part; certainly we do not say that 'momentum' used to refer to a
different quantity, but rather that the old theory was wrong in thinking
that momentum was exactly *mv*. So this is not a case of giving a word a
new meaning in the language. But that does not alter the fact that the use
to which we put the words (the sense we have given them) was not avail-
able before Einstein. Even if we decide to say that the sentence "had a
meaning in the language" even before Einstein, that does not mean that it
was *understandable*—understandable as a *claim*—before Einstein" (ibid.,
p. 375).

Putnam wants to say that when we declare—in a misplaced spirit of
fallibilist humility—that "the laws of logic may turn out to be wrong," we
have not (yet) succeeded in giving those words a sense any more than the
pre-Riemannian geometer or the pre-Einsteinian physicist would have been

in a position to make sense of the sentences in the above examples as asser-
tions of intelligible claims.

Putnam is famous for having argued against the idea (as put forward, for
example, by Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend) that Newton's and
Einstein's theories are incommensurable with one another because the fun-
damental theoretical terms (such as mass) have all undergone a *change in
meaning.* Putnam can be seen in the above quotation as trying to recover
the kernel of truth (which was misexpressed in terms of an incommensura-
bility thesis) underlying the views of those theorists of scientific change who
were so impressed by the radical character of scientific revolutions. While
continuing to stand by his earlier arguments (for rejecting the thesis that the
terms "momentum," "mass," and "velocity" all underwent a change in
meaning in the shift from Newton to Einstein), Putnam makes it clear here
that he does not take those arguments in any way to preclude him from
agreeing with what (he now thinks) was perfectly sound (but misexpressed)
in Kuhn and Feyerabend: namely, the thought that the Newtonian physicist
would not have known how to make sense of the claim that "momentum is
not exactly mass times velocity"—that it was only with Einstein that we
learned how to understand those words as making a fully intelligible claim.

47. Putnam, on his present view, thus seems to be wedded to the idea that the
negation of a proposition of logic is worse off than the (unnegated) propo-
sition of logic. There is, for Putnam, a significant asymmetry between a
logical proposition and its negation: the question of the truth of a logical
proposition makes sense, whereas the parallel question about its negation
(in ordinary circumstances) does not; the former meets the conditions of
being a thought and the latter does not. This aspect of Putnam's view aligns
him, one might have thought, much more closely with Kant and Frege than
with the *Tractatus* or the later Wittgenstein. For further discussion of this
and related questions which arise in connection with Putnam's account in
"Rethinking Mathematical Necessity," see my "Search for Logically Alien
Thought," in *The Philosophy of Hilary Putnam,* pp. 115–180.

48. See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar* (Berkeley: University of Califor-
nia Press, 1978), p. 455.

49. These sentences (which Putnam reproduces without supplying a reference,
assuming that all educated readers know these lines by heart) are from
Quine's essay "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in *From a Logical Point of
View* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 43.

50. "Introducing Cavell," Preface to *Pursuits of Reason: Essays in Honor of
Stanley Cavell,* ed. Ted Cohen, Paul Guyer, and Hilary Putnam (Lubbock:
Texas Tech University Press, 1993), pp. vii–viii. In *Renewing Philosophy*
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), Putnam expands on this:
"Cavell sees all of Wittgenstein's work as concerned with the problematic
of skepticism, but skepticism in a very wide sense. The skeptic in Cavell's

enlarged sense may indeed not be a skeptic in the usual sense at all. Rather
then professing to doubt everything or to relativize everything, he may
claim to have a grand metaphysical solution to all our problems. But for
Cavell the pretense that there is a grand metaphysical solution to all of our
problems and skeptical or relativistic or nihilistic escape are symptoms of
the same disease. The disease itself is the inability to accept the world and
to accept other people . . . Something in us both craves more than we can
possibly have and flees from even the certainty that we do have. It is not
that relativism and skepticism are unrefutable. Relativism and skepticism
are all too easily refutable when they are stated as positions; but they never
die, because the attitude of alienation from the world and from the commu-
nity is not just a theory, and cannot be overcome by purely intellectual
argument. Indeed, it is not even quite right to refer to it as a disease; for one
of Cavell's points is that to wish to be free of skepticism is also a way of
wishing to be free of one's humanity. Being alienated is part of the human
condition, and the problem is to learn to live with both alienation and ac-
knowledgment" (pp. 177–178).

51. This is obscured by the David Pears and Brian McGuinness translation of
the *Tractatus* (London: Routledge, 1961), which introduces into this sen-
tence the idea that there is something which "we must *pass over* in silence."
It is further obscured by their translation of the previous sentence. Where
Wittgenstein says the reader "must overcome [or defeat]" the propositions
in this book, Pears and McGuinness have: "He must *transcend* these prop-
ositions."

52. This is a phrase of John McDowell's which (as the reader of this volume
will discover) Putnam has grown fond of; see McDowell's John Locke Lec-
tures, *Mind and World,* and McDowell's "Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Fol-
lowing," in *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule,* ed. S. Holtzman and C. Leich
(London: Routledge, 1981), p. 150.

53. I have partly constructed this paragraph from sentences taken from my
"Search for Logically Alien Thought" (which discusses these issues in more
detail).

54. *Philosophical Investigations,* §43.

55. Putnam's reading of Frege and my summary of it below are indebted to
Thomas Ricketts' "Objectivity and Objecthood: Frege's Metaphysics of
Judgment," in *Synthesizing Frege,* ed. L. Haaparanta and J. Hintikka
(Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1986).

56. *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* pp. 12–25.

57. Here, again, Putnam sees Frege (and *a fortiori* Wittgenstein) following in
Kant's footsteps. In Chapter 1 Putnam summarizes a similar point (about
how the activity of judgment eludes the gaze of empirical psychology) of-
fering it, on this occasion, as an exposition of Kant: "Here is an example to
illustrate what Kant had in mind. If I think, 'There are cows in Rumania,'

then regarded as an event in the material universe, what I have produced is a list or sequence of words—noises, or subvocalizations, or images in my mind, or whatever. If I utter (or think) not the sentence 'There are cows in Rumania,' but the mere list of words *There, are, cows, in, Rumania*, I also produce a sequence of words—one with different causes and effects to be sure. But the difference between judging that there are cows in Rumania and producing a mere list of noises seems to be something over and above a mere difference in the causes and effects in the two cases. The judgment is, in Kant's terminology, an act of *synthesis*. And the problem about which, according to Kant, empirical psychology cannot tell us anything is the problem of understanding synthesis."

58. I am allowing myself here to follow Putnam's (somewhat inconsistent) use of this term. Throughout most of the essays in this book "naturalistic" is employed as a label for various forms of (what Putnam in some of his more careful moments calls) "reductive naturalism": empiricism, behaviorism, positivism, psychologism, eliminativism, and so on. As mentioned above, Putnam also sometimes uses the label "disenchanted naturalism" to name the enemy in order to leave room for the claim that the view he himself endorses is a ("sane") form of naturalism—one which allows nature to encompass (rather than exclude) normativity and intentionality.

59. *Philosophical Investigations*, §19.

60. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 8.

61. *The Many Faces of Realism* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1987), chap. 1.

62. *Realism with a Human Face*, pp. 40, 42.

63. *The Realistic Spirit*, chap. 1.

64. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 325.

65. *The Realistic Spirit*, p. 39.

66. Ibid., pp. 39–40.

67. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, pp. 201–202. For further discussion of Wittgenstein's remark, see *The Realistic Spirit*, pp. 41ff., and the appendix to Diamond's "Wittgenstein, Mathematics, and Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, ed. Hans Sluga and David Stern (London: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

68. *The Realistic Spirit*, pp. 18–22.

69. Ibid., pp. 21–22.

70. Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*, pp. 71–72.

71. Putnam writes: "Mary Warnock once said that Sartre gave us not arguments or proofs but 'a description so clear and vivid that when I think of his description and fit it to my own case, I cannot fail to see its application.'

It seems to me that this is a very good description of what Wittgenstein was doing, not just in the private language argument, but over and over again in his work" (*Renewing Philosophy*, p. 74).

72. Ibid., p. 156.

73. If the person lacks a perspicuous view of the way in which the picture informs his own practice, he may himself become puzzled whether he is entitled to the use he makes of it. He may thereby be drawn into viewing the possibilities of use in the same way—through the lens of the picture considered in abstraction from its use. He will thus be led either into conflict with himself (through his continued reliance on the picture—unless, that is, he changes his life) or into (what Wittgenstein calls) "superstition" (into insisting that God *does* have eyebrows, and only a heathen sinner would deny it!).

74. *Philosophical Investigations*, §115.

75. Putnam is here alluding to a discussion in Wittgenstein's *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*: "In general there is nothing which explains the meanings of words so well as a picture" (p. 63).

76. *Renewing Philosophy*, pp. 156–157.

77. Chapter 13, last paragraph.

78. "The Face of Necessity," chap. 9 of *The Realistic Spirit*.

79. *The Realistic Spirit*, p. 259. Diamond immediately goes on to develop this point in connection with the topic of her paper—the picture of necessity implicit in everyday mathematical practice: "To give up altogether the pictures that mislead us when we talk as philosophers about proof and reasoning would be to give up—not Platonist mathematics—but mathematics, reasoning, inference, what we recognize as making sense, as human thinking. The picture of a necessity behind what we do is not then to be rejected, but its application looked at" (p. 259).

80. Chapter 13, penultimate paragraph. The passage continues: "As Cavell puts it, skepticism about other minds can be (and, in a way, often is) a *real* problem, while skepticism about 'middle-sized dry goods' is an utterly unreal problem." The allusion here is to the discussion of the asymmetry between skepticism about other minds and skepticism about the external world in Part IV of Cavell's *The Claim of Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

81. This question (whether Wittgenstein can, without inconsistency, uphold the integrity of our ordinary talk of the inner) forms the topic of an exchange between John McDowell and Crispin Wright. Here, again, there is a considerable affinity between Putnam and McDowell—this time with respect to their readings of Wittgenstein's remarks about pictures. See McDowell's "Intentionality and Interiority in Wittgenstein," in *Meaning Scepticism*, ed. Klaus Puhl (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991).

82. *Philosophical Investigations,* §§423–424.

83. Ibid., §§422, 425–426.

84. Ibid., §427.

85. Wittgenstein writes: "We are thinking of a game in which there is an inside in the normal sense. We must get clear about how the metaphor of revealing (outside and inside) is actually applied by us; otherwise we shall be tempted to look for an inside behind that which in our metaphor is the inside" ("Notes for Lectures on 'Private Experience' and 'Sense Data,'" in *Philosophical Occasions, 1912–1951* [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993], p. 223).

86. Putnam's views on these matters are (as therefore is also my summary of them—especially at this point) indebted to Peter Winch's article "Wittgenstein, Picture, and Representation," in *Trying to Make Sense* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

87. Here again, I am allowing myself to echo Putnam echoing McDowell.

88. The papers by McDowell which Putnam has in mind here are "Virtue and Reason," *Monist,* 62 (1979); "Are Moral Requirements Hypothetical Imperatives?" *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* suppl. vol. 52 (1978); and "Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Following."

89. McDowell, "Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Following," p. 141.

90. *Renewing Philosophy,* p. 86.

91. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* p. 174.

92. Chapter 12, last paragraph.

93. *Reason, Truth, and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 136.

94. Wittgenstein, *Zettel,* §567.

95. I am indebted to Stanley Cavell, Cora Diamond, Martin Stone, and Lisa Van Alstyne for comments on a previous draft of this introduction.

he Return of Aristotle