FAREWELL TO THE TRADITION: DOING WITHOUT METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY

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I

Like a host of others I think we can cope very well indeed without a foundationalist epistemology either classical or modest. I also believe that we neither can have nor do we need a philosophical Archimedean point or any other kind of Archimedean point to assess science, religion, morality, politics and all the rest of culture. We need no such "transcendent" perspective; wide reflective equilibrium with its repairing the ship at sea will do. Moreover, there is no good reason to believe that there is some single description of the world that patient inquiry might someday unearth that will depict what the basic categories of the world are and indeed must be so that at long last we will have discovered the ultimate nature of reality or the very structure of the universe. To think we can do anything like this is a wild philosophical conceit.

I do not think we even have any coherent conception of what we are asking for here when we ask for an Archimedean point let alone claim that we possess criteria for deciding when we would have finally found the holy grail. Just as philosophy ought to set aside the doing of foundationalist epistemology (if that isn't pleonastic) so it should also resolutely set aside the doing of metaphysics or ontology.

Negatively, a transformed philosophy, in tune with the development of science since at least the Seventeenth Century, should be resolutely anti-metaphysical and, positively, going more in the direction of the pragmatists and the Frankfurt school philosophers (including Jürgen Habermas), it should reconstruct philosophy as critical-theory-of-society. I shall not concern myself here with its positive transformation but with its negative anti-metaphysical and anti-epistemological stance.[1] I think this anti-metaphysical stance includes a rejection of physicalism or materialism: that metaphysics within the limits of science alone, as Hilary Putnam has aptly labelled it. We can neither get nor do we need that scientistic world-picture anymore than we need any of its more or less idealist or obscurantist rivals. Such a physicalist metaphysics is indeed the only *metaphysical* game in town, given the development of

thought (including most importantly scientific thought) up to the present. It is, that is, the only *metaphysical* view that has any plausibility at all. But even it, as Putnam has powerfully argued (particularly in "Why there isn't a ready-made world" and in "Why reason can't be naturalized"), is incoherent in its root notions, revealing itself to be not the handmaiden of science articulating the basic categories of the world but a scientistic ideology: a myth for modern man.[2] There is no metaphysical game in town, or for that matter out of town, that is worth the candle.

Perhaps the most powerful single case of resistance to such onslaughts on The Tradition, onslaughts made not only by Putnam but by Richard Rorty and Charles Taylor, comes from Alvin Goldman in his masterful *Epistemology and Cognition*.[3] There Goldman defends metaphysical realism (placing himself well within a physicalist programme), a version of the correspondence theory of truth and a modest foundationalism in epistemology. He aims such a defence against what he takes to be anti-realism (including Putnam's work), against deflationary accounts of truth such as disqoutationalism and through and through social accounts of knowledge such as Rorty's. He seeks in short to vindicate The Tradition. I want to concentrate on his very perceptive discussion of realism and truth in Chapter 7 of *Epistemology and Cognition*. I shall first try to make vivid some of its power, originality and plausibility and then show how it is subject to a very basic flaw which undermines it defense of metaphysical realism which in turn is required for the defense of his modest foundationalism.

II

Truth is important for Goldman's conception of epistemic justification and a non-epistemic, non-pragmatist, non-disquotational realist conception of truth at that. 'Realism' is, of course, a philosophical term of art (though not only a philosophical term of art) and it gets many readings, so Goldman seeks to specify what he means to be claiming in defending metaphysical realism. He takes his departure appropriately enough from Michael Dummett's characterization of realism. Goldman, to my mind rightly, rejects bivalence as a necessary condition for realism but accepts what Dummett calls verification — transcendence as essential for realism. What is critical for realism, Goldman contends, is the belief, and the correctness of the belief, that when statements of putative fact are true, including statements about the future and subjunctive conditional statements, what makes them true (or false) is independent of our knowledge or of verification (143). That is what is meant by the claim that truth is verification-transcendent. It is essential

for, indeed definitive of, metaphysical realism. What the realist is claiming is that "a statement is true or false independently of our knowledge, or verification, of it (or even our *ability* to verify it)" (143). Truth so understood is not an epistemic matter about what is warrantedly assertable or rationally acceptable. Goldman's central concern with realism is, as he puts it, "a concern with truth; with what makes a statement, or belief, true, if it is true" (143). He then immediately points out that his theory of truth, like Tarski's, is interested in "the 'meaning' of truth, not in procedures or marks for telling which propositions are true" (144). Classical coherence theories of truth have conflated these quite different enterprises. "They run together coherence as a *test* of truth and coherence as a definition of truth" (144). Coherence, suitably understood, has a certain plausibility as a test, or a partial test, for truth but no plausibility at all as a definition of truth. Goldman's theory of truth is concerned exclusively with the definition and elucidation of its meaning and does not concern itself with tests for truth which Goldman treats under the central epistemic topic of a theory of justified belief (144).

In articulating a proper theory of truth, we face, in a way disquotational truth theory does not, in his estimate, the substantial questions that divide realists from anti-realists. And it is these issues that must, Goldman believes, be resolved in favour of the realist if his own defense of epistemology against Wittgensteinian or Rortyean attack is to be sustained. The realist conception of truth Goldman defends is a conception which asserts (put in modal terms) that the very idea of a proposition's being true is the idea of state of affairs such that it could happen (or could have happened) that it be true, even though we are not in a position to verify it (148).

Goldman offers a cogent if not a strikingly original critique of epistemic theories of truth (144–51). His criticisms are fairly standard and fairly unexceptional and, given the fact that its two major contemporary exponents (Rorty and Putnam) have abandoned it, I shall not discuss it.[4] But it is important to keep firmly in mind that Goldman's alternative realist conception insists on a sharp distinction between a proposition's being true and a proposition's being verified and stresses, as well, that it is the "latter, but not the former" which "involves processes by which the truth is detected or apprehended" (149). Indeed, it is by maintaining just this distinction — the distinction between what truth is and how it is known — that we "can make good sense of certain of our verifying procedures" (149). Realists form a conception of reality that is a conception of something robust. It is something that has objects or properties, which are invarient under

"multiple modes of detection. The use of multiple procedures, methods or assumptions to get at the same putative object, trait, or regularity is common place in ordinary cognition and in science" (149). In this way in careful inquiry we seek to triangulate in on the objects or relationships under study. We can best make sense of this "on the assumption that truths, or facts about the object or system under study are sharply distinguished from the processes of verification or detection of them" (149). The point is to use different techniques or methods "to get at the verification-independent properties of the target object" (150). The underlying realist and common sense assumption is that there are truths about the world to be discovered by verification processes. Is there any good reason at all to think there is anything mistaken or even problematic in this pre-theoretical, pre-philosophical assumption? It seems, at least, to be something which it would be very difficult sensibly to deny. (We might, in a way that exhibits some skepticism concerning Goldman's very problematic, also ask whether it requires a *theory* of truth, an epistemology or an ontology for its defense and whether the claims made in any such putative defense would not be less certain than that very claim itself?)

III

One of the reasons that has led what Goldman takes to be the anti-realist camp (Wittgenstein, Goodman, Rorty and Putnam) to reject both metaphysical realism and the taking of an epistemological turn is a belief that the correspondence theory of truth is incoherent. Goldman well brings out their central criticisms of what he takes to be the strong classical conception of the correspondence theory of truth. He shows how these arguments are well taken such that *such* a correspondence theory must be abandoned and he shows as well the implications of this for foundationalist epistemology. He then, taking to heart these criticisms, seeks to articulate a de-mythologized and weakened correspondence theory that would be immune to these criticisms and still provide the basis for a foundationalist epistemology. This takes us to the heart of his account and to the core of his defense of a modest foundationalism. If this account, or some modification of it, stands, it is at least plausible to believe that the case against epistemology collapses. So it is of some considerable importance that we carefully inspect Goldman's ideas here and this requires first setting them out.

The Tractarian version of a correspondence theory of truth, Goldman argues, is a non-starter for the usual reasons. It claims that the world is a totality of facts. A proposition is true just in case it corresponds to an approprite fact. But the world does not consist of fact-like entities:

entities of the sort that would exactly correspond to propositions or sentences. It is at best false to portray the world "as being prestructured into truthlike entities" (151). (This, of course, in the face of William James's derision, assumes that we understand what "correspondence" could come to here.)

It is also argued by anti-foundationalists and anti-realists alike (*sometimes* they are the same) that the world is not prefabricated in terms of kinds or categories. The claim made by Goodman and Putnam is the familiar Kantian one that objects and kinds do not exist independently of conceptual schemes. "We", as Putnam puts it, "cut up the world into objects when we introduce one or another scheme of description".[5] There are no Self-Identifying Objects. It is we conceptualizers, conceptualizing in our various ways, who sort the world into kinds. The world does not sort itself into kinds. Goldman expresses this familiar Kantian point, at least seemingly so vital in arguing about the case against foundationalism and against epistemology, as follows:

> The point here is essentially a Kantian point, and one also stressed by Nelson Goodman. The creation of categories, kinds, or 'versions' is an activity of the mind or of language. The world itself does not come precategorized, presorted, or presliced. Rather, it is the mind's 'noetic' activity, or the establishment of linguistic convention, that produces categories and categorial systems. When truth is portrayed as correspondence, as thought or language *mirroring* the world, it is implied that the world comes precategorized. But that, says the antirealist, is a fiction.(152)

IV

One might have expected Goldman to take a Davidsonian turn here and reject the whole Kantian schema/content dichotomy, but he does not and he seems at least to accept that critique of a strong form of the correspondence theory which relies on a rejection of the belief "that the world is prestructured into truthlike entities (facts) and that truth consists in language or thought mirroring a precategorized world" (152). Goldman seems at least to think that *such* a realism with *such* a strong correspondence theory of truth is indefensible and he turns instead to what he calls "weaker variants of correspondence" which he thinks are defensible and are sufficient to yield a realist theory of truth without making a mystery of 'correspondence'. Traditional correspondence theories used the metaphor of mirroring; Goldman provides

a new governing metaphor, namely that of being fitting or fittingness. He believes it gives us, with the use of an analogy, the key to a de-mythologized correspondence theory of truth. Goldman introduces his conception as follows:

> The mirror metaphor is only one possible metaphor for correspondence. A different and preferable metaphor for correspondence is *fittingness*: the sense in which clothes fit a body. The chief advantage of this metaphor is its possession of an ingredient analogous to the categorizing and statement-creating activity of the cognizer-speaker. At the same time, it captures the basic realist intuition that what makes a proposition, or statement, true is the way the world is.(152)

To bring out the force of his case, he works with his analogy of the sense in which clothes fit a body. Just as there are "indefinitely many sorts of apparel that might be designed for the human body" so there are "indefinitely many categories, principles of classification, and propositional forms that might be used to describe the world" (152). The human body indeed has parts but it is not "presorted into units that must each be covered by a distinct garment" (152). Custom and sartorial ingenuity decide what parts to cover, what types of garment should cover which parts, whether the garments should be loose fitting or snug and the like. Moreover, for many parts of the body, there is a considerable array of different garment-types used to clothe them. It is people with their interests, preferences and inventiveness who devise standards for proper fittingness. Here we have a wide variation and there are shifts in style and fashion. "Styles specify which portions of selected bodily parts should be covered or uncovered and whether the clothing should hug snugly or hang loosely. This is all a matter of style, or convention, which determines the *conditions of fittingness* for a given type of garment" (153). Whatever conditions of fittingness human devising and interest set down for a given type of garment — something that is determined by the creators and designers, and not by the world, and reflects human choice and devising — still, whether a given garment (a token of a type) for a given person fits that person's body is determined by the world (by the way that person's body is). Custom and / or human devising determines *how* it shall fit, or what counts as fitting in such cases, but whether in that particular case that fit obtains is a matter of what a part of the world is actually like, namely what that person's body is like and what that garment is like. Indeed, to repeat, convention determines the *conditions of fittingness* for a given type of garment. However, as Goldman well puts it, "Once such fittingness conditions

are specified...there remains a question of whether a given garment token of that type satisfies these conditions with respect to a particular wearer's body. Whether it fits or does not does *not* depend solely on the fittingness conditions; it depends on the contours of the prospective wearer as well" (153).

The analogy vis-a-vis a realist theory of truth and Kantian critique is apt. Though forms of mental and linguistic representation are human artifacts, human constructions, not products of the world *per se*, it remains the case that "whether any given sentence, thought sign, or proposition is true depends on something extra-human, namely the actual world itself" (153). But which "things a cognizer-speaker chooses to think or say about the world is not determined by the world itself. That is a matter of noetic activity, lexical resources in the speaker's language and the like" (153). For a sentence or proposition to have any truth-value, it must have associated conditions of truth. But the conditions of truth are no more read off the world or pried off the world than are conditions of fittingness. These are determined by the resources of a given language, the interests, devising and choices of agents in a particular culture and often at a particular time or at least epoch. These conditions of truth are set by human convention and devising: a devising that in many cases answers to various human interests. But, Goldman continues, bringing out firmly his realist commitments, whether or not these conditions of truth, socially *derived* though they are, *are or are not satisfied* is determined by how the world is and not by any human 'world-making'. "Truth and falsity, then, consists in the world's 'answering' or 'not answering' to whatever truth-conditions are in question" (153). This specifies without miracle, mystery or authority, a de-mythologized sense of 'correspondence' for a chastened correspondence theory of truth in a way that squares with realist intuitions. Moreover, this account does something that good philosophical accounts not infrequently do. It meets intuitions realists properly insist on while at the same time finding a place for the valid points made by anti-realists. In doing this, we get a much better picture of what should be said and believed than with more tunnel-visioned approaches.

In deftly so proceeding, Goldman points out that *which* truth-conditions must be satisfied is not determined by the world. (I would prefer to call it the non-human world because there is nothing else but the world.) Conditions of truth are laid down not by the world (the non-human world) but only by thinkers or speakers: agents acting in the world with certain purposes, interests and conceptions of things. "This is the sense in which the world is not precategorized, and in which truth does not consist in the mirroring of a precategorized world" (153).

We have with such a display of the conceptual terrain a way of doing justice to the realist claim that truth and falsity, at least for matters of fact, is determined by how the world is while still doing justice to "the constructionist themes of Kant, Goodman and Putnam" (153). That is a pleasant, and perfectly coherent way, to have your cake and eat it too.

V

A considerable part of the motivation for the Goodman-Putnam type constructivism is epistemological or more precisely to make a case for an anti-foundationalist anti-epistemology. We can never, they argue, compare a thought or a statement, or a network of such thoughts or statements, giving us a 'version of the world', with an unconceptualized reality so as to tell whether the world answers to that thought or statement or network of thoughts or statements (154). Moreover, "comparison of a theory with perceptual experience is not comparison with unconceptualized reality because perceptual experience is itself the product of a sorting, structuring or categorizing process of the brain. So all we can ever do cognitively is compare versions to versions" (154).

Relying on his account of fittingness as a replacement for mirroring, Goldman remarks that he can concede that point to the constructivists without it undermining his weakened correspondence account of truth or his realism, for on his own correspondence account no utilization is made of mirroring or of the strange idea that "true thoughts must resemble the world" (154). An "epistemology of getting or determining the truth need not involve comparison" (154).

VI

Perhaps this will do and with it we will have laid the foundations for a realist modest foundationalism. However, there is at least this kind of worry. Suppose someone sloganizes as follows: 'There can be no fittingness without at least a "mirroring" that unavoidably involves comparison. We cannot give sense to whether something is fitting or not without making comparisons'. Let us, in trying to see if there is anything in that, go back to the garment analogy. Suppose I am buying a certain sort of hat and I am told (reflecting a sartorial convention) that one of the fittingness conditions for that sort of hat is that it not rest on the ears but fit snugly one quarter of an inch above the ears. Perhaps I see a model of a hat so fitting (a wax head with a hat of the requisite type on it) or have a mental image of a hat on my head one quarter of an inch above my ears. I try on a hat and walk to a mirror and see that (say) it fits a quarter of an inch above my ears or, if I have no mirror, I feel it with my fingers and ascertain that it does fit one quarter of an inch

above my ears or perhaps I just feel the pressure of the hat on my head at the requisite place. Perhaps (if I am a pedantic sort) I will measure it even carrying out certain elementary operations. But the point is that fitting here does involve comparisons. Now take the thought or the sentence 'There is a tree before me'. I cannot, as the constructivists show, compare thought or sentence with an unconceptualized reality. It is not like looking at the hat on the wax head and then looking in the mirror at the hat on my head. But how, then, can we determine fit without comparison? Goldman puts something like this difficulty (if that is what it is) himself when he says: suppose it is asked if the realist's world is unconceptualized (as he agrees it is) how can it be grasped or encountered in a manner that determines fittingness? How can, or can, we determine fittingness here? Is it not, after all, the case that on Goldman's account we can just grasp or encounter the world (the unconceptualized world) so as to determine whether some thought or sentence of ours fits it? His realist theory, the claim goes, so understands the world that it turns it into a noumenal object: a something that cannot be known or correctly described, a very vast and mysterious something I know not what.

Goldman, of course, resists this. Since his response is vital for his defense of a realist foundationalism let me quote his response in full.

> Perception is a causal transaction from the world to the perceiver, so perception does involve an encounter with the world (at least in nonhallucinatory cases). To be sure, the event at the terminus of the transaction does not *resemble* the event at the starting point. The terminus of perception is a perceptual representation, which involves figure-ground organization and other sorts of grouping and structuring. The initiating event does not have these properties. Still, the transaction as a whole does constitute an encounter with something unconceptualized. We are not cut off from the world as long as this sort of encounter takes place. But is this sort of encounter sufficient for knowledge or other forms of epistemic access? As far as I can see, realism about truth does not preclude such knowledge. Suppose that the (unconceptualized) world is such that the proposition 'There is a tree before me' fits it, that is, is true. And suppose that the perceptual process is a reliable one, both locally and globally. Then, according to my account of knowledge, I may indeed *know* that there is a tree before me. The world that I learn *about* is an unconceptualized world. But *what* I learn about this world is that some conceptualization (of mine) fits it. *How* I learn this is

by a process that begins with the unconceptualized world but terminates in a conceptualization.

Does this (realist) theory make the world into a noumenal object, an object that cannot be known or correctly described? Not at all. On the proposed version of realism we can know of the world that particular representations fit it. So the world is not a noumenal object. (154)

VII

Goldman's account is impressive. Does it, at least in essentials, stand and, if it does, does the case against epistemology collapse? I think much of it stands and should simply be incorporated into good, clean intellectual work but I also think central elements of his thought, and indeed elements which are crucial for his case against those who would reject epistemology and with it foundationalism, need careful querying and it is to that that I shall now turn. Indeed, it is my belief that in some very essential respects his case does not stand.

At the very end of his discussion of metaphysical realism, Goldman, almost as if it were an aside, brings up a criticism of metaphysical realism by Hilary Putnam, turning on indeterminacy of reference. But — or so I shall argue — Putnam's critique here cuts to the heart of the matter. Goldman must deflect it if he is to make his case for metaphysical realism (155). I shall argue that Goldman has not adequately responded to it and that Putnam's arguments both undermine metaphysical realism and scuttle in a very fundamental way epistemological foundationalism.

Putnam in criticizing the correspondence theory of truth points out that there are too many correspondences. Correspondence is, if it comes to anything, Putnam claims, a word-world relationship. But, given indeterminacy of reference, there just are too many word-world relationships. There are in situation after situation too many candidates for the reference relation. While there may be one satisfaction relation under which a given sentence turns out true, there will be other equally plausible satisfaction relations under which it turns out not to be true. Interpretation is inescapable here, for, "for any word-world relation purporting to be the 'intended' truth relation, there are other, equally good candidates. Since no unique word-world relation can be identified with truth, the correspondence notion of truth is untenable" (155). Reference relations are always indeterminate and this, according to Putnam, has key implications for truth.

Goldman, strangely it seems to me, denies that this is so. Putnam's problem, he tells us, if it really is serious, is a problem about interpretation or the *establishment* of truth-conditions and not about

truth (155). Goldman rightly points out:

> Questions of the truth cannot arise until there is a suitable bearer of truth-value with an established set of truth-conditions about which it can be queried which truth-value it has. Sentences or thought events construed as meaningless marks or nerve impulses are not bearers of truth-values. Only when a sentence or thought event is interpreted — when it has suitable semantic properties (including reference of singular terms and sense or reference of general terms) — is it even a candidate for being true or false (155).

Putnam presses us to ask how words and thought signs get their meaning and reference. How, that is, do truth-conditions get attached to thought signs? Goldman throws up his hands at this problem (155) but claims that, however it is resolved, it is not a problem for him "for unless and until sentences and thought signs are conceded to have interpretations, or truth-conditions, the question of truth cannot arise" (156).

While not denying the truth of what he has just said I continue to have trouble with its relevance to the problem at hand. As we have seen Goldman cogently arguing, when such an assignment is made, when such an interpretation is given, we can have definiteness (under that interpretation) of reference and (under that interpretation) accuracy of representation and we can determinately ascertain in many circumstances what (under a certain interpretation) truth-value a particular employment of a given sentence has. We can, ascertain, that is, whether it is true that there is a poisonous snake in my berry patch. "Given truth-conditions for a sentence, or thought, what makes it true or false is surely the way the world is, or whether it fits the world" (156).

It seems to me that this response to Putnam will not do at all and that, when we think it through, it is a great let-down to realist hopes. Such an account cannot meet the realist's pretheoretical intuitions. Intuitions which, if abandoned, would be tantamount to abandoning realism. What the metaphysical realist wants is for the world *quite unequivocally* to determine what is true and what is false. As Goldman puts it himself, it is the realist's expectation that it is objects and properties in the world which determine, whether propositions are true, quite independently of what cognizers or interpreters, if any there are, think or what conceptual schemes (if any) are extant and accepted. This being so, the realist's intuition goes, it is just true or false that at a given time and place there is a poisonous snake in Nielsen's berry patch quite apart from whether Nielsen or anyone else is around to assert or deny it or to place a certain

interpretation on the utterance of the sentence 'There is a poisonous snake in Nielsen's berry patch'. The realist expectation is that if the proposition that there is a poisonous snake in Nielsen's berry patch fits with a certain segment of the world then it is true and we need not be concerned how some cognizers interpret it or what conceptual schemes are accepted.

Putnam's analysis of indeterminacy of reference shows this realist belief to be a myth. What counts as a 'poisonous', 'snake', 'poisonous snake', 'berry patch', 'being in the berry patch' all admit of different readings. There is no determining what is the correct reading independently of societal conventions or determinate uses of terms in certain language-games built into the linguistic practices of a given society or a family of societies. In that way society determines what we can say, think and believe and what has the most fundamental epistemic authority.

Realist pre-theoretical expectations to the contrary notwithstanding we cannot say *sans phrase*, and make it stick, that there is a poisonous snake in Nielsen's berry patch. What we can say is that, given a certain interpretation of the sentence expressing that proposition, a certain specification of truth-conditions *and* a certain condition of a part of the world, that (if all these conditions hold) it is true. But under other interpretations it is false and under still other interpretations it is indeterminate. There is no just its being the case, independently of the holding of some conceptual framework, that there is a poisonous snake in Nielsen's berry patch. And since this is perfectly generalizable the commonsensical sounding claim of metaphysical realism has been undermined. If this is to believe in schema and content then so be it.

Perhaps a richer set of examples will help drive home this point. Consider the standard South African racial classification system. As South African road and city maps (at least of the 1976 vintage) will tell you, there are whites ('Europeans'), blacks, coloreds, and asians and they make up the major racial groupings of South Africa and there are supposedly a determinate number of such peoples in the various townships. Now let me concoct the following not utterly unrealistic dialogue. Suppose I am walking down the main street of Stellenbosch with an Afrikaner and we pass two chaps chatting in front of the drugstore. I say to the Afrikaner after we have passed, 'They are blacks, aren't they?' He replies, 'No, they are coloreds'. I respond, 'They looked like blacks to me. They are very dark'. He says, 'No, they are coloreds. They were speaking Afrikaans and they have straight noses'. I ask, 'Can't some blacks speak Afrikaans like native speakers?' He allows that a few can and that some blacks have straight noses. I then allege

there is no racial difference between blacks and coloreds but only an ethnic one connected with certain cultural traits and certain distinctive historical circumstances. He says, 'No, there are distinct racial groupings, answered to by whites, blacks, coloreds, and asians'. We both agree that there are borderline cases where nothing would settle what race a given person was, except the vicious arbitrariness of the racial reclassification board. But the Afrikaner also alleges that over populations and with respect to clear paradigmatic cases there are in the world such different races and that the two chaps we passed in front of the drugstore were plainly coloreds. (He, of course, could be right about the first while being wrong about the second.) He can associate certain conditions with 'being colored' that will vindicate his claim that they are coloreds but there is nothing in the world which will force an acceptance of that reading on me or alternatively force an acceptance of my denial that there are coloreds on him. All we can say is that, given the acceptance of a certain conceptual framework and when certain conditions obtain, the sentence 'Those chaps were coloreds' is true. But the conditions by themselves are not enough to settle the truth claim here, the conceptual framework must also be accepted, but there is nothing in the world (the non-human world) that just forces that or any other conceptual framework on us. That is not to say, however, that decisionism is king and that there are no considerations of a pragmatic sort that may reasonably incline us to one framework rather than another. But this does mean that what we will even count as true is not independent of the conceptual framework we have. What is true or false, realist intuitions to the contrary notwithstanding, is not independent of the conceptual framework we inherit or adopt. And conceptual frameworks, while being Neurath modifiable, are *cultural artifacts*. There is no, independently of some tradition or other, just discovering the truth — the simple truth — naked to our gaze. To escape nihilism or cultural relativism or things of that sort (if indeed we can so escape) we need wide-reflective equilibrium not metaphysical realism or indeed any other metaphysical doctrine.(6)

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CANADA

NOTES

[1] I have, however, in my "Philosophy as Critical Theory", *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* (1987), pp. 89–108, and elsewhere articulated this positive side.

[2] Hilary Putnam, *Realism and Reason*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 205–247.

[3] Alvin Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), Chapter 7. All future references to Goldman's book will be given in the text.

[4] Rorty, "Pragmatism, Davidson and Truth", in Ernest Le Pore (ed.) *Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 333–355, and Hilary Putnam, *The Many Faces of Realism*, (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1987) and his "On Truth" in Leigh S. Couman *et al.* (eds.), *How Many Questions* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 35–56.

[5] Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 52–3.

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