WORLD-VIEWS AND THE WORLD

A Study of the Role of Linguistic Frameworks in Our Knowledge of the Real

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work. All sources used have been acknowledged.

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The work is a contribution to the debate between realism and relationalism. The argument is that there is a unique real world to be, and thinking about it is to give a correct account of the real world, or of the world itself. There can only be a single, correct account of the real world. The realist viewpoint may be referred to as the standpoint of objectivity, or as the externalist perspective.

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This work is a contribution to the debate between realism and relativism in metaphysics. Realism is the thesis that there is a unique real world which exists independently of our perceiving it and thinking about it. Furthermore, realism has it that the nature of the unique real world is as it is independently of how we perceive it to be, and of how our theories describe it. According to realism, to give a correct account of some constituent of the world, or of the world itself, is to present a God's Eye view of that constituent, or the world. There can only be one complete and correct account of the real world. The realist standpoint may also be referred to as the standpoint of objectivity, or as the externalist perspective.

Relativism is the thesis that the Real is relative to its being experienced and described. Furthermore, the relativist holds that there are many different ways in which the Real is experienced and described; and hence, that there are many different real worlds. Relativism denies the possibility of a God's Eye view: there just are different points of view — that is, different ways of experiencing and describing the Real. The relativist standpoint may also be referred to as the standpoint of subjectivity, or as the internalist perspective.

Our enquiry will proceed as a dialectic between realism and relativism. As the dialectic progresses, it is hoped that we will discover just what is at stake between realism and relativism.
A key concept in the development of our dialectic will be that of a linguistic framework. The term has been adopted from Rudolf Carnap¹. For the moment we shall not examine just what use Carnap makes of the concept: this will emerge later. However, we shall draw a distinction which Carnap does not make, between uses of the concept linguistic framework which have fairly mundane, uninteresting implications, and uses of the concept which have far deeper, more interesting implications -- particularly relativistic implications. In illustrating the former kind, we might better understand what is not at issue between relativism and realism. Then, as the dialectic progresses, the deeper implications may emerge, and realist and relativist reactions to cases employing the concept in this way should lead us better to understand what the root of the realist-relativist dispute is. But for now let us begin with merely a vague characterization of a linguistic framework, and say that it is simply a portion of language.

"Mundane" linguistic frameworks

A relativist might tender the following sentence as a statement of relativism:

Different linguistic frameworks give rise to different worldviews.

But, as this bare statement comes to us, its relativist connotations are far from self-evident. We shall investigate the statement and hope that eventually the relativist nature of it will become clear.

Does the above statement mean that different linguistic frameworks give rise to different views of the same world — the unique, real, objective world? That is, does this statement merely claim that knowledge/truth is perspectival — that is, that there are different ways of correctly seeing the one real world, and hence different ways of describing the world? Surely this much is uncontroversial. I observe the glass of wine in front of me from a particular angle. It has a particular two-dimensional image or shape from this angle, and the wine a particular colour. However, to someone else sitting in another part of the room, it has a quite different shape and colour. Nevertheless, we are both observing the same glass of wine: we simply have different perspectives of it.

Furthermore, the concept of perspective, as we are using it here, can be extended. The basic concept is spatial, and concerns sight: we have different views of an object, depending on what angle we view it from. But the concept can be extended to include different "views" — not just visual, but related to any of the senses, as well as the intellect and value systems — arising from different interests and expertises. For example, if the other person were an expert wine taster, then she would have a different perspective from mine based on the smell and taste of the wine. She would know what area the grapes
came from, how the wine was made, the type of container the wine was matured in, and so on. Now suppose there were a third person in the room -- a physicist. She would have a different perspective of the wine again. She might know its exact molecular composition, the sub-atomic explanation for its colour and chemical reactivity, and so on. Thus, there are any number of correct descriptions of the glass of wine. They can all be correct simultaneously without inconsistency. If any two descriptions were to contradict one another, or were to have contradictory implications, then we would conclude that at least one of them was not a correct description of the glass of wine. Thus far we have not encountered relativism.

Now, what is the force of the term 'linguistic framework' in our statement? Does the wine taster in our example operate within a different linguistic framework from mine; and likewise the physicist? Well, as it happened, they did; but they need not have. We all are capable of using any of several linguistic frameworks; some people are proficient in many more than others, as a result of more extensive education and training, and broader interests and opportunities. A linguistic framework is simply a portion of language suited to talking about some particular aspect of the world. There are linguistic frameworks especially suited to talking about the quality of wines, the micro-structure of matter, automotive mechanics, mathematics, politics, everyday life, and so on. Linguistic frameworks are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and there can be many different orders of them: that is, there can be linguistic frameworks within linguistic frameworks, within linguistic frameworks again, and so on. For example, consider the mathematical linguistic framework. There are many different
divisions and subdivisions of mathematics, each having its own more and more specialized linguistic framework, each framework being specially suited to different (mathematical) aspects of the world. Under the American Mathematical Society's classification of mathematics of 1979, there are approximately 3,400 sub-categories of mathematics\(^1\). Any single mathematician would be familiar with at most two or three sub-categories -- and each sub-category, of course, will have its own linguistic framework. So, returning to our previous example, our description of the second person observing the glass of wine as 'the wine taster' is not, of course, an exhaustive description of that person's being. She does not only ever speak as a wine taster -- that is, in that specialized linguistic framework. She could quite easily have been a physicist as well, and thus could have chosen to look at the wine from that perspective -- that is, she might have chosen to describe it in its molecular or even sub-atomic structure. Or again, she may have decided to look at it from a purely everyday perspective and have commented that it happens to be a cheap and easy way of getting drunk, and tends not to produce too bad a hangover.

Now, the importance of the notion of linguistic frameworks is in dealing with apparent contradictions. For example, an artist might say of our wine that its colour is just right. Our wine taster, on the other hand, might say that the colour is quite poor. Nevertheless, despite this apparent contradiction, they might well both be uttering simultaneously correct statements. This is because despite the fact

that they are both considering the wine's colour, they are nevertheless each (we shall assume) considering it from a different perspective — that is, within a different linguistic framework. The artist is operating within an aesthetic linguistic framework. The colour is just right aesthetically speaking, with respect to the light and shade, and other colours surrounding it. The wine taster, however, is operating within the linguistic framework appropriate to wine tasting: to her, the colour is not right — it indicates a bad wine. Thus, we can see how the two apparently contradictory statements can both be correct without inconsistency: they are made within different linguistic frameworks. We are here assuming that there is a fact of the matter as to whether the colour is aesthetically right, and a fact of the matter as to whether the colour indicates a poor quality wine. Those who hold to a fact-value distinction may be suspicious of this example, but its force certainly does not turn on any element of subjectivity. However, for those who still cannot accept this, consider the following example.

A tourist in a Third World country correctly asserts that a certain sample of water is pure after she has determined that it is not contaminated with harmful bacteria — for example, she might have boiled it for several minutes, or have had it tested for such bacteria. An experimental chemist, on the other hand, correctly states that this same sample is not pure. To her, only distilled water — liquid composed entirely (or as closely as possible) of H₂O molecules — is pure water. Thus, once again we see that prima facie contradictory statements can be simultaneously correct if they are made within different linguistic frameworks. Indeed, in each of the above two examples, the pair of statements could well have been made by the same person: someone
proficient in both linguistic frameworks. According to what we have seen so far, it is logically possible (though practically impossible, due to limited time and intellectual capacity) for a single person to be proficient in every linguistic framework employed by humanity, and, without ever contradicting herself, to utter truth (that is, correct statement) after truth about the world. (We assume that she never makes mistakes, no matter what linguistic framework she is operating in.) As time approached infinity, she would approach perfect knowledge of the world: that is, knowing everything about every aspect of the world.

Of course, as we have seen, for one to recognize that she never contradicts herself, one would need always to be aware of which particular linguistic framework she was making any given statement in, and be proficient in that linguistic framework. For, as the above examples indicate, the meaning of some words may differ from framework to framework. In an everyday linguistic framework, dealing with an everyday aspect of the world, in which our main concern with water is drinking to quench thirst and to maintain health, 'pure' means not contaminated with harmful substances or organisms. But in an experimental chemist's linguistic framework, which deals with an aspect of the world in which the concern is how particular chemicals behave under controlled conditions, 'pure' means having no impurities whatsoever — that is, in our case, containing nothing that is not $H_2O$.

As we have so far characterized it, the notion of a linguistic framework is hardly deep or interesting. Different linguistic frameworks deal with different aspects of the world or its constituents, or look at the world from different, though mutually consistent,
perspectives. Thus, so far as we have seen, there is no contradiction between correct statements in different linguistic frameworks. But returning to our relativist’s statement, surely a relativist must mean more than just that different linguistic frameworks give rise to different, though compatible, views of the same world. When the statement is interpreted as we have done so far, it is hardly a statement of relativism.

"Deep" linguistic frameworks

However, now suppose that the object I am looking at is an ancient human bone at a sacred aboriginal burial site. (Note that the aborigines talked about in this example are not intended to be Australian Aborigines.) I might consider the object from an archaeological standpoint, and state that it is composed of such and such materials, is so and so many years old, and was part of a human being leading a normal tribal life in this area. However, to a second observer -- a member of the tribe descended from the ancient tribe of the same period as the bone -- the object is not simply an ancient bone composed of normal materials, once having belonged to a normal person. To her the bone once was a part of a supernatural being, and the bone itself now has supernatural powers and is not composed of normal earthly materials.

Now, this case is not so easily dealt with as the previous examples. The two observers are certainly employing different linguistic frameworks from each other, but this time the difference between frameworks does not seem to lie simply in their dealing with
different aspects of the same object. We shall suppose here, for the sake of argument, that translation between the aboriginal language and English is unproblematic. Thus, assume that both the aborigine and I mean the same by 'supernatural': say, the power magically to make a seriously sick person well when employed in an appropriate magical ritual. Thus, this is not a case of a merely apparent contradiction, as in the 'pure water' and 'right colour' cases: in this case there is a genuine explicit contradiction. I say that the object is a normal bone, having earthly constituents and no supernatural qualities. The aborigine contradicts this. What can we say about this situation?

Clearly, if the aborigine and I are making statements about the same object, then at least one of us must be wrong. Assume for the moment that my account of the bone is correct. What should we make of the aborigine’s account? Has she simply made a mistake? Could I reason with her and show her that there is no evidence for her claim that the bone is supernatural? Could I convince her that her account is inconsistent with the empirical laws of nature, and thus convince her that she has perhaps made a blunder, or uncritically accepted a belief which, with a little careful reasoning, she could have seen to be incorrect?

Clearly, it would be quite misleading to see the aborigine as having made an avoidable mistake -- an isolated blunder. Her statements about the bone do not arise out of a lapse in her rationality, or a careless acceptance of beliefs. They are merely a typical part of an everyday linguistic framework; one which she shares with the other members of her culture. The view of the world arising from this
linguistic framework includes supernatural beings and objects. Her fellow tribespeople would adjudge her account of the bone as correct. That is not to say that one could not make a mistake within that linguistic framework. A child might point to another human bone lying around, and state that it is a supernatural one; only to be told by the adults that she has made a mistake, and that she should pay more attention during her lessons. But our aboriginal observer has not made such a mistake. Judged from within her linguistic framework she is perfectly correct.

Now, the last sentence needs explaining. To do so we must first investigate a particular notion we have been using: correctness. What does it mean for a statement or description to be correct or true? The answer to this is simple: a statement is true or correct just if the situation that it states to obtain in the world does in fact obtain in the world. We are assuming that the unique real world exists independently of anyone’s perception or description of it. A correct statement describes some part of the world just as it is in itself. Hence, ‘Snow is white’ and ‘La neige est blanche’ are true just if in the real world snow is white. Of course, as we have seen in the ‘right colour’ and ‘pure water’ examples, one must recognize which linguistic framework a statement is made within, and be sufficiently proficient in that framework to be in a position to understand just what that statement asserts is the case in the real world. Nevertheless, once one does understand just what it is that the statement claims to be so, then in order to assess whether the statement is true or false one must determine of the independent real world whether it is as the statement claims it is. Now, as we have set up the bone case, there is no problem
as to the meaning of the statement claiming that the bone is supernatural; for we have assumed that the aborigine and I mean exactly the same by the term 'supernatural' — or, more accurately, that the English statement 'This bone has supernatural qualities' is an accurate translation in every respect of the aborigine's statement. Thus, the aborigine's statements about the bone are false, or incorrect, since they do not accord with the real world: the bone did not once form part of a supernatural being, and nor does it have supernatural qualities now.

But then, what was meant above when we said that judged from within her linguistic framework the aborigine is perfectly correct? Here our concept of a linguistic framework becomes deep and interesting. Statements such as 'This bone has supernatural qualities' are (we assume) quite appropriate to, perhaps even typical of, the aboriginal linguistic framework. Talk of supernatural beings and objects is an important part of the aborigine's culture; so much so that the question 'Are there any supernatural powers?' would never arise for her. And if the question was put to her, then she would regard the answer as being self-evidently affirmative. If pressed further, say with the question 'But how do you know they exist?', she might tell the questioner to watch an aboriginal magical ritual in order to see such powers: in other words, she would simply produce an example of supernatural powers to answer the question.

Here we begin to realize the force of the word 'framework'. The statement 'This bone has supernatural qualities' is not an isolated falsity, at odds with the rest of the aborigine's linguistic framework.
Such supernatural talk is an integral part of a framework. This linguistic framework presents the world in a particular way, though not necessarily in any detail. Amongst other things, it determines the categories into which things in the world are to be placed, or how the world is to be divided up; and, very importantly, it comes complete with a 'style of reasoning'. This last term is Ian Hacking's\(^1\). We shall investigate just what it means later. Now, once this linguistic framework has been accepted, the question as to whether there are any supernatural powers will not be raised, the answer being self-evidently affirmative. It is, however, a proper question to ask within this linguistic framework whether a particular object or being has supernatural powers. To determine the answer to such a question one must employ the style of reasoning tied up with the linguistic framework. For example, in our aborigine case it is a proper question within the aboriginal linguistic framework to ask of a particular bone whether it has supernatural qualities. If, say, the bone was found at a sacred aboriginal burial site, then by aboriginal reasoning this might prove that it does have supernatural qualities.

World-views

Now, the way the world is presented by the aborigine's linguistic framework is incompatible with the way our Western scientific linguistic framework presents the world. There are not just isolated contradictory

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statements. The two linguistic frameworks each present a world-view; and these whole world-views are incompatible. Now we can see what was meant by the claim that judged from within her linguistic framework the aborigine is correct: in the world as presented by the aboriginal linguistic framework the bone does have supernatural qualities. Thus, once anyone accepts and operates within the aborigine’s linguistic framework, that person will adjudge the statement attributing supernatural qualities to the bone as correct.

From this it follows that if we, as subscribers to the Western scientific linguistic framework, want to maintain that there is only one real world, which different linguistic frameworks are used to describe, then we must conclude that the aborigine’s world-view as a whole is incorrect. That is, the aborigine’s world-view, or way of seeing the world (and that of her whole culture), is wrong-headed. She does not see the world as it actually is. At this deep level -- that is, where a linguistic framework gives rise to a world-view -- there can only be one correct linguistic framework, if we accept realism. Of course, as we have seen, at the shallow level there can be any number of different correct linguistic frameworks, since each framework deals with a different aspect of the world, rather than presenting a world-view.

How do I know that my (that is, Western scientific) world-view is the correct one? Well basically, mine works and the aborigine’s does not. That is, mine provides a more consistent and more precise explanation of a vastly wider range of worldly phenomena. Also, the predictive capabilities of mine are far better and more successful. The vast difference in the explanatory and predictive success of our
respective world-views indicates that it is more than likely that mine is correct (approximately) and that hers is incorrect.

Now, such mutual incompatibility between linguistic frameworks (or world-views) is not restricted to frameworks of different cultures. There are many totally different and mutually contradictory ways of seeing the world within our Western scientific culture. For example, one may have a monistic view of the world (à la Spinoza): everything is but one substance manifested in many different ways. All the things we see as being individual existences are simply various modes of being of the one substance. On the other hand, someone else might have a pluralistic view of the world: the world is a collection of individual existents. Each person will see the other’s account of the world as wrong (though, perhaps, as a convenient fiction). Now, going along with what we have assumed so far -- that is, that there is one unique real world -- one and only one of these two world-views is correct. That is, either there is only one substance, or there is more than one substance.

But how are we to know which of the two alternatives is correct? If we try to imagine in principle what would be evidence for one world-view over the other, then it soon becomes clear that there can be no such objective or independent evidence. This is because any "evidence" will be seen in terms of (that is, in the linguistic framework of) the world-view itself. Any data must be seen in some way or other -- that is, they are necessarily described in some particular terms or others. And how is each person to see/describe the data except according to her world-view, or in terms of her linguistic framework? Once one accepts the view that the world is the unique substance, then
anything at all that might be held up as evidence for pluralism will simply be seen as a mode of that single substance. Since these two world-views do not share even the most basic data, we cannot know which of them is correct, even though we know that one of them must be correct. But this is a very strange state of affairs. Apparently, either the monist or the pluralist is correct; but whichever one is correct is so purely by chance, since there is no way of knowing for certain which view is correct. Indeed, there is no objective evidence possible which would enable us to assign even a greater probability of correctness to one view over the other. And given that, why is one person a monist and another a pluralist? That is, how did they come to hold their respective world-views as correct, when there is no reason to think that one or other is the correct one?

Kuhn provides a plausible answer to this question\(^1\). One learns to view the world in the way that is sanctioned by one’s peers and teachers. Acquiring such a world-view is essential to one’s becoming a member of the relevant community. Indeed, according to Kuhn, it is essential to one’s full understanding of the statements of the community that one shares that community’s world-view (or linguistic framework). This is because different world-views, or linguistic frameworks, are incommensurable; that is, there is no common measure between different world-views. This means that they will admit different basic data and employ different concepts; and even when terms do coincide, the meanings of these terms will differ. Furthermore, what

is to be treated as an issue — for example, what sentences qualify as candidates for a truth-value — differs from framework to framework.

Due to this incommensurability, one community cannot perceive as a possible alternative the world-view of a different community: the unfamiliar world-view (of the second community) is totally misunderstood, since it is interpreted in terms of the first community’s own world-view; and hence, statements of the second linguistic framework will seem either manifestly false or nonsensical to the first community. Our earlier example of the aborigine’s world-view versus mine fits this account at least as well as the monism versus pluralism case. Both the aborigine and I have grown up with our respective world-views. When each of us hears (the translation of) the other’s account of the bone, we each perceive it as at best totally false, if not utter mumbo-jumbo. Neither of us can see the other’s world-view as a viable alternative to our own.

The model we have so far presupposed is of a unique, independent, objective world, of which there can only be one complete, totally correct account. From such presuppositions it follows that if different world-views are each correct, then each must be a view of a different aspect of that unique world. Taken all together, every possible correct world-view — if completely worked out — would give a complete account of the world. There cannot be different correct views of the same aspect of the world, or of the world as a whole, as we argued in the two cases mentioned above. Such a model is what Hilary
Putnam refers to as 'hard-core realism'.

Are the implications of such realism plausible? Take the monism-pluralism case. Is it really the case that one will be either a monist or a pluralist, and that a monist cannot see pluralism as a coherent alternative world-view (and vice versa)? This is clearly not the case. Probably most of us are "brought up" as pluralists; but after a thoughtful reading of, say, Parmenides or Spinoza, we might come to see the world monistically. Thus, the incommensurability of world-views does not make it impossible to understand a world-view different from one's own. After all, we claimed earlier that monism and pluralism are equally valid ways of seeing the world; and that there are no good reasons for holding one to be correct and the other incorrect. Surely to recognize this we must adequately understand both world-views: that is, we must be able to see the world at one time pluralistically, and at another monistically.

But once we have achieved this, then it becomes difficult to persist with hard-core realism. That is, it becomes hard to believe that, despite all we have said, either monism or pluralism is the correct way of viewing the world, and the other is incorrect. Rather, it seems much more plausible to hold that both are correct ways to view the world. Each world-view will provide a complete and correct description of any particular object in the world. The descriptions will of course be completely different, but they will be equivalent. It

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is analogous to the way that the earth can be mapped by different projections — such as the Mercator and the Polar. It is a property of the real world itself that it ‘admits of these different mappings.’ Putnam calls this model ‘sophisticated realism.’ Thus, for example, a pluralist might point to an object and say: ‘This is Robert J. Hawke, an individual existent, a substance.’ A monist, however, would say of the same object: ‘It is merely a mode of being of the one substance — that is, the unique substance is manifested in this instance in the mode of Robert J. Hawke’.

Relativism

Putnam holds that there is a serious problem with sophisticated realism: it is that although we succeed in retaining the unique real world, the price we pay is that we give up any intelligible notion of how the world is. Putnam writes:

‘Any sentence that changes truth-value upon passing from one correct theory [linguistic framework/world-view] to another correct theory — e.g. an equivalent description — will express only a theory-relative property of THE WORLD. And the more such sentences that there are, the more properties of THE WORLD will be theory-relative.’

In our monism-pluralism case, the property being-an-entity, or being-a-substance, will be theory-relative (or world-view-relative, or

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1 This illuminating analogy is Putnam’s: see ibid., p.132.
2 Ibid., p.132.
3 Ibid., p.132.
4 Ibid., p.132.
linguistic-framework-relative). In 'Realism and Reason' Putnam provides an example of equivalent descriptions of the world which demonstrates that the property being-an-object (as opposed to a class or set of things) is theory-relative; and even that the cardinality of the world is also theory-relative. Such examples lead Putnam to make the following claim:

'The fact is, so many properties of THE WORLD -- starting with just the categorical ones, such as cardinality, particulars, or universals, etc. -- turn out to be 'theory-relative' that THE WORLD ends up as a Kantian 'noumenal' world, a mere 'thing-in-itself'. If one cannot say how THE WORLD is theory-independently, then talk of all these theories as descriptions of 'the world' is empty'.

Hence, sophisticated realism, like hard-core realism, is untenable.

Here, at last, we encounter fully-fledged (though not self-confessed) relativism. For in Putnam's statement we give up the idea that a world-view is a view of the world. It is at best a (or perhaps the) view of a world. Now, at last, we are able to appreciate the relativistic import of our original statement of relativism:

Different linguistic frameworks give rise to different world-views.

We can join Kuhn and make the point that different communities of people, employing different linguistic frameworks -- Kuhn uses the term 'paradigm' here -- in a very real sense 'live in different worlds'. I live in a different world from that in which lives the aborigine of our earlier example. Her world includes supernatural objects and beings; mine does not. Of course, it must be remembered that it is by no means

1 Ibid., p.133.
2 Kuhn, op.cit., p.193.
always the case that any two linguistic frameworks will identify different worlds: it is only in the deep sense of the term that this is so. It still makes perfect sense to have different linguistic frameworks suited for discourse about different aspects of the same world — that is, two such (mundane) linguistic frameworks would be parts of a larger (deep) linguistic framework, identifying and characterizing a world.

Given such relativism, does it make any sense to distinguish between correct and incorrect, or true and false statements; or does "anything go"? Well, although we have seen that there is no unique theory-independent world with which a statement can accord — and in virtue of that be true or correct — nevertheless, our common sense account of truth can be perfectly well applied within any linguistic framework. But prior to seeing how this can be done, we should examine more closely Hacking's notion of a 'style of reasoning'.

In 'Language, Truth and Reason' Hacking distinguishes between subjectivism and relativism. The characterization he chooses for subjectivism is that by thinking we might either make something true, or make it false. Such a doctrine he rightly holds to be patently wrong. What concerns Hacking is relativism, which he characterizes as follows: 'by thinking, new candidates for truth and falsehood may be brought into being'; or in other words, 'whether a proposition is as it were up for grabs, as a candidate for being true-or-false, depends on whether we

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1 Hacking, op.cit., p.49.
have ways to reason about it. Hacking argues that there are many different styles of reasoning which can be discerned and their developments traced. Some die out, whereas others persist.

An example Hacking gives of a style of reasoning different from our own is that of the Renaissance medical, alchemical and astrological doctrines of resemblance and similitude. He argues that our modern notion of evidence is totally lacking in this style of reasoning. He gives the following example of how this style of reasoning proceeds: syphilis is transmitted in the marketplace, which is signed by the planet Mercury, which also signs the element mercury, which therefore might be effective against syphilis.

Hacking argues that what we must focus on, in attempting to understand such foreign writings, is not what the writers held to be true, but rather what they considered to be the possibilities for truth-or-falsehood, and the procedures of reasoning that produce these possibilities. In translating from such foreign writings, the guiding principle should not be to maximize the number of propositions held to be true in both the foreign and our own doctrines. There will be very few such propositions, and, more importantly, the reasons these propositions are held true in the foreign writings will almost certainly be completely different from the reasons we hold them true. Rather, what we should attempt to do in translating a foreign text is to discover how the writer reasoned: that is, how she came to propose the propositions in the text, and how she defended them. If we do not

1 Ibid., p.48.
examine the propositions of a foreign text in the light of the style of reasoning which gave rise to those propositions — that is, if we simply pass judgment on the translations of the bare propositions — then most of these propositions will be held not so much false, as absurd: just not the kind of thing that we would even consider. As Hacking says,

'It is not that the propositions match ill with our modern sciences, so much as that the way propositions are proposed and defended is entirely alien to us'.

Thus, Hacking argues, 'Understanding is learning how to reason'.

Let us again take as an example our imaginary aborigine case. It might well be totally appropriate for the aborigine to reason in the following way: the bone was found by an elder at a sacred site, where it was pointing in a particular significant direction; and therefore it has supernatural powers. Now, the aboriginal culture's style of reasoning, of which this is an example, creates particular possibilities or candidates for truth-or-falsehood, which our Western style of reasoning does not. For the aborigines, it is an issue whether or not particular objects have supernatural powers: some do and some do not. The style of reasoning which produces examples such as we have given above, and the concept of supernatural power as possessed by particular objects which is part of that style of reasoning, are essential to the aborigines' world-view. That is, if an aborigine consistently failed to understand or to accept such reasoning, then she would be quite out of step with her culture and its world-view — she would be seen to be mentally ill, or divorced from reality. I am imagining here an aborigine who refuses

1 Ibid., p.60.
2 Ibid., p.60.
to take part in any magical ceremonies, and never uses or responds to any supernatural language — as distinct from someone who might dispute particular cases of purported supernatural powers, refuting the particular instances of reasoning.

The style of reasoning of our Western scientific linguistic framework does not allow examples of reasoning such as we have given above. In consequence, that any particular object has such supernatural powers is simply not a candidate, or possibility, for truth-or-falsehood — the concept is not in currency in our world-view. By this I do not mean merely that our world-view dictates that no object has supernatural powers. Rather, what I mean is that our style of reasoning does not produce examples of reasoning which would conclude with either 'This bone has supernatural powers', or 'This bone does not have supernatural powers'. The issue does not arise in our world-view whether or not a particular object has such supernatural powers (except perhaps in the special case of when we are considering the statements and style of reasoning of the aboriginal culture). Clearly, if someone in our culture were to present an argument like the aborigine’s above, for the claim that a particular bone had supernatural powers, then that person would be adjudged crazy — to have lost touch with reality. But furthermore, I would also hold that if someone were to take this person’s argument seriously, and, in response, to present an argument with the conclusion that some particular bone did not have such supernatural powers, then this would rightly be seen to be pretty strange behavior too. The issue is simply not the kind of thing our culture is concerned with and reasons about.
Now, it may be objected here that there are rare cases in which we might be inclined to express the proposition denying the existence of supernatural powers in objects, just as there are rare cases in which we might deny the existence of a perpetuum mobile. That is, the objector is arguing that although in the scientific world-view supernatural powers, like perpetua mobile, are impossible, this does not mean that the two concepts are not employed by us, in reasoning about the issues of our culture. For example, a child, or simply a person without a scientific education, may ask whether a particular object will keep moving forever. And similarly, after reading storybooks a child might ask whether a particular object has magical or supernatural powers. Now, in the case of the perpetuum mobile, I think we can allow that the concept has currency in our world-view; that it is an issue for us — albeit one that is definitively decided. This is because our style of reasoning includes examples of reasoning which employ the concept, if only as an unattainable limit, and thus creates the possibility of truth-or-falsehood regarding the perpetuum mobile.

However, the case of supernatural powers is different. The general meaning of the concept of supernatural or magical power in our culture’s mythology is an active force outside of the natural physical laws. Now, if the question was asked whether a particular object has supernatural powers in this sense, then we might answer that it does not (though I hold that we would probably first insist on some clarification of the question, because it would initially strike us as absurd). But what Hacking’s argument shows is that the concept we would thereby be employing would not be the same as the aborigines’ concept which we translate as ‘supernatural’. (Here, of course, the supposition we made
The concept that the aborigines employ is essentially bound up with the kind of reasoning which is appropriate to it. Such reasoning, and the associated concept, are never employed in our world-view. The translation of the aborigines' concept as 'supernatural' reflects our interpretation and judgement of their concept. That is, we notice how they employ the concept and how they treat the bone -- for example, treating it with reverence, and focussing all attention on it in significant rituals, etc. -- and we make the judgement that the powers the bone is supposed to have are supernatural ones. But in the aborigines' world-view such powers may well be perfectly natural -- the only kind that there is. We must not mistake the aborigines' concept for our concept supernatural, which is tied up with our style of reasoning. If we study the aborigines' style of reasoning, including how they reason about "supernatural" powers, then we will see that it is just not a possibility for truth-or-falsehood in our world-view that an object has supernatural powers in the aborigines' sense. And thus, we cannot adjudge as true or false the aborigines' statement about the bone from within our linguistic framework.

One small point of criticism I have of Hacking is that he rejects Kuhn's and Feyerabend's term 'incommensurability' as being too closely tied to translation, rather than reasoning. According to Hacking, 'incommensurable' means that there is 'no way of translating from one scheme to another'. However, Kuhn does not use the term in this sense at all. True, for Kuhn, people operating within

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1 Ibid., p.59.
incorcommensurable world-views are participants in a communication breakdown, but from what we have already seen of Hacking's view we can see that he would have to agree with Kuhn in that respect. And further, what Kuhn advocates that we do when faced with such a communication breakdown is 'recognise each other as members of different language communities and then become translators'. Such translation 'allows the participants in a communication breakdown to experience vicariously something of the merits and defects of each other's points of view'. Thus, clearly 'incommensurable' does not mean the same as 'no way of translating'.

Furthermore, Kuhn goes on to say the following:

'To translate a theory or worldview into one's own language is not to make it one's own. For that one must go native, discover that one is thinking and working in, not simply translating out of, a language that was previously foreign.'

Now, I think that the above passage clearly indicates that Kuhn recognizes that what is important when considering the translation of the writings of a different linguistic framework is much more than that the propositions 'match ill' with our own. His reference to 'thinking and working in' the new language is strongly reminiscent of Hacking's notion of learning 'how to reason in a new way'. Hence, I think 'incommensurability' is still a useful term in our debate here. However, I do think that Hacking's notion of styles of reasoning, and his emphasis on what are possibilities for truth-or-falsehood, rather

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3 Ibid., p.204.
than what is held true, successfully identify just how world-views are incommensurable.

Relativism and truth

Now let us return to the question of how, despite relativism, our common sense account of truth can be applied to linguistic frameworks. As we have seen, a particular linguistic framework in an important sense identifies and characterizes a world. Among other things, it defines what is to be accepted as data, and provides a style of reasoning. Now, for a statement made within a certain linguistic framework to be true, it must state that a certain situation obtains in the world identified by that linguistic framework, and that situation must actually obtain in that world. In practice, for us to determine whether a given statement is true or false, first we must be operating in the appropriate world — that is, we must employ the same linguistic framework as that from which the given statement comes. Then it is simply a matter of perceiving the relevant data and reasoning from it (using the style of reasoning which comes with the linguistic framework) to see whether the world is as the statement says it is. Returning to our earlier example, the aboriginal child’s claim that a certain human bone is a supernatural one is either true or false in her culture’s world. It will be true just if it is in fact the case that the indicated bone has supernatural qualities. This can be determined by considering the relevant data — say, where it was found, what it has been used for, and so on — and then using the appropriate style of reasoning to determine whether the bone is supernatural: for example, as we have supposed above, the bone might
have been found by an elder at a sacred site, pointing in a significant
direction, and have subsequently been used in magical ceremonies of the
tribe, which by aboriginal reasoning might mean that it must have
supernatural qualities. It must be stressed here that the statement
'This bone has supernatural qualities' can be true when uttered in the
aborigine's linguistic framework. That is, in the world identified by
that linguistic framework there are some bones which really have
supernatural qualities. For obvious reasons, Putnam calls this model
'internal realism'. This is to be contrasted with metaphysical
realism -- with its hard-core and sophisticated versions -- which we
have seen from our own and Putnam's arguments to be untenable (pp. 20-
22).

Putnam claims that internal realism is all we need: that is, life, and in particular enquiry, proceeds as well as it ever has without
the metaphysical realist model. Certainly this is so for those who never attempt to understand statements made outside of their own
linguistic framework. For, as we have seen, people that share a particular linguistic framework thereby share a particular world; so
enquiry simply consists in their investigating the way the world is --
and this is indistinguishable from the way enquiry is conceived in the
metaphysical realist model. But, of course, we are sometimes presented
with translations of statements made within linguistic frameworks other
than our own. Thus, suppose I (a Westerner) am presented with the
following translation of a statement made by the aborigine: 'This bone
has supernatural qualities'. Interpreted within my linguistic framework
the statement is false. On the other hand, I may be sufficiently
acquainted with the aboriginal linguistic framework, and the style of
reasoning essential to it, to know that within that linguistic framework the aborigine’s actual (untranslated) statement is true — that is, that in the aborigine’s world this bone does indeed have supernatural qualities. Now, although statements made within one linguistic framework are often interpreted and adjudged true or false within another linguistic framework, such a practice necessarily involves a mistake. By failing to interpret a statement in terms of the linguistic framework in which it is made, one fails to understand the statement made. When one interprets it in terms of one’s own linguistic framework, and then adjudges it as true or false, one is in fact dealing with a quite different statement (irrespective of whether it turns out to be true or false). The only way one can correctly adjudge a statement is to do so in terms of the linguistic framework in which it is made — that is, by considering the relevant data admitted by that linguistic framework, and employing the style of reasoning of that framework.

Metaphysical realism versus relativism

Now, I think that the most common reaction to such relativism will be total dissatisfaction. Such dissatisfaction will arise from the persistence of the metaphysical realist model. A metaphysical realist might grant that different world-views are incommensurable; and that, hence, a statement can only be adjudged according to the world identified by the linguistic framework within which the statement is made. She might further grant that different linguistic frameworks identify and characterize different worlds. However, she will emphasize
that these are merely worlds-as-characterized-by-linguistic-frameworks. There is, she will insist, a unique language-(theory-)independent world: the real world. Worlds characterized by different linguistic frameworks will each, to a greater or lesser degree, resemble this real language-independent world. Thus, although a statement can only be adjudged within its own linguistic framework, the linguistic framework itself can, to a greater or lesser extent, be correct — that is, accord with the real world. Accepting for the moment that the metaphysical realist model is correct, the question is again: can we — and if so, how do we — tell that one linguistic framework is more correct than another?

Earlier we said that my Western linguistic framework works better than the aborigine’s — that is, it provides a more consistent and more precise explanation of a vastly wider range of worldly phenomena, and its predictive capabilities are far better and more successful. From this we inferred that my linguistic framework is more correct — that is, that my world resembles the real world more closely. But are we justified in making such an inference? I think not. All we have succeeded in showing is that my world is more sophisticated than the aborigine’s world: we have not shown that the real world is thus sophisticated. For, all the data that our Western linguistic framework is seen to handle better are only data within our linguistic framework. The aborigine does not recognize them as data to be accounted for. The aborigine’s linguistic framework is perfectly adequate for handling the aborigine’s world (that is, the world as characterized by that linguistic framework). Criticisms such as that the aborigine’s account relies on magical explanation, mystifies rather than clarifies, is inconsistent, etc., are all made in terms of our linguistic framework.
They are dependent upon our style of reasoning; based on our data. Thus, they do not tell on the aborigine's linguistic framework. To adjudge which of a set of rival worlds-as-characterized-by-linguistic-frameworks most closely resembles the independent real world, we must first be able to compare them with this world. Hence, we must be able to characterize this real world independently of all linguistic frameworks — but this, of course, is impossible.

The criterion of technological control

The metaphysical realist might argue for one more criterion for determining which world-view most correctly represents the independent real world. The criterion is the degree of technological control facilitated by particular world-views. That is, the greater the technological control facilitated by any particular world-view, the more correctly that world-view represents the independent real world. An argument for the validity of this inference can be found in Charles Taylor's 'Rationality'. Taylor claims the following:

'There is an inner connexion between understanding the world and achieving technological control which rightly commands everyone's attention, and doesn't just justify our practices in our own eyes'.

Taylor makes a few observations in support of this claim. He points out that our ordinary pre-scientific understanding of our environment is inseparable from an ability to make our way around in it and deal with

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1 Taylor, C., 'Rationality', in M. Hollis and S. Lukes (eds.), op.cit., pp.87-105.
2 Ibid., p.101.
it. Among other things, this accounts for many distinctions we make among objects in our environment — for example, between edible and non-edible. Now, Taylor argues that given these circumstances it is clear that an increase in scientific knowledge beyond this pre-scientific practical understanding cannot fail to present recipes for more effective practice. For example, once we discover the properties which make things edible, we cannot fail to notice that certain objects are edible which we hitherto had not suspected were so. Taylor writes:

'The basic point is that given the kind of beings we are, embodied and active in the world, and given the way that scientific knowledge extends and supersedes our ordinary understanding of things, it is impossible to see how it could fail to yield further and more far-reaching recipes for action'.

He then goes on to argue that further and more far-reaching recipes for action, when applied, are precisely increased technological control. And thus, Taylor believes that he has an argument for the superiority (with respect to the understanding of the world) of our scientific world-view, over the world-views of non-scientific cultures, which members of those other cultures must listen to. Taylor puts this argument in what he says is almost modus tollens:

'...there is no scientific advance without increased technological applicability; but in your case [the case of a non-scientific culture] we see no increased technological application; so you are making no advance'.

Now, Taylor admits that as the argument stands it is not conclusive — hence, his saying that it is only almost in modus tollens form. As it is stated, there is a shift from 'applicability' to

1 Ibid., p.101.
2 Ibid., p.102.
'application'. This shift provides a gap in the argument through which a non-scientific culture may try to escape Taylor's conclusion. For example, consider a culture which purports to be totally disinterested in technological control; perhaps, like traditional Platonists, regarding the physical world as hardly worth being worried about. Granted, even these people's genuine lack of interest will not save them from noticing the spectacular degree of technological control which our scientific culture has. Their line against Taylor will be that they simply do not bother carrying through their knowledge about the world into action upon the world. That is, they will dispute the apparent inference from lack of actual technological application to lack of technological applicability — that is, potential for application. In other words, they claim that they could achieve at least as spectacular a degree of technological control as we do, if only they could be bothered putting their minds to it.

Of course, the gap in Taylor's argument can easily be eliminated by changing the second premise in the "almost" modus tollens form to read 'we see no increased technological applicability'. Then we would need to examine the non-scientific culture, and to interrogate its members, in order to ascertain whether there is increased technological applicability being generated by its knowledge of the world. That is, even if we accept that the culture genuinely has no interest in technological control, Taylor's argument will not be answered unless the culture provides recipes for action, or at least potential recipes for action, which, if followed, would produce effective technological control. However, unlike modern scientific culture, which generates such recipes readily and in abundance, this culture does not (we
assume); and nor are there any potential recipes in its account of the
world. Thus, the metaphysical realist can conclude, by Taylor's
argument, that science's understanding of the world is superior to that
of this non-scientific culture.

Now, the strength of the criterion of (potential)
technological control, embodied in Taylor's argument, is that it is not
easily dismissed with the comment that the criterion is only important
within the scientific world-view, and that Taylor's argument is only
valid within the scientific style of reasoning. Taylor makes out a
plausible case for believing that anyone, irrespective of the culture
she is operating in, first will notice the spectacular degree of
technological control that our scientific culture has; secondly, will
wonder as to the explanation of this degree of control; and thirdly, as
a result of these, will presume that science has got things right about
the way the world is, and that her own culture correspondingly has not.
Thus, the force of Taylor's argument against the relativist is that
styles of reasoning are not so different that the universal recognition
of the fact of science's technological superiority will not universally
lead to the presumption of science's having got things right about the
world, in a sense in which other cultures have not. According to
Taylor, the only reasonable explanation for science's superior
technological control is the one science gives: 'that it has greatly
advanced our understanding of the material world'.

Now, if the claim is correct that the recognition of the fact

1 Ibid., p.103.
of science’s spectacular technological superiority will universally create at least the presumption of the superiority of science’s understanding of the independent real world, then Taylor will have provided the metaphysical realist with a very strong argument against the relativist. If the claim is correct, then degree of technological control, or at least, degree of potential technological control, will be an adequate criterion for determining which world-view most correctly represents the independent real world. However, I hold that the claim is not correct. I believe that we can quite easily envisage a perfectly plausible world-view, the holders of which will certainly notice science’s spectacular degree of technological control, and yet for whom such recognition will not create even the presumption in favour of science’s account of how the world is. Indeed, we shall now outline a perfectly plausible world-view for which such a recognition creates quite the contrary presumption.

Imagine our aboriginal tribe again. (Note again that the culture we are imagining here is not intended to be that of the Australian Aborigines, some of whom in fact did engage in environmental control, such as scrub burning.) Suppose the aborigines are nomads who keep no animals and grow no crops, but exist solely by hunting and foraging. Suppose further that they see their whole environment as being the body of a powerful spirit who provides them with their needs, so long as they respect it and its body through right action. Right action might consist in part of accepting what is offered by the spirit, taking only what is offered, and giving back what the spirit requires, when it requires it. Now, such a culture might well reason from the fact of science’s spectacular superiority of technological control that
science has got things **wrong** regarding the world — and here I do not mean **morally** wrong. The aborigines’ point of view would be that science has **misunderstood** the physical world. We have failed to see that the world is a being, a "conscious" organism. We have failed to see how the being provides our needs — I am thinking here of how poorly we scientific Westerners would fare in the outback deserts of Australia, which provide all of the needs of certain tribes of nomadic Australian Aborigines. Because of this lack of knowledge we have thought it necessary and desirable to control and to modify our environment. Despite the spectacular degree to which modern science has accomplished these aims, the aborigine, we shall assume, still holds that science’s whole endeavour is wrong-headed — and ultimately doomed to failure. Suppose that the aboriginal culture holds that because the environment is an organism, any attempts at modifying it, no matter how well considered and skilfully executed, will result in the environment’s eventual destruction. Even human life prolongation by technological advances are considered wrong-headed by the aborigines since this is in effect tampering with the time that is best for particular persons to return to the world-spirit: hence, it is just another case of contributing to the death of the world through ignorance.

Now, what we have just described here is a plausible example of a culture which takes notice of modern science’s technological superiority, and yet for whom this does not create even the presumption against its own understanding of the physical world, in favour of that of modern science; indeed, quite the contrary. Thus, Taylor’s argument loses its apparent universality. There is not only one reasonable inference that can be drawn from science’s spectacular degree of
technological control: namely, that science has a superior understanding of the independent real world. This may be the only reasonable inference if one is operating with certain styles of reasoning; but we have just seen that there may well be other styles of reasoning in which the contrary inference is appropriate.

Thus, any metaphysical realist employing Taylor’s argument for the superiority of science’s understanding of the world will remain wide open to the relativist’s counter that any such judgment of superiority will be a culture-based, or world-view-based one; that is, justified only within a (or some) particular style(s) of reasoning. And therefore, we can conclude that the degree of (potential) technological control facilitated by a world-view fails as a criterion for determining which world-view most correctly represents the independent real world.

The debate continues

So, must we finally reject the notion of a language-independent real world, and admit that all there is is a myriad of linguistic-framework-characterized worlds, which are incommensurable and, hence, between which there can be no meaningful discourse? Despite our arguments such a model remains deeply dissatisfying. That there is no unique, language-independent, real world, over and above the plurality of language-characterized worlds, contradicts what would seem to be a fundamental intuition. From where did the stimulus come to construct a linguistic framework, thereby identifying and constructing a world? And if all linguistic activity were to cease (say, through the anihilation
of humanity), thereby putting an end to all language-characterized worlds, would there be nothing left? Such considerations seem very telling on the attempt to reject metaphysical realism. For surely it can only be the independent real world which initially stimulated us to form a linguistic framework; and surely, if humanity were to vanish, this independent real world (minus humanity) would remain.

So, let us once again grant that there is a unique, independent, real world, and recap on our objections to the metaphysical realist model; and then we shall see if that model can be modified to accommodate both our metaphysical realist intuitions, and all that is persuasive in the arguments of the relativist. Each linguistic framework claims to provide the (approximately) correct description of the world. However, there are many different incommensurable accounts of the world. This incommensurability means that there can be no mutually acceptable criterion by which to determine which account is correct. And therefore, the point that there is nevertheless some objective criterion which determines that one particular account is in fact correct, is problematic. For what could such a "criterion" amount to, except the bare fact that that particular account accords with the world? Any attempt at justifying the claim to correctness will only have force within the linguistic framework concerned. Thus, given that only one account can be correct, then the people that do in fact have the correct account of the world do so for no good objective reasons. That their account is correct, and all others incorrect, is simply a bare fact: an accident, so to speak. Now, such a model, as we have already commented, has little or no plausibility (and certainly no appeal). Thoughtful consideration of other linguistic frameworks will
soon weaken one’s conviction that all accounts of the world other than one’s own are incorrect. However, I do not think that we must now and forever reject metaphysical realism and look back to the counterintuitive relativism as the only alternative model. Rather, I think that the metaphysical realist model might possibly be altered to resolve our misgivings. To this end it will be helpful to make a brief excursion into four-dimensional geometry. (Note that this is not four-dimensional physics — the fourth dimension is not time.)

The four-dimensional geometry analogy

In The Mathematical Experience, Davis and Hersh tell us that a four-dimensional hypercube can be constructed in the following way:

'In the first step, we take two points, 1 inch apart, and join them. We get a line interval, a one-dimensional figure. Next, we take two 1-inch line intervals, parallel to each other, 1 inch apart. Connect each pair of end-points, and we get a 1-inch square, a two-dimensional figure. Next, take two 1-inch squares, parallel to each other. Say the first square is directly above the second, 1 inch away. Connect corresponding corners, and get a 1-inch cube.

So, to get a 1-inch hypercube, we must take two 1-inch cubes, parallel to each other, 1 inch apart, and connect the vertices. In this way, we should get a 1-inch hypercube, a four-dimensional figure.'

However, with each step above we have moved in a new direction, each direction being perpendicular to all of the others. This presents us with a problem in the final step, since we have already exhausted all of the directions with which we are familiar (as three-dimensional beings

1 Davis and Hersh, op.cit., p.400.
in three-dimensional space). Nevertheless, we can postulate a new
direction that is perpendicular to the first three without logical
inconsistency. And hence, we can conceive of the one-inch hypercube.
We can even work out the properties that such a hypercube would have.
For example, we can see that it would have 16 vertices, 32 edges, 24
square faces, and 8 cubical hyperfaces. In fact, if we define our
hypercube by means of coordinates, we can work out any relevant question
by using algebraic methods.

In an attempt to generate an intuitive understanding of a
hypercube (rather than the purely formal understanding facilitated by
algebraic methods), a mathematician, Thomas Banchoff, and a computer
scientist, Charles Strauss, have made computer-generated motion pictures
of a hypercube moving in and out of three-dimensional space. To help us
understand just what the pictures show, Davis and Hersh draw the analogy
of a two-dimensional creature living on the surface of a pond. This
creature can see objects only on the surface of the pond, not below or
above it. Thus, the creature can perceive objects only as two-
dimensional cross-sections, which are formed when the objects intersect
with the creature’s two-dimensional frame of experience. So, if a cube
passes from the air into the water, this creature would see a continuous
series of two-dimensional cross-sections of the cube. Now, returning to
the Banchoff-Strauss movies, what they simulate is what we, as creatures
limited to a three-dimensional frame of experience, would see as a four-
dimensional hypercube passed through our three-dimensional hypersurface.
What we would see is a continuous series of three-dimensional objects.
What this series of objects would be is a continuous series of three-
dimensional cross-sections of the hypercube.
Now, what we have just seen of four-dimensional geometry I think provides a very fruitful analogy in our quest to reconcile our metaphysical realist intuitions with the existence of different incommensurable world-views, each purporting to be correct. The details of the analogy are as follows. The four-dimensional hypercube represents the unique real world. The three-dimensional creatures represent us human beings. The three-dimensional hypersurface -- the creatures' frame of experience -- represents our linguistic framework. Now, our "three-dimensional" linguistic framework intersects the "four-dimensional" real world. Thus, the world as we know it -- that is, as is described within our linguistic framework -- is merely a "three-dimensional cross-section" of the "four-dimensional" real world.

To suit our purposes I shall elaborate the four-dimensional geometry analogy. But first, in order to make this elaboration easier to understand, I shall elaborate the simpler pond analogy. In Davis' and Hersh's pond analogy there is just one two-dimensional surface through which the cube passes. However, let us now suppose that there are many different two-dimensional planes of experience. Furthermore, suppose that mostly these planes are not parallel, and hence intersect each other. And finally suppose that the three-dimensional cube does not move through these planes, but rather is stationary; but that instead each plane intersects the cube. Now, with this analogy in mind, let us move to the four-dimensional case. This time there are many different three-dimensional hyperplanes or frames of experience. Mostly they are not parallel, and hence intersect each other. Each of them intersects a stationary four-dimensional hypercube.
Now let us relate this elaborated four-dimensional analogy to our model of the relationship between language, or knowledge, and the real world. As before, the four-dimensional hypercube represents the unique real world. Each of the three-dimensional hyperplanes, or frames of experience, represents a linguistic framework: that is, each represents the world-view of a community of "three-dimensional" knowers. Each linguistic framework cuts a "three-dimensional cross-section" through the "four-dimensional" world. Each such "cross-section" is the world-as-described-by-a-particular-linguistic-framework. Each such description is (approximately) correct. It is formed by an ever-continuing dialectic between the real world and the linguistic framework: the real world determines how the world is to be described; but the way the world is described in turn determines how the world appears. This is represented in the analogy in the following way: most hypersurfaces continually, but subtly, shift their orientations; and hence, the cross-sections defined by their intersections with the hypercube subtly change. However, these changes in the orientations of hypersurfaces and the cross-sections they reveal are not always subtle: on rare occasions — representing cases such as Kuhnian revolutions — the changes are radical. On the other hand, the orientation of some hypersurfaces, and the cross-sections revealed, are very stable indeed — this represents the fact that the linguistic frameworks (and hence, world-views) of some remote indigenous tribes, for example, have remained virtually unchanged for centuries.

Now, as we saw in our four-dimensional geometry analogy, the different hypersurfaces intersect one another. This represents the fact that people from any one linguistic framework come into contact with
other linguistic frameworks. But further, let us assume in the analogy that a denizen of a given hypersurface, or frame of experience, can do more than merely come into contact with another frame of experience, whilst remaining in her own frame: let us assume that given enough time she can learn to move into the different hypersurface at will, and thus experience a different cross-section of the hypercube. Of course, this represents in the actual world a person who becomes so familiar with another community’s linguistic framework that she becomes able to live in it -- that is, she can become part of that community, sharing its world-view -- while retaining the ability to re-immense herself at will (after a period of re-adjustment) in her original linguistic framework and world-view. For example, suppose that a person who has had a modern Western upbringing deliberately has extensive exposure to a tribal aboriginal culture, actually living with the aborigines, with the express aim of becoming a part of the tribe. She may become quite capable of living a tribal lifestyle, even of becoming quite skilled in the everyday tribal business -- immersing herself in the aboriginal culture. Nevertheless, she can still sometimes return to her Western life and, after a period of re-adjustment, function and communicate just as she did before immersing herself in the aboriginal culture. Now, in the case we have just described, the modern Western world and the aboriginal world have in no way been blended or reconciled by the person. They remain quite distinct and, indeed, incommensurable worlds: in our analogy, the cross-sections of the hypercube are quite distinct and different. The person is simply able to "cross over" from one world to the other, from one linguistic framework to the other: in our analogy, the orientation of the two frames of experience are different, but they do intersect one another; and hence, the denizens of one can
learn to cross over from one to the other. Thus, in the case as we have so far described it, the person cannot simultaneously be in the two worlds, or operate in the two linguistic frameworks.

Now, some explanation is needed of our case here. It might be objected that the two cultures are invariably blended whenever someone "travels" from one culture to another. And plenty of cases can be put forward in defence of this objection: for example, cases of people who have been brought up in aboriginal tribes, but who later are thrown into the midst of modern Western culture. Such people, so the objection goes, retain many of their aboriginal beliefs and practices -- they will even speak a mixture of aboriginal and Western languages. Thus, these people have in fact blended the two cultures and world-views. However, in response to this objection, I would point out that such people fare notoriously badly. They are not accepted either by tribal aboriginal culture or by modern Western culture. They actually have no culture, and no maintainable world-view. To me, such cases demonstrate that blending two cultures, or world-views, does not work.

What the person in our example does is quite different. She knows that her Western world-view and that of the aboriginal culture are incommensurable. Thus, she knows that in order to experience the aboriginal world-view in as similar a way as possible to the way a tribal aborigine does, she must push aside her own Western world-view as much as possible whilst learning the aboriginal culture. After in such a way becoming totally familiar with the new culture (probably taking years), and actively participating in that culture, then eventually I think she will start to live in it. That is, she will come to share the
aborigines' world-view. Now, that is not to say that she will come to see the aborigines' world-view as being more correct than the Western world-view. Rather, in coming to live within the aboriginal linguistic framework, she achieves a leap of faith. When she is actually living within the aboriginal linguistic framework, she is effectively ignoring the Western world-view. After achieving such a leap of faith, if she discusses, say, the impending expression of wrath of an evil spirit with the aborigines, then she may actually fear this evil spirit just as the aborigines do. And there will be consequences for her actions of her completely accepting the aboriginal world-view. For example, if the tribal elder advises that she must drink from a stagnant pond in which sacred buffaloes wallow, in order to escape the wrath of this evil spirit, then she will do so. Nevertheless, she can at will return to live within the Western linguistic framework, with its world-view which does not include such evil spirits, and with very different consequences for action: for example, no Westerner would choose to drink water from such a pond in the knowledge that it would probably contain potentially very harmful bacteria. This move again requires that she make a leap of faith, this time pushing aside, or ignoring, the aboriginal linguistic framework and world-view. To reiterate, she can only live within one linguistic framework, or have one world-view, at a time: in our analogy, a being can only be on one cross-section of the hypercube at a time.

But now let us return to the Strauss-Banchoff computer movies of a four-dimensional hypercube passing through our three-dimensional space. The purpose of these movies is to try and generate an intuitive understanding of a hypercube in three-dimensional watchers. Davis and Hersh also describe an interactive graphic system, set up by Strauss to
make such movies, which has a series of panel controls enabling the operator to move the image (the three-dimensional cross-sections of the hypercube) at will. Davis and Hersh report that after a period of manipulating the image they suddenly did achieve an intuitive understanding of the four-dimensional hypercube moving and rotating in four-dimensional space. This raises an interesting question for our model of the real world and our knowledge of it: could one come to acquire an intuitive understanding of the whole "four-dimensional" real world — that is, transcend the limitations of one's "three-dimensional" linguistic frameworks? The answer to this question will depend on just how good an analogy the four-dimensional case is to the real world and our knowledge of it. If the analogy is very good, then the answer would probably be affirmative. If one were to become very familiar with a sufficiently large number of different world-views, and were to be able to immerse oneself at will in one after another, repeatedly, then one might well come to an intuitive understanding of the "greater" world — that is, some grand synthesis of all of the world-views constituted by the different linguistic frameworks, which somehow transcends those limited individual world-views. (Of course, it is quite a different question as to whether someone could have the time and the intellectual capacity actually to perform such a feat; to which the answer is almost certainly negative.)

A cautionary note

However, we must exercise great caution with such speculation not to pursue the analogy further than is justified given the purpose of the
analogy. The purpose of the four-dimensional geometry analogy is to illustrate one way in which several incompatible accounts of a single object can all be simultaneously correct. Our problem was: how do we reconcile there being a unique real world with there being any number of incompatible, incommensurable, yet purportedly correct accounts of that world? One possible answer, given by the analogy, is that there is more to the real world — an extra dimension, as it were (using the word loosely here) — than can possibly be experienced by any community of people, given the limitations of language (and hence of intellect).

The point of the analogy should not be taken too literally: we are not claiming that the real world is four-dimensional and we are three-dimensional. Indeed, we should stress that the weaker claim arising from the analogy — namely, that the world is somehow more than any or all correct linguistic frameworks can possibly describe — is put forward merely as a possible answer to our problem. There is no — nor, I think, can there be any — real evidence for such a claim. It is merely a possible explanation of the circumstantial evidence: being that there is a unique real world, and a host of purportedly correct, but incompatible, accounts of that world. Thus, our move is much like the move a defence lawyer might make if the prosecutor is trying to convict her client on merely circumstantial evidence. The prosecutor gives a plausible account of occurrences, which fits all the available circumstantial evidence and illustrates the defendant’s guilt. To counter this, the defence lawyer merely needs to give a different, but still plausible, account of occurrences, which leaves the defendant not guilty. In our case, our four-dimensional analogy points to a model which accommodates the circumstantial evidence, and yet which condemns
neither the unique independent real world, nor the majority of linguistic frameworks purporting to be correct.

We could have made our point using only the simpler pond analogy, or indeed a different analogy altogether. The advantage of the four-dimensional geometry analogy is that whereas we have an intuitive grasp of three-dimensional space, we do not have such a grasp of a fourth spatial dimension. Although all of the dimensions are, strictly speaking, mathematical entities only, nevertheless we are introduced to three-dimensional geometry when children by reference to our physical surroundings — for example, we are taught that spheres and cubes really exist (albeit not quite as perfectly as in geometry). When we come to the fourth dimension however, we cannot be shown even an imperfect four-dimensional solid. The fourth dimension comes across as wholly and solely a mathematical construction — a hypothetical, though mathematically consistent, dimension. This hypothetical but consistent character of the fourth dimension is just what we require in our analogy; for, as we have seen, all that we have attempted to illustrate is a model of the independent real world which explains one possible way in which there can be many incommensurable, yet simultaneously correct, accounts of that unique world. The model we have presented is merely hypothetical, but nevertheless consistent. It successfully illustrates that it is possible to accommodate both our metaphysical realist intuitions and the conclusions of the relativist’s arguments.
At the end of the last chapter we presented an argument to show that it is at least consistent to subscribe to the metaphysical realist’s model of there being a unique independent real world, while at the same time accepting the relativist’s claim that there are many correct incommensurable accounts of the world. The model we presented, based on the four-dimensional geometry analogy, exemplifies the thesis that even though there is only one independent real world, nevertheless there is more than one correct and complete description of that unique world. Now, it is easy to see that there can be many correct partial descriptions of the world: each such description can be perfectly consistent with all of the others. But to say that there can be many complete correct descriptions, entails that they are incommensurable with one another. And this is so in our "four-dimensional" model. In the four-dimensional geometry analogy each three-dimensional hypersurface completely reveals the hypercube from a particular (three-dimensional) point of view. Of course, this is not to say that each three-dimensional hypersurface reveals the complete hypercube in its four dimensions: none of them can possibly do this. However, each three-dimensional cross-section of the hypercube is complete in that nothing can be added to it to make it any more complete. For example, such cross-sections cannot be added to each other to make a more complete picture of the hypercube. This is because from a three-dimensional point of view no two cross-sections can be seen or understood as cross-sections of the one object. And so in our model,
each linguistic framework correctly and completely describes the "greater" world from a particular point of view. Each such world-view is not merely a description of part of the world: it is a description of the whole world.

Spinoza, Leibniz and Nagel's bat

Other philosophers have developed models which also exemplify the thesis that there can be many complete and correct descriptions of the one real world. Spinoza and Leibniz are two of the most celebrated of them.

For Spinoza, there is only one substance, which he calls 'God', or sometimes 'nature'. God is absolutely infinite -- that is, God consists of infinite attributes, 'each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence'. His definition of 'attribute' is as follows:

'An attribute (attributum) I understand to be that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of a substance'.

The only two attributes that Spinoza identifies are extension and thought. If we consider nature under the attribute extension, then we comprehend the essence of nature as being extension: that is, what nature is is infinite and eternal extension. However, we can also consider nature under the attribute thought. Then we comprehend the essence of nature as being thought, infinite and eternal. And nature

2 Ibid., Part 1, Def.4.
can be considered under any of its infinity of other attributes (though not by finite beings such as ourselves), with its essence consequently being comprehended appropriately.

Now, in Spinoza's scheme, when we say that on the one hand we can comprehend the essence of nature as extension, and on the other hand as thought, we are not simply comprehending or describing different parts of nature. Rather, we are describing or comprehending the whole of infinite nature in alternate ways. When we consider nature under the attribute extension, then we are correct in comprehending the infinite and eternal essence of nature as being extension; if, however, in considering nature under that attribute we were to ascribe thought to some part of it, then we would be incorrect; despite the fact that when nature is considered in an appropriately different way, thought is correctly comprehended as its essence. Thus, we can see that Spinoza's scheme exemplifies the thesis that there can be many complete and correct ways of describing or comprehending the one real world.

Unlike Spinoza, for Leibniz there are many substances — for example, each of our souls is an individual substance. In Section 9 of his Discourse on Metaphysics, he states that 'every individual substance expresses the whole universe in its own manner'. Later in the same section he writes that

'every substance is like an entire world and like a mirror of God, or indeed of the whole world which it portrays, each one in its own fashion; almost as the same city is variously represented according to the various situations of him who is

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regarding it. Thus the universe is multiplied in some sort as many times as there are substances, and the glory of God is multiplied in the same way by as many wholly different representations of his works’.

Thus, once again we have a scheme which allows that there are many wholly different representations or descriptions of the one universe or world. And again each representation is a more or less correct representation of the whole universe, not merely of a part of it. We must say ‘more or less’ because individual substances, also called ‘Monads’, do make errors, and most often possess only confused ideas. Each Monad has distinct representations only ‘as regards those things which are nearest or most in relation to each Monad’². Nevertheless, Leibniz holds the following:

'It is not in the object represented that the Monads are limited, but in their modification of their knowledge of the object. In a confused way they reach out to infinity or to the whole, but are limited and differentiated in the degree of their distinct perceptions'³.

Thus, for Leibniz each Monad is correct in the way it uniquely represents the whole universe, but the details of that representation are largely incorrect or confused.

If we consider our bodies, then we can see a clearer illustration of how it is that each Monad has a representation of the whole world completely different from that of each and every other Monad. Leibniz writes that

'all space is filled up; therefore all matter is connected; and in a plenum or filled space every movement has an effect

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¹ Ibid., Sect.9, p.15.
² Monadology, Sect.60.
³ Ibid., Sect.60.
upon bodies in proportion to their distance, so that not only is every body affected by those which are in contact with it, and responds in some way to whatever happens to them, but also by means of them the body responds to those bodies adjoining them, and their intercommunication can be continued to any distance at will. Consequently, every body responds to all that happens in the universe."

Thus, since each body is affected by everything in the universe, it actually expresses the universe. And hence, the soul, which together with such a body constitutes an animal, can 'read' in its own body a representation of the universe. Because the effects exerted on a body are proportional to its distance from the event, each body will express the universe differently. And since each Monad distinctly represents only what is 'nearest or most in relation' to it, each soul will gain a special representation of the universe from its own body that is different from that gained by each and every other soul:

'Thus although each created Monad represents the whole universe, it represents more distinctly the body which specially pertains to it .... And as the body expresses all the universe through the interconnection of all matter in the plenum, the soul also represents the whole universe in representing this body, which belongs to it in a particular way'.

Leibniz's account here of how there are different representations of the unique real world provides an interesting point of contact with the views of a contemporary philosopher, Thomas Nagel. In what is perhaps his best known paper, 'What is it like to be a bat?', Nagel argues that we cannot imagine what it is like to be a bat. We can imagine what it would be like for us to have webbing on our arms,

1 Ibid., Sect.61.
2 Ibid., Sect.62.
3 Nagel, T., 'What is it like to be a bat?', in Mortal Questions, Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp.165-180.
to have very poor vision, but a well-developed high-frequency echolocation, and to fly around in the dark catching insects, and so on; but this is to imagine what it would be like for us to behave as a bat behaves. It is not to imagine what it is like to be a bat -- that is, 'what it is like for a bat to be a bat'\(^1\). Nagel holds that there is something unavoidably subjective or internal about the way in which any being experiences the world, and that the particular way in which a being does experience the world is a function of the kind of physiology it has. Thus, the way a being with an alien physiology experiences the world is inaccessible to us, even in imagination, since 'Our own experience provides the basic material for our imagination, whose range is therefore limited'\(^2\). The physiology of another being need not be very alien for there to be an inaccessible subjective character to how it experiences the world. Nagel claims that it can exist between one person and another:

>'The subjective character of the experience of a person deaf and blind from birth is not accessible to me, for example, nor presumably is mine to him. This does not prevent us each from believing that the other's experience has such a subjective character'\(^3\).

It is important to see here that Nagel's point is not the hackneyed one that one's experience is essentially private and unknowable by anyone else. Nagel's point is that there are facts accessible to any given type of being, which are inaccessible to beings

\(^1\) Ibid., p.169.
\(^2\) Ibid., p.169.
\(^3\) Ibid., p.170.
of different types. Such facts 'embody a particular point of view':
the point of view of that particular type of being. Of points of view
in general, Nagel says the following:

'It is often possible to take up a point of view other than
one's own, so the comprehension of such facts is not limited
to one's own case. There is a sense in which phenomenological
facts are perfectly objective: one person can know or say of
another what the quality of the other's experience is. They
are subjective, however, in the sense that even this objective
ascription of experience is possible only for someone
sufficiently similar to the object of ascription to be able to
adopt his point of view — to understand the ascription in the
first person as well as in the third, so to speak'.

Thus, we can see that for Nagel there are different ways of experiencing
or representing or describing the one real world, depending on what type
of bodily structure the experiencer has.

It is interesting that Leibniz too held that because bodies
respond differently to their environment, different beings experience
the unique real world differently, and develop different representations
of the world — that is, they have different world-views. Of course, a
very important difference between Leibniz's metaphysical scheme and that
of Nagel is that for Leibniz it is each and every individual being that
knows facts about the world that are inaccessible to other ordinary
beings (that is, excepting God). However, for Nagel, as we have seen,
such particular subjective facts are known by all of the members of a
type of being. Indeed, there are probably many more fundamental points
of difference between the metaphysical schemes of Spinoza, Leibniz and
Nagel than there are points of similarity. However, I hope that I have
shown that there is at least one point of similarity between them all: they all exemplify the thesis that there can be different incommensurable, yet nevertheless correct, ways of describing the one real world. And they have that point in common with our model based on the four-dimensional geometry analogy.

Nominalism

In Representing and Intervening\(^1\), Hacking characterizes this thesis and calls it 'nominalism'. Nominalism, Hacking argues, is a thesis regarding classification:

'It says that only our modes of thinking make us sort grass from straw, flesh from foliage. The world does not have to be sorted that way; it does not come wrapped up in 'natural kinds'.'\(^2\).

Nominalism is opposed to realism, which is the standpoint that the world comes ready made in particular natural kinds.

Hacking holds that this issue of classification is to be sharply distinguished from the issue of existence. Idealism is a thesis regarding existence:

'In its extreme form it says that all that exists is mental, a production of the human spirit'\(^3\).

Of course, once again the opposing standpoint is called 'realism'.

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\(^1\) Hacking, I., Representing and Intervening, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

\(^2\) Ibid., p.108.

\(^3\) Ibid., p.108.
Hacking claims that one reason the same term is used for the opposition to both nominalism and idealism is that these two theses 'tend to be part of the same cast of mind'. Yet despite this they are quite distinct:

'The idealist need have no opinion about classification. He may hold that there is indeed a real distinction between grass and straw. He says only that there is no stuff, grass and straw; there are only ideas, mental entities. But the ideas could well have real essences.

Conversely the nominalist does not deny that there is real stuff, existing independent of the mind. He denies only that it is naturally and intrinsically sorted in any particular way, independent of how we think about it.

Hacking argues that whereas Kant is a transcendental idealist, in that he holds that the objects of our empirical knowledge do not exist independently of our minds, Putnam is a transcendental nominalist. They are both empirical realists in that they both hold that within the world-as-experienced there are real objects, and that statements about them are determinably true or false. But Kant holds that the whole world-as-experienced is ideal -- it does not exist independently of the minds of the experiencers. Putnam, however, does not hold that the world-as-experienced does not exist; but nor does he hold that it does exist in any sense which transcends the mind, or structure of human experience. Putnam is not concerned with the question of the transcendental existence or otherwise of the world-as-experienced.

Hacking sums up Putnam’s position as follows:

'Putnam’s internal realism comes to this: Within my system of thought I refer to various objects, and say things about those

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1 Ibid., p.108.
2 Ibid., p.108.
objects, some true, some false. However, I can never get outside my system of thought, and maintain some basis for reference which is not part of my own system of classification and naming. That is precisely empirical realism and transcendental nominalism.\(^1\)

So Putnam is a transcendental nominalist.

However, Putnam’s nominalism is different in a very important way from that of Spinoza, Leibniz and Nagel, and from that exemplified by our model based on the four-dimensional geometry analogy. This difference is just that in all of the models except Putnam’s, each world-as-characterized, or world-as-experienced, does exist in a transcendental sense -- that is, each world-as-characterized is a correct way of characterizing the real transcendent world. But Putnam’s rejection of metaphysical realism means that he cannot countenance such a position. In Reason, Truth and History\(^2\), Putnam goes into more detail than in ‘Realism and Reason’ as to why such a position is incoherent, so it will be worth examining our model in terms of Putnam’s arguments in the later work.

Now, although we developed our model on the basis of the four-dimensional geometry analogy, this analogy will no longer be important. Remember that the purpose of the analogy was to illustrate one possible way in which there could be different world-views, or ways of describing the one real world. Since making that point, we have seen other philosophers who also hold such a position, but not based on such an

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\(^1\) Ibid., p.109.

analogy. Henceforth, 'our model' will refer simply to a generalized model of many incommensurable world-views, or modes of description, each of which correctly describes the unique transcendent real world. How it is that each and every different description can be correct in such a transcendental sense does not matter: we have seen four different accounts of how this is possible, and doubtless there are others. All that is important for us now is that it is possible. So this is all that our model claims: that there is just one real world, but many incommensurable correct descriptions or characterizations of it. It is this generalized model that we shall examine in the light of Putnam's arguments.

The internalist and externalist perspectives

Putnam draws a distinction between the internalist perspective and the externalist perspective in philosophy. These two perspectives are concerned with the question of whose point of view one is adopting when one is describing something. The internalist perspective is taken when one adopts the point of view of a particular being in the world. The externalist perspective is taken when one does not adopt a position consistent with any particular being in the world at all, but rather adopts a God's Eye, or No Eye, point of view. So, from whose point of view are we speaking when we describe our model of the independent real world and the many incommensurable world-views, each of which is one correct way of describing the unique world? Clearly it cannot be from the point of view of one of the individual world-views: each such point of view reveals only one manifestation of the independent world.
Rather, we must be speaking from an external point of view -- a God's Eye point of view. Thus, our model presents an externalist perspective.

The externalist perspective is the perspective of the metaphysical realist. As such, the notion of truth which is integral to it has it that truth is radically non-epistemic -- that is, that whatever is true is so irrespective of whether we know it or not, and even of whether we can possibly know it or not. Thus,

'we might be 'brains in a vat' and so the theory that is 'ideal' from the point of view of operational utility, inner beauty and elegance, 'plausibility', simplicity, 'conservatism', etc., might be false'.

Now, in Reason, Truth and History Putnam presents what he admits is an unusual argument to show that in fact we cannot be brains in a vat. He thinks that he thereby undermines the very basis of the externalist perspective -- namely, the notion of radically non-epistemic truth -- and hence, shows that the externalist perspective is incoherent. We shall now examine his argument.

Imagine a possible world in which all sentient beings are merely brains in a vat of nutrients, which keeps them alive. In this possible world, the universe 'just happens to consist of automatic machinery tending a vat full of brains and nervous systems'. This automatic machinery happens to be programmed to give all these brains and nervous systems a collective hallucination. Putnam elaborates:

'Thus, when I seem to myself to be talking to you, you seem to yourself to be hearing my words. Of course, it is not the

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case that my words actually reach your ears -- for you don't have any (real) ears, nor do I have any real mouth and tongue. Rather, when I produce my words, what happens is that the efferent impulses travel from my brain to the computer, which both causes me to 'hear' my own voice uttering those words and 'feel' my tongue moving, etc., and causes you to 'hear' my words, 'see' me speaking, etc. In this case, we are, in a sense, actually in communication\(^1\).

Thus, as far as we could tell, the world would appear no different from the way it appears to us in the actual world.

Now, suppose that the possible world we have just characterized were the actual world. That is, suppose that we all really were brains in a vat. Of course, the most likely purpose for which such a supposition might be put forward is as an argument for epistemological scepticism: no matter how perfect our knowledge of the world becomes, the brains-in-a-vat possible world means that we can never be certain that we have not got the world completely wrong. Thus, it is just an alternative to the Dreaming argument for scepticism.

Putnam's interest in the brains-in-a-vat story is not exactly with its sceptical point, though I think his interest is related to it. What interests Putnam about the story is that he sees it as shedding light on the difference between the internalist and externalist perspectives in philosophy. In particular, as we have mentioned, he sees it as revealing the incoherence of the externalist perspective, by way of undermining the notion of radically non-epistemic truth. And this is where Putnam's target -- the externalist perspective -- is related to the sceptical point of the story. For epistemological

\(^1\) Ibid., pp.6-7.
scepticism necessarily presupposes this same notion of non-epistemic truth. Therefore, if he successfully undermines this notion, then he will have refuted scepticism too, even though he does not explicitly claim this.

Putnam argues that the externalist (or metaphysical realist) and the internalist (or internal realist) will have different reactions to the brains-in-a-vat story — though he assumes that they both will wish to refute the story’s sceptical conclusion. The internalist, Putnam claims, can dismiss the story easily. She will immediately ask: from whose point of view is the story being told? Obviously, it must be from the point of view of someone outside of the vat-world, since none of the brains in the vat can know the true state of their world. But, Putnam argues,

'a 'world' by definition includes everything that interacts in any way with the things it contains. If you, for example, were the one observer who was not a Brain in a Vat, spying on the Brains in a Vat, then the world would not be one in which all sentient beings were Brains in a Vat. So, the supposition that there could be a world in which all sentient beings are Brains in a Vat presupposes from the outset a God’s Eye view of truth, or, more accurately, a No Eye view of truth — truth as independent of observers altogether'¹.

And, of course, the internalist will not countenance a God’s Eye, or No Eye, perspective. Her whole point is that one necessarily thinks or speaks within a particular linguistic framework, or theoretical framework, or conceptual scheme; that is, from a particular point of view. Hence, the internalist concludes that the brains-in-a-vat story is just that — a story. It does not describe a possible world at all.

¹ Ibid., p.50.
However, for the externalist it is of no concern whatsoever that the brains-in-a-vat story is told from a God's Eye point of view, for this is precisely the externalist perspective: that is, the point of view which transcends each and every individual point of view. So, for the externalist the brains-in-a-vat story does describe a possible world. Thus, if she wishes to avoid the sceptical consequences of the story, then she must produce a different argument. Putnam thinks he has such an argument.

Supposing that the brains-in-a-vat possible world is the actual world, and hence that we are brains in a vat, the crucial question Putnam asks is: could we say or think that we are brains in a vat? Putnam's answer is that no, we could not say or think such a proposition. He argues that the supposition that we really are brains in a vat 'cannot possibly be true', despite the fact that he sees the brains-in-a-vat possible world as being genuinely physically possible. His point is that if we were brains in a vat, we could not say or think that we were so. And therefore, we cannot even suppose that we are brains in a vat. The reason for this, according to Putnam, is that the very supposition is self-refuting:

'If we can consider whether it is true or false, then it is not true .... Hence it is not true'.

But how is this so? It is easy to see how this applies to at least one other supposition: namely, the supposition that I do not

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1 Ibid., p.7.
2 Ibid., p.8.
exist. If I can suppose that I do not exist, then it follows that I do exist. However, it is not at all obvious (and Putnam readily admits this) that the supposition that we are brains in a vat is self-refuting in such a way. The reason Putnam gives for its being self-refuting involves reference. Basically, if we successfully refer to vats, then we cannot be brains in a vat:

'...although the people in that possible world [consisting of brains in a vat and a controlling computer] can think and say any words that we can think and say, they cannot (I claim) refer to what we can refer to. In particular, they cannot think or say that they are brains in a vat (even by thinking 'we are brains in a vat')'.

Putnam's argument here relies on a particular kind of account of reference -- or, perhaps, non-account would be a better description. On Putnam's view, a language-user can refer to objects which exist according to that user's conceptual scheme. And Putnam does not have much more to say about such reference, except to indicate that it is unproblematic. Now, so far as the formulation of Putnam's view we have just given goes, the externalist can concur with it. For, what is essential to the common externalist view of reference too, is that an object must exist, and we must be acquainted with it, or recognize it, as an existing object, for us to be able to employ a sign to refer to it.

Of course, for the internalist, 'Objects' do not exist

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1 Ibid., p.8.
2 Ibid., p.52.
independently of conceptual schemes'; whereas, for the externalist they do. And thus, Putnam claims, unlike the internalist, the externalist needs an account to explain how it is that words and sentences within her linguistic or conceptual framework refer to things outside of that framework, and what the conditions are for such successful reference. The commonly accepted account of such reference is the causal account. Broadly speaking, for one successfully so to refer, on this account, one must have an appropriate causal connexion with that thing: this connexion may be a direct perceptual one; or an indirect one — such as via a book, or via an expert, etc. Now, Putnam criticizes such accounts as accounts of what it is to refer. Thus, he rejects them as reductionist:

'I cannot follow "physicalists"...who would argue that"intentional" or semantical properties (for example, reference) can be reduced to physical ones.'

However, I think that in demanding an account from the externalist of what it is to refer, and then rejecting the suggested account, Putnam is not dealing with what is primarily at stake between the internalist and externalist: namely, what can be known. For, if it could be shown by the externalist that the objects we know within our conceptual scheme exist independently of our scheme, then reference to these objects would be as unproblematic as it is for the internalist on Putnam's view.

1 Ibid., p.52.

Therefore, I think we can settle on a formulation of what conditions are necessary for successful reference, which both Putnam and the externalist can agree on: for one successfully to refer to an object, one must be acquainted with it, or recognize it, as an existing object. Given this common view, the externalist can agree with Putnam's point that

'\textit{the qualitative similarity} (amounting, if you like, to qualitative identity) between the thoughts of the brains in a vat and the thoughts of someone in the actual world by no means implies sameness of reference'\textsuperscript{1}.

In the brains-in-a-vat possible world, our counterparts have exactly the same qualitative experiences and thoughts as we do in the actual world. But when they purportedly think and speak about trees, for example, they actually do not refer to trees at all: there are no trees (we have supposed). But, what about vats? There does exist one vat, and the vat-worlders have exactly the same idea of vats as we do. What is missing, though, is the vat-worlders' being acquainted with vats as existing objects. The fact that the computer gave the vat-worlders an idea which is qualitatively identical to that which we who know vats have -- and furthermore, to that which they would have if they somehow grew bodies and were able directly to perceive the vat in which they had been kept -- is purely coincidental (we assume). Thus, given Putnam's view of reference, the vat-worlders cannot refer to vats.

We shall not here go into the maze of arguments for and against such a view of reference: even if we did come to a conclusion eventually, it would not have any relevance to our concerns here.

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., p.14.
Indeed, I tend to agree with Hacking's view\(^1\) that reflections upon language never tell us what there is, or what we can know. So, for the sake of argument, let us assume that Putnam's view of reference is correct, and therefore that the supposition that we are brains in a vat is self-refuting.

Scepticism

Now, as a prelude to our investigation of whether Putnam's argument does indeed show the incoherence of the externalist perspective, let us first ask this question: does the acceptance of Putnam's argument undermine the sceptical point of the brains-in-a-vat story? This is important, because if it does not do so -- which I think is the case -- then we must conclude (by *modus ponens* -- see pp.64-65) that Putnam has failed to undermine the notion of non-epistemic truth.

Putnam's argument would undermine the sceptical point if the only way to make that point was via the supposition that we might actually be brains in a vat. The brains-in-a-vat story is a fiction, the purpose of which is merely to illustrate a way in which a group of sentient beings could have exactly the same qualitative experience to ours and, as a result, an exactly similar account of the world to ours, and yet it actually be the case that its account is entirely mistaken. The brains-in-a-vat story describes a possible world; indeed, as Putnam freely admits, it violates no physical law. What Putnam objects to is

\(^1\) Hacking, I., *Representing and Intervening*, p.92.
the sceptic concluding from the story that we might in actuality be brains in a vat. However, the sceptic might well be able to make her point without employing the offending formulation, and we shall now examine how she might do this.

Now, Putnam objects to the move from the acceptance of the physical possibility of the brains-in-a-vat world, to the conclusion that such vat-beings would be mistaken in their world-view. Putnam argues that the view of reference to which he subscribes leads him to hold that it is not the case that the vat-beings think they experience/know about the real world, but in fact do not because the computer makes them hallucinate all this experiencing and knowing. Rather, Putnam holds that the vat-beings successfully refer to, experience and know truths about the world-in-the-image.

Thus, for Putnam the brains-in-a-vat story merely illustrates the fact that beings can have qualitatively identical experiences, thoughts and world-view to ours, and yet be referring to completely different referents.

But let us examine Putnam’s claims in the light of the story again. Remember that we are presupposing the externalist standpoint -- that is, we are describing the vat-world from a God’s Eye view. Now, Putnam claims that it is incorrect to say that the vat-worlders’ world-view is mistaken. But suppose that the world in the story is very much like ours, except having a higher level of technology, and that we have constructed the computer which supports and provides all the experience to the brains in the vat. And suppose further that after the brains
have been in the vat for several years, we rapidly grow bodies for the brains, so that they are suddenly able to experience the real world just as we do. The crucial question here is this: how do the ex-brains-in-a-vat regard their earlier world-view? I think that they would correctly regard their earlier world-view as having been an illusion or hallucination, and hence incorrect.

To reiterate, we are presupposing the externalist standpoint here: there is just one real world, and hence just one correct description of it. Furthermore, we are assuming Putnam's view of reference (as formulated on p.69). Given this, I argue that the ex-brains-in-a-vat would correctly regard their earlier world-view as incorrect, even if it is qualitatively identical with their new, correct one.

Now, Putnam would object here that their earlier world-view was not an incorrect description of what they now know is the real world, since it was not a description of the same thing they are now referring to. That is, he would reiterate that their earlier world-view was a correct description of their actual referent -- namely, the world-in-the-image. However, I cannot agree with Putnam here. What the brains-in-a-vat experienced, and considered to be how the unique real world actually is, in fact was merely how the independent real world appeared to be to them: the image-world was produced by real computers in the real world. Thus, the vat-worlders were acquainted with the independent real world in their experiencing of the (false) appearance of that world. And therefore, I would argue that given Putnam's view of reference it is true to say that the vat-worlders could refer to the
independent real world, even though they could not possibly know any truths about it, except that it appeared to them in such a way. The vat-worlders were correct in holding that there is a unique independent real world, but their characterization of it was entirely wrong, because they did not know that they were actually characterizing a mere image-world -- an illusion (whether a verisimilar one or not) produced by the real world. Nevertheless, I argue that they were successfully referring to, and attempting to characterize, the independent real world.

Thus, contrary to Putnam, I argue that the force of the brains-in-a-vat story is indeed that beings could well have qualitatively identical experiences and world-view to ours, and yet their world-view be entirely mistaken. And since there is no qualitative difference between our experiences and thoughts, and those of the mistaken beings, then we cannot know that our world-view is not entirely mistaken.

Now, in the latter sceptical formulation there is no reference to how the world might actually be -- there is no claim that we might actually be brains-in-a-vat. Thus, Putnam’s argument will not work against it. Furthermore, as well as successfully avoiding Putnam’s argument, this reformulation also preserves the whole of the sceptic’s point. Her whole point is that we cannot be certain that our world-view is correct; and that no being could ever be certain of its world-view. She is just not in the business of saying how the world is: quite the contrary, she argues that we cannot know how it is. Thus, the sceptic does not put forward the brains-in-a-vat story as a worthwhile candidate for acceptance as a world-view. The sceptic may well accept Putnam’s
claim that the supposition that we are brains in a vat is self-refuting. Scepticism is essentially a negative standpoint: it says that we cannot know for certain how the world is. Thus, returning to the vat-world case, the vat-worlders could themselves have made the sceptical point regarding their knowledge of the real world. That is, they could have correctly concluded that they could not be certain that their world-view was not entirely mistaken — even though they could not refer to real vats.

But after such a conclusion is reached, the sceptic can then become a positive enquirer: although it is futile to demand that we be certain that our world-view is correct, nevertheless we can investigate the workability of world-views. Our realist (broadly speaking) world-view — that is, the view that there are real objects around us, which we perceive via our senses — is quite workable. On the other hand, a world-view that we are brains in a vat is totally unworkable, for the reason Putnam gives us: that is, that the very supposition is self-refuting. Nevertheless, this in no way reflects upon the legitimacy of the brains-in-a-vat story in the sceptic’s argument: it successfully shows that our world-view could be entirely wrong.

Thus, even if we accept Putnam’s argument that the supposition that we are brains in a vat is self-refuting, we do not therein have any good reason to reject the sceptical force of the brains-in-a-vat story. No matter how perfect — that is, complete and consistent — an account of the world we have, it might be entirely wrong: that is, it might not describe how the independent real world is at all. Thus, the notion of non-epistemic truth remains intact, despite our accepting Putnam’s
But it is by undermining this notion, as the foundation of the externalist perspective, that Putnam hopes to collapse the whole externalist perspective. Has he, then, failed in this endeavour? To see, we shall examine how his conclusions about the different characteristics of the internalist and externalist perspectives applies to our model.

Our combination internalist-externalist model

Recall that our model is of a host of incommensurable linguistic frameworks, each of which provides a correct way of characterizing the unique real world. Now, we said that in presenting this model we can only be speaking from a God’s Eye view, rather than from the particular point of view of a particular linguistic framework. Hence, we said that the model is externalist. However, that is not the full story. For, in constructing the model we said that one can only understand a statement from within the linguistic framework within which it was made. And we also said that one can only adjudge a statement as true or false from within the linguistic framework within which it was made. Based upon these considerations we would conclude that our model is internalist. So then, it seems that our model is in fact both externalist and internalist. Does this create a tension in our model? And how does Putnam’s attack on the externalist perspective affect our model?

Well first, can we happily have a combination internalist-
externalist model? Clearly, in such a model we are operating with two different notions of truth. On the one hand we have the notion of truth as being epistemic — this notion being the basis of the internalist perspective and the doctrine of internal realism. According to this notion, truth is in essence knowable, at least in principle. This is so because a statement made in a particular linguistic framework is true just if it states that a certain situation obtains in the world, and that situation does in fact obtain in the world-as-characterized-by-that-particular-linguistic-framework. Now, the only way to determine what obtains in the world-as-characterized-by-a-particular-linguistic-framework is to examine the relevant data provided by that linguistic framework, and to reason from that data in the style of reasoning supplied by that linguistic framework. Thus, truth boils down to whatever is (in the ideal limit) warrantedly assertable, or in other words, whatever it is (in the ideal limit) rational to accept.¹

On the other hand, however, we have the notion of truth as being radically non-epistemic — this notion being the basis of the externalist perspective, and the doctrine of metaphysical realism. In our model, we have supposed that each linguistic framework provides a correct characterization of the independent real world. That is, we have supposed that the statements about the world of any particular linguistic framework, state what is in fact the case in the independent real world: that is, they are true. Now, in supposing them to be true here, we are operating with the notion of radically non-epistemic truth; for no-one can ever know that these statements are true of the

independent real world, since one necessarily operates within a particular linguistic framework, and hence can come to know as true or false only statements about the world-as-characterized-by-one’s-linguistic-framework. Now, I see no prima facie tension in our model as a result of its having these two different notions of truth, and hence being both internalist and externalist. But perhaps consideration of Putnam’s attack on the externalist perspective will reveal such a tension.

Simplified, his argument seems to be as follows. For the externalist perspective, truth is correspondence with the independent real world, and is thus radically non-epistemic. Therefore, the externalist must accept that even an ideal account of the world might be entirely false, since, for example, we might be brains in a vat. But then Putnam argues (and we have accepted his argument here) that a brain in a vat cannot refer to vats; and therefore we cannot coherently suppose that we are brains in a vat. Hence, the externalist’s notion of radically non-epistemic truth appears to be undermined, for we cannot even suppose that a situation actually obtains in which we are totally mislead as to the state of the world. And so, argues Putnam, we can only coherently assume that our account of the world is more or less true, and that (in the limiting case) our ideal account of the world — that is, the account that it is perfectly rational to accept — must be entirely true. Hence, according to Putnam, we are left with the notion of epistemic truth as being the only coherent notion.

Now, I think that when we examine Putnam’s argument in the light of our combination internalist-externalist model, we can see
exactly why he sees the externalist perspective as running into trouble. Putnam claims to be considering the brains-in-a-vat story as an externalist — that is, from a God’s Eye, or No Eye, point of view. From this external point of view we can admit that the story describes a possible world. But then Putnam asks us to suppose that we are actually brains in a vat; and concludes that we cannot coherently suppose this, because if we were actually brains in a vat, then we could not refer to vats. Now, there are two ways to take what Putnam is asking us to do. If we take it the simpler way, which is the way I think Putnam intends us to take it, then indeed it is evident that we cannot coherently suppose that we are brains in a vat. The simpler way to take the request 'Let us suppose that we are brains in a vat' is to take it that the referents of ‘us’ and ‘we’ are identical. That is, the request is to be understood as follows: let us suppose that we — that is, those who are now doing the supposing -- are brains in a vat. Now, when it is interpreted this way, the request is impossible because the supposition is incoherent, for the reasons Putnam gives. But what Putnam fails to note is that when we attempt to perform the request, thus interpreted, we are thereby moving from our purportedly externalist starting point to the internalist perspective. For we begin by adopting a God’s Eye view, in describing a possible world in which all sentient beings are brains in a vat, but then we proceed to suppose that these very same beings, us, who are (playing at being) omniscient gods, are actually operating in the vat-world, and hence have limited knowledge as determined by their world-as-experienced (the vat-world). Now, it is perfectly clear that this supposition is incoherent without going into Putnam’s difficult arguments about reference. What makes it incoherent is that in attempting to entertain it in the way in which Putnam does, one slips
into the internalist perspective; and Putnam has already convincingly shown us (p.65) that the internalist cannot even admit that the brains-in-a-vat story describes a possible world. Thus, ipso facto, we cannot coherently suppose that we are in such a world. But clearly, when Putnam's request is interpreted in this simpler way, it does not tell us anything at all about the externalist perspective, despite Putnam's claims to the contrary.

However, the request 'Let us suppose that we are brains in a vat' can be interpreted in a way wholly consistent with the externalist perspective. The key is to be found in Kant's Critique\(^1\), where he distinguishes between the transcendental 'I' and the empirical 'I'. In our case, the 'us' in the request refers to the transcendental subjects who are doing the supposing. In this sense, we are playing at being omniscient gods, who are not part of the empirical world at all. The referents of 'we' in the above request are different from the referents of 'us'. The 'we' refers to the empirical subjects of knowledge, who operate only within the world. And it is this sense of 'we' that we intend when we simply say 'Suppose we are brains in a vat', or 'We might be brains in a vat'. The we that we refer to in such sentences are not the God-like consciousnesses who are speaking. Thus, even though we accept Putnam's claim that any brain in a vat cannot possibly refer to vats, and that therefore, if we were brains in a vat, we could not refer to vats, nevertheless it is quite coherent for us to suppose that we are actually brains in a vat. For the 'us' who do the supposing can refer

to vats, because they (we) are supposedly operating from a God's Eye point of view. Having supposed that we (empirical beings) are actually brains in a vat, we (gods) conclude that we (empirical beings) cannot refer to vats, and have a totally incorrect world-view.

Putnam's mistakenly thinking that he has exposed the incoherence of the externalist perspective results from his failing to stick to the externalist perspective, and slipping into the internalist perspective. More precisely, it is a result of his failing to pursue consistently his own correct characterization of the externalist's notion of truth -- that is, as radically non-epistemic truth. Given this notion, no one can ever actually know a statement to be true. Thus, a genuine externalist will appreciate as valid the sceptical point of the brains-in-a-vat story; she will not try to dismiss it, as Putnam assumes she does. Truth, for the externalist, can only be discovered from a God's Eye, or No Eye, point of view. And since on one can ever actually have such an external view, then such truth is totally inaccessible to everyone: hence, scepticism. But the total inaccessibility, even in principle, of such truth does not mean that the notion is incoherent. We can pretend to have a God's Eye view when supposing or hypothesizing, as we have done in our model. But we simply cannot possibly know anything from such a perspective.

So, we have seen, contrary to Putnam, that the externalist perspective, with its notion of radically non-epistemic truth, is not incoherent. But nevertheless, it clearly does not provide us with a workable definition of truth. The externalist's, or metaphysical realist's, definition of truth -- that is, that a statement is true just
if it states what is in fact the case, not just in a world-as-characterized-by-some-particular-linguistic-framework, but in the independent real world -- cannot be employed. It is just not possible for anyone, necessarily operating from within a particular linguistic framework, coherently to claim to know that their statements are true in this externalist sense. They can only coherently suppose that they are, or claim that they might be. The only workable definition of truth is provided by the internalist’s, or internal realist’s, notion of epistemic truth: in any given linguistic framework, a statement is true just if it states what is in fact the case in the world-as-characterized-by-that-linguistic-framework.

Hence, we can clearly see that the externalist assumption in our model -- that each different linguistic framework provides a correct way of characterizing the independent real world -- serves no purpose other than to accommodate our metaphysical realist intuition that there is a unique independent real world. In accommodating this intuition we merely greatly complicate our model. The model does not thereby become better able to account for some bit of evidence or other: there can be no evidence or good reason to believe that one’s linguistic framework correctly characterizes the unique real world, which exists independent of one’s linguistic framework; for one’s linguistic framework determines what counts as evidence or good reason for belief.

Thus, if we hold our combination internalist-externalist model, we will find ourselves in something similar to Kant’s position. Kant held that all we can know are objects of experience, or appearances. Our understanding determines how we are to experience
these appearances: that is, it gives particular form to our experience. Thus, all knowledge is of the phenomenal world, and this world is structured by our intuitions (space and time) and our understanding (the categories). However, Kant also posits a noumenal world, or things-in-themselves, which are the reality behind the appearances we experience. He holds that we cannot know anything about noumena. However, he holds that we are subject to 'a natural and inevitable illusion' resulting from our improperly applying the forms of our understanding to matters beyond our experience, thereby thinking that we know about noumena. Thus, we can see how Kant’s model is similar to ours: we too hold that we can at best merely posit a transcendent real world behind our world-as-experienced, or world-as-characterized-by-our-linguistic-framework. We cannot know anything about this independent real world.

However, unlike Kant I do not think that our strong inclination to hold that we know about the independent real world is natural and inevitable. Furthermore, I will go so far as to question Kant’s view that we can justifiably posit a unique independent real world. That is, based on what we have seen of the character of the externalist perspective and its notion of radically non-epistemic truth, I hold that there is no good reason for our metaphysical realist intuition that there is a unique independent real world. So, perhaps we should finally be prepared to reject our metaphysical realist presupposition of there being a unique real world, independent of all particular linguistic frameworks.

1 Ibid., B354, p.300.
But, to return to an earlier objection to rejecting metaphysical realism, suppose that all cognitive activity ceased; what would remain? Since, after rejecting metaphysical realism, all that we allow to exist are language-characterized worlds, then once cognition ceased, nothing would remain. But surely this cannot be true.

However, our considerations of the internalist versus the externalist perspectives provide us with an answer to this objection. Consider just what it is that we are being asked to suppose. We are being asked to suppose that all cognitive beings cease to exist — including us. Now, we have argued above (pp. 77-80) that such a supposition presents no problem for the metaphysical realist, who operates from the externalist perspective. As we argued, the externalist perspective allows us to pretend to have a God's Eye View. Thus, it allows us (transcendent supposers) to suppose that we (empirical knowers) are actually brains in a vat, or even, as in this case, that we cease to exist along with all other knowers. (What we could give as answer to the question of what would thus remain would still, I argue, be a moot point, even given the externalist perspective.)

However, the internalist perspective does not allow a God's Eye point of view. Therefore, after rejecting metaphysical realism, the answer to the realist's question of what would remain after all cognition ceased, is not nothing. The answer to the metaphysical realist's objection is rather to reject the supposition itself. Given that all we are allowing are language-characterized worlds, the supposition of a world totally independent of knowers/speakers cannot be
entertained. It could only be entertained if we countenanced at least the pretence of a view outside of all empirical observers' points of view; but, as we have seen, the very notion of such a view is rejected as invalid.

Our model minus the independent world

So, shall we now reject the intuition that there is a unique real world, independent of all particular linguistic frameworks? Let us first investigate just what kind of model we would be left with if we did jettison the language-independent world. The model would simply consist of a myriad of incommensurable linguistic-framework-characterized worlds. Would such a model be a wholly internalist one, as opposed to our original combination internalist-externalist one? Based on one way of reading Putnam, he would say yes -- though he might not be entirely happy about being so read. When characterizing the internalist perspective he writes that

'it is a characteristic of this view to hold that what objects does the world consist of? is a question that it only makes sense to ask within a theory or description. Many 'internalist' philosophers, though not all, hold further that there is more than one 'true' theory or description of the world'.

Unfortunately Putnam does not make it clear as to whether he is one of those internalist philosophers who hold that there is more than one true world-view. But he does at least seem to allow that such philosophers are indeed internalists; so it would seem that he would hold that our

1 Putnam, H., Reason Truth and History, p.49.
revised model is wholly internalist.

But I say that it is not. The key lies, I think, in the difference between what remains of our model after the language-independent world is jettisoned, and what would remain of Kant’s model of what there is if he were to jettison noumena. What would remain of Kant’s model is just the phenomenal world, the world-as-experienced. Kant’s concern is with human knowledge. He never suggests that human beings might have different styles of knowing, similar to Hacking’s ‘different styles of reasoning’. There is just knowing, complete with its possibilities and limits. Thus, there is but one phenomenal world, or world-as-experienced. Clearly then, there is no question of such a model being anything but internalist -- there definitely is no God’s Eye view taken. The point of view we have taken in characterizing this Kantian model is that of a being in the world -- that is, in the unique world-as-experienced.

But now consider our revised model of many different linguistic frameworks -- and hence, many linguistic-framework-characterized worlds. From whose point of view have we characterized this model? It cannot be from the point of view of someone in a particular linguistic-framework-characterized world, for the following reasons. We have seen that because linguistic frameworks/world-views are incommensurable, to identify the object to which someone refers we must be operating within the same linguistic framework as the referrer. Thus, if we adopted a particular point of view -- that of a particular linguistic framework -- then all we could have is our linguistic framework/world-view, and talk of other linguistic frameworks and
worlds within our linguistic framework. All we would be referring to with such talk are (following Putnam) linguistic-frameworks-in-the-image, and worlds-in-the-image. If we attempted to characterize our model from such a particular point of view, then what we would have is a model of a linguistic framework/world-view (ours) which includes within it other alternative linguistic frameworks/world-views. Now, apart from the fact that this is not the model as we intend it, it also misrepresents our linguistic framework: our linguistic framework/world-view does not include alternative world-views, such as the aboriginal world-view. Our model, however, is of many alternative linguistic frameworks/world-views, each of which is accorded genuine internal reality. Our world-view, in this model, is completely on a par with all other world-views. And clearly, therefore, even though we purposely adopted an internalist perspective in developing the model, with its epistemic notion of truth within world-views, nevertheless our characterization even of this revised model must be from a God's Eye point of view: it can only be presented if we adopt an externalist perspective. Hence, even our revised model, with independent real world jettisoned, is still externalist, and thereby lands us in the same epistemological trouble.

However, an objection may be raised here, based on the claim that our rejection of our revised relativist model hinges on a quantifier-shift fallacy. Consider the following argument: I cannot possibly identify any one of my beliefs which I believe to be false; therefore, I believe that none of my beliefs can possibly be false. This argument is invalid. Actually, I believe that some of my beliefs are indeed false, even though I cannot possibly identify any particular
one of my beliefs which I believe to be false. The invalid move from
premise to conclusion depends on a quantifier-shift fallacy. Now, it
may be objected that our argument for the rejection of our revised
relativist model is of the following form: I cannot possibly identify
any alternative world-views to my own; therefore, I cannot admit the
possibility of alternative world-views to my own. But this argument,
so the objection goes, is invalid for the same reason as the false
beliefs one is. Just because we cannot identify or know any alternative
world-views, it does not follow that they do not exist. Surely we can
admit at least the possibility of their existing.

But let us examine the two invalid arguments above. In the
former case, even though I cannot possibly identify any of my beliefs
which I believe to be false, nevertheless it is perfectly possible for
other people to identify particular beliefs of mine which they believe,
with good reason, to be false. And such people can inform me of these
reasons, which may convince me that these particular beliefs are false.
However, it is a peculiarity of the "intentional" act of believing that
upon discovering that a particular one of one's beliefs is false, one
thereby ceases to believe it -- that is, one ceases to have that belief,
and thenceforth has the contrary belief instead. Thus, even though
other people can identify particular beliefs of mine that are false, and
can convince me of their falsity, this cannot be represented as my
believing that these beliefs of mine are false. But now consider the
alternative world-views case. What marks the crucial difference between
this case and the former, is that it is not just that I cannot identify
an alternative world-view to my own, but that even if there were any
alternative world-views, no one in such a world-view could identify my
world-view as an alternative to theirs either (let alone inform me of the fact). That is, unlike the false beliefs case, what we are talking about here are in principle unknowable facts. But we have seen that it is an essential tenet of the internalist perspective -- with its underlying epistemic notion of truth -- that we cannot countenance unknowable truths or unknowable possible worlds. We can construct (indeed, we have done) a story of incommensurable alternative world-views which are all internally correct; just as Putnam has constructed the brains-in-a-vat story. But, as Putnam holds of the latter story, our story does not describe a possible world for the internal realist. Neither of the stories describe a world which could possibly be known, or perceived, or experienced, by anyone in such a world. Thus, the very postulation of our relativist model as a possibility presupposes a God's Eye view, which the internalist rejects.

Well then, perhaps Kant can show us a way out of our trouble? We have seen above that Kant's model of the world, minus the Kantian baggage of noumena, is wholly internalist, and hence is wholly concerned with things that we can know. What if we revised our model in a similar way to that in which we revised Kant's, thereby producing a wholly internalist model? Would it be acceptable? Such a model would amount to identifying language with our linguistic framework. We could not recognize the existence of any different real linguistic frameworks, because such recognition would necessarily presuppose an (in principle unattainable) God's Eye point of view. Thus, it would not even make any sense to speak of our linguistic framework -- as if there were others. All there would be is language and the world-as-characterized-by-language. Now, such a model is close to what Donald Davidson holds, and
But first, does our latest model have any prima facie acceptability? The most important consideration here is that despite our not admitting any genuinely alternative linguistic frameworks/world-views, we would still undeniably encounter (translations of) whole bodies of apparently very unusual utterances belonging to (for example) other cultures. How would we deal with such utterances? Well, presumably we would simply judge that each and every such utterance is false or incorrect, since they do not state how things actually are in the world — that is, in the language-characterized world, or the world-as-known. And we could even grant that groups of such utterances do constitute frameworks, but that these frameworks are incorrect nevertheless.

The debate so far

But our argument has now ironically brought us virtually back to our starting point. We began from the position that we had the (approximately) correct view of the independent real world, and that there could be only one correct view of the unique world. But then we noticed that statements of other cultures, which we initially regarded as either obviously false or nonsensical, might together constitute other views or perspectives of the world; and that individual statements, when adjudged solely with respect to such alternative world-views, could be correct. Thus, for it to be justifiable to maintain that we have the only correct view of the world, we saw that it would need to be possible to identify and to characterize the independent real
world independently of all linguistic frameworks/world-views. But this was seen not to be possible: one can only characterize the world within some linguistic framework or other. Thus, we concluded, there is no way of determining which world-view is correct with respect to the independent real world.

Nevertheless, we wanted to hold on to our metaphysical realist intuition that there is an independent real world, and this eventually led us to our combination internalist-externalist model. In this model, any statement is to be adjudged internally -- that is, within a particular linguistic framework. In addition, each linguistic framework is assumed correctly to reveal a mode of being of the independent real world; that is, each linguistic framework provides a correct way of characterizing the independent real world. Thus, if a statement is internally adjudged correct or true, it is assumed on this model that it is externally correct or true also.

But then we argued that there is no good reason, and indeed, there can be no good reason whatsoever, for making the assumption that each, or even any, linguistic framework correctly reveals the independent real world -- this is because the externalist perspective is radically non-epistemic. But since no-one can ever know anything about the independent real world, what reason do we have for positing the existence of such a world? We argued that there was no good reason. So we rejected this world, leaving the model of many different and incommensurable worlds-as-characterized-by-linguistic-frameworks. But it was realized that this model still presented an externalist perspective: to say that there are many linguistic frameworks, each
characterizing a world, and that there can be no choosing between them as regards external correctness, since there is no transcendent world with respect to which they can be correct, is to adopt a God’s Eye, or No Eye, point of view -- a view external to each and every particular point of view (linguistic framework). Therefore, this model too is of a world which we cannot possibly know.

Now, finally, we have hit upon a genuinely completely internalist model, and hence one which is of nothing but what we can know. All there is to this model is language -- that is, our linguistic framework -- and the world-as-characterized-by-language. This is similar to our original position, in that we -- as members of the Western scientific culture -- have the only correct view of the unique real world. The only difference is that in our latest model the unique real world which we alone know correctly is not independent of language.

Now, many will be very dubious of the validity of our move from the epistemological standpoint that there is no world-view which we or anyone else can ever know to be correct with respect to the independent real world, to the rejection of the metaphysical standpoint that there is an independent real world. We are sure to be charged with confusing the two kinds of question: epistemological and metaphysical; what we (can) know, and what is. But rather, what we are doing is rejecting the whole notion of a metaphysical, as opposed to an epistemological, standpoint. It is only profitable to ask, or justifiable to say, what there is from a particular point of view. If someone could actually have a God’s Eye point of view, then that person could know the independent real world; and hence, metaphysical realism
would be perfectly justifiable. But the God’s Eye point of view is a fiction: there is in fact no such view. We can only pretend that there is, but I see such a pretence as being as futile as the absolutist’s claim that we can still make sense of the concepts of instantaneous space and absolute simultaneity, despite accepting the Special Theory of Relativity, if we imagine an omniscient observer. Just as the notion of such an observer is not tenable given the Special Theory, so the notion of a God’s Eye view is not acceptable given the internalist perspective, according to which all knowers have a particular point of view, or linguistic framework/world-view. By pretending that there is a God’s Eye view, and positing an independent real world, we are gratuitously complicating our model. Better to make the model wholly internalist: hence, we now move on to Davidson.
CHAPTER 3
DAVIDSON'S IDEA OF A CONCEPTUAL SCHEME

In the first two chapters we employed the notion of a linguistic framework. We said that different linguistic frameworks give rise to different world-views, or ways of characterizing the world. Further than this, we came to say that different linguistic frameworks characterize different worlds -- that is, that people operating in different linguistic frameworks inhabit different worlds. Finally, we said that all we can know to exist is one linguistic framework and one world -- namely, the world as characterized by the one linguistic framework. Now, the notion of a linguistic framework that we have thus employed is the same as that of a conceptual scheme employed by many other philosophers. 'Conceptual scheme' is the term that Davidson uses in 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme' to refer to what we have called 'linguistic framework'. We will use his term for the time being.

In his paper, Davidson argues that the doctrine of conceptual relativism is incoherent, from which follows that no sense can be made of the very idea of a conceptual scheme. He begins his main argument by accepting the doctrine that associates having a language with having a conceptual scheme; the supposition being that if conceptual schemes differ, so do languages. But then he makes the point that speakers of different languages may nevertheless share a conceptual scheme, just if

their languages can be translated into each other. He therefore revises his definition of a conceptual scheme, identifying it with a set of intertranslatable languages.

Now, if the notion of a conceptual scheme is to be at all intelligible, there must be at least the possibility of there being more than one conceptual scheme. For, to say that the one and only possible conceptual scheme is "the way of organizing experience," or "the system of categories that gives form to the data of sensation;" or that reality is relative to the one and only possible conceptual scheme; is to say nothing more than (respectively) that experience is organized, that the data of sensation have form, and that reality exists. If the notion of conceptual scheme does not allow even the possibility of rival conceptual schemes, then the notion is empty.

So, given this point, and the definition of a conceptual scheme as a set of intertranslatable languages, then in order to determine whether the notion of a conceptual scheme is coherent, Davidson need only investigate whether it is possible for there to be two people that speak languages which fail of intertranslatability. Now, Davidson identifies two kinds of cases in which languages might fail of intertranslatability: namely, complete and partial failure. Complete failure would occur if no significant range of sentences in one language could be translated into the other. Davidson spends the bulk of his paper arguing for the view that complete failure is

1 Ibid., p.5.
2 Ibid., p.5.
unintelligible. Partial failure would occur if some range of sentences could be translated, and some range could not. After dismissing total failure, Davidson briefly examines cases of partial failure, finding that they do not make the notion of a conceptual scheme any more intelligible.

Although Davidson spends most of his paper arguing against total untranslatability, we will not be concerned with it here. Davidson assumes that some subscribers to the notion of conceptual schemes, including Kuhn and Feyerabend, are committed to the view that different conceptual schemes are totally unintertranslatable. His assumption is based on his interpretation of their term 'incommensurable'. Davidson dismisses this term in the following manner:

"'Incommensurable" is, of course, Kuhn and Feyerabend’s word for "not intertranslatable"."

However, we have already seen that Kuhn holds that translation is possible between conceptual schemes (pp.28-29); and thus, for him at least, 'incommensurable' and 'not intertranslatable' are by no means synonymous. Certainly, Kuhn does hold that people operating within incommensurable world-views or conceptual schemes are participants in a 'communication breakdown'; but when we are involved in such a situation Kuhn advocates that we 'recognise each other as members of different language communities and then become translators'. I think Davidson's misinterpretation of Kuhn’s account of the incommensurability of

1 Ibid., p.12.
conceptual schemes may be explained by their having different notions of translation (this will emerge later in this chapter). I am not sure what Feyerabend is committed to regarding intertranslatability of schemes. But, in any case, I think a significant fact that most readers of Kuhn and Feyerabend notice is that they are very good at explaining what characterizes different conceptual schemes, and showing us in our own perfectly intelligible language/conceptual scheme just how different conceptual schemes are incommensurable. And this fact shows that different conceptual schemes are, at least in one sense, intertranslatable to some degree.

Now, I am not sure whether Davidson successfully shows that it is impossible to imagine a language which is totally untranslatable into our own. However, I think that if we operate with a common sense notion of translation, which is how I see the notion Hacking (pp.24-25) and Kuhn operate with, then any case of a totally untranslatable language which might be imaginable would certainly be a science fiction case: for example, the language-users would probably have none of our faculties of perception, and would communicate to their fellow language-users in a way not available to us. Such speculations may well be quite entertaining, but in terms of the actual debate about conceptual schemes they are beside the point. As Hacking comments,

'As a matter of brute fact all human languages are fairly easily partially translatable'.

The most that subscribers to conceptual schemes hold -- though I am not saying that they necessarily hold even this much -- is that there is

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some failure of translation between conceptual schemes. So, what does Davidson have to say about partial failure of intertranslatability?

Davidson’s argument against conceptual schemes

He begins with the following two premises: 'a man’s speech cannot be interpreted without knowing a good deal about what he believes (and intends and wants)'; and ‘fine distinctions between beliefs are impossible without understood speech’. From these Davidson infers that any theory either of how we interpret speech, or of how we account for beliefs and attitudes, cannot presuppose the other as fact: what we require is a theory that simultaneously interprets speech and accounts for attitudes, and depends on no evidence which assumes either.

Davidson holds that the way to achieve this is first of all to assume that any speaker, no matter what the language, accepts as true any sentence he/she utters. Davidson argues that this assumption clearly does not violate the above conditions, since despite making it we are none the wiser as regards what his/her sentence means, nor as regards what belief his/her holding it true represents. So, ‘the problem of interpretation’, according to Davidson, ‘is to abstract from the evidence a workable theory of meaning and an acceptable theory of belief’.

1 Davidson, op. cit., p.17.
2 Ibid., p.17.
3 Ibid., p.18.
Davidson gives us an example of how this works in practice. Suppose you and a companion see a yacht. Your companion says, 'Look at that handsome yawl', but you can see clearly by the position of the jigger that it is in fact a ketch. Davidson explains that there are two possible reactions. The first is that your companion has simply mistaken a ketch for a yawl: that is, he has acquired a false belief. However, supposing you know your companion to have adequate vision, and that he has a clear and unobstructed view of the yacht, you may well opt for the second possibility and judge that he means something slightly different by 'yawl' than you do. We have thus reinterpreted an utterance in order to preserve a reasonable theory of belief.

Now, Davidson admits that this case is relatively trivial, since there exists a background of common beliefs and a method of interpretation. However, Davidson claims that the same principles apply even to cases of radical translation -- that is, interpretation of a totally foreign language from scratch. What is crucial in such cases, according to Davidson, is the point that

'if all we know is what sentences a speaker holds true, and we cannot assume that his language is our own, then we cannot take even a first step towards interpretation without knowing or assuming a great deal about the speaker's beliefs'.

But, as we know from the original premises, knowledge of beliefs comes only with interpretation of speech, which, of course, we do not yet have. So Davidson concludes that the only possible way to begin and carry on the process of interpretation is to apply the so-called principle of charity -- the principle that we must count people right in

1 Ibid., p.18.
most matters. That is, we assume general agreement on beliefs with the person whose speech we wish to interpret. This principle allows us to establish 'a systematic correlation of sentences held true with sentences held true',\(^1\). The wider this 'foundation in agreement',\(^2\), according to Davidson, the more sense we make out of the speech and thought of others.

Davidson believes that this account of interpretation removes any bite from the idea of a conceptual scheme, and certainly totally undermines conceptual relativism. He writes the following:

'If we choose to translate some alien sentence rejected by its speakers by a sentence to which we are strongly attached on a community basis, we may be tempted to call this a difference in schemes; if we decide to accommodate the evidence in other ways, it may be more natural to speak of a difference of opinion'.

Now, I take it that by 'strongly attached on a community basis' Davidson means that the sentence is held to be a basic truth, so much so that anyone who is a member of the language community will have that belief.

Let us take as an example our aborigine case from Chapter 1. (For convenience alone we shall reverse Davidson's polarity of truth values.) Suppose once again that an aborigine points to an ancient human bone and utters a sentence which we translate as 'This bone has supernatural powers'. Recall, however, that the aborigine's concept is essentially bound up with how her culture reasons about such powers.

\(^1\) Ibid., p.19.
\(^2\) Ibid., p.19.
\(^3\) Ibid., p.19.
Such reasoning is totally foreign to our culture, and hence her concept is not the same as our concept supernatural. Our translation of her concept as 'supernatural' reflects our interpretation or judgement of her concept. Suppose again that she strongly holds the statement to be true, and that such beliefs in "supernatural" powers inhering in objects in her environment are basic to her culture. We, however, as speakers in a scientific language community, certainly would not accept her statement as true. But this is not to say that we would simply reject it as false. Rather, I think we would reject the sentence, and the example of reasoning of which it is a part, as perhaps bizarre or absurd. Perhaps if we were pushed by an enquirer to say whether we held the aborigine's proposition true or false, then we might reject it as false; but this ignores the fact that such propositions are part of a style of reasoning which is not shared by us; and that hence such propositions are not issues, or candidates for truth-or-falsehood, for our scientific language community.

Now, surely the aboriginal case we have just described is one in which, using Davidson's words, 'we may be tempted to call this a difference in schemes'. However, according to Davidson, it is open to us to 'decide to accommodate the evidence in other ways', in which case 'it may be more natural to speak of a difference of opinion'. So, for example, instead of translating the aborigine's utterance as 'This bone has supernatural powers', we might choose to translate it as 'This bone is very rare and strong'. However, let us assume further that we believe the bone to be exactly like the many fragile old bones to be found in the area: that is, we hold that the bone is neither rare nor strong. Now, it is easy to imagine a context which might incline one
translator to translate the utterance as the former statement, while inclining another to translate it as the latter: for example, the context of the bone’s being used in a particular ritual. The first translator might see the ritual as the aborigines’ attempt to manipulate their environment by invoking "supernatural" powers in the bone. However, the second translator might see the ritual as being merely an expressive activity, like a play in our culture; and thus, the reason for the bone’s revered place in the ritual is that it is seen as a key symbol in the theme of the ritual — say, the overwhelming strength of nature. To opt for the former interpretation will incline us to see a difference in conceptual schemes, each with its own style of reasoning, creating different possibilities or candidates for truth-or-falsehood. To opt for the latter will incline us to perceive a mere difference in opinion — that is, one culture believing a particular proposition to be true, and the other culture believing the same proposition to be false. Thus, Davidson argues that

'when others think differently from us, no general principle, or appeal to evidence, can force us to decide that the difference lies in our beliefs rather than our concepts'.

He goes on to say the following:

'Given the underlying methodology of interpretation, we could not be in a position to judge that others had concepts or beliefs radically different from our own'.

Thus, on Davidson’s account of interpretation there can never be a definitive case of partial failure of intertranslatability -- an alternative interpretation is always possible. And therefore, we can never discover a definitive case of an alternative conceptual scheme.

1 Ibid., pp.19-20.
2 Ibid., p.20.
Hence, we cannot possibly find any support for conceptual relativism; and therefore, the very idea of a conceptual scheme is meaningless, according to Davidson.

Our wholly internalist model

Now, recall the wholly internalist model that we arrived at towards the end of the last chapter. All there is to this model is language and the world-as-characterized-by-language. Given this model, we saw that there is no sense talking of our linguistic framework, for by rejecting the externalist perspective we preclude our recognizing the existence of any others. Truth, in such a model, consists in a statement's stating what is in fact the case in the world-as-characterized-by-language: it is not correspondence with a language-independent world. This position is clearly very close to Davidson's. He concludes his 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme' with the following:

'Given the dogma of a dualism of scheme and reality, we get conceptual relativity, and truth relative to a scheme. Without the dogma, this kind of relativity goes by the board. Of course truth of sentences remains relative to language, but that is as objective as can be. In giving up the dualism of scheme and world, we do not give up the world, but reestablish unmediated touch with the familiar objects whose antics make our sentences and opinions true or false'.

Similarly, in our model we reject the dualism of framework and the real world. And similarly, truth on our model is relative to language, which has unmediated contact with the real world -- that is, the world-as-characterized-by-language. And finally, it is the world which makes

1 Ibid., p.20.
statements true or false on our model too.

We should note here that the formulation we have given of what truth consists in for the internal realist -- namely, that a statement is true just if it states what is in fact the case in the world-as-characterized-by-language -- is not a formulation acceptable to Putnam. The major aim of Reason, Truth and History is to show that we should reject what Putnam calls 'the copy theory of truth',

'the conception according to which a statement is true just in case it 'corresponds to the mind-independent facts''.

The view that he holds instead is

'that there is an extremely close connection between the notions of truth and rationality; that is, to put it even more crudely, the only criterion for what is a fact is what it is rational to accept'.

However, he nevertheless holds that it is not identical to rational acceptability:

'But the relation between rational acceptability and truth is a relation between two distinct notions. A statement can be rationally acceptable at a time but not true'.

Later it turns out that truth for Putnam's internalist is 'an idealization of rational acceptability'; that is, a statement is true just if it 'would be justified' under 'epistemologically ideal conditions'. Now, our formulation of what truth is for the internalist boils down to correspondence to the world-as-characterized-by-language.

2 Ibid., Preface, p.ix.
3 Ibid., Preface, p.x.
4 Ibid., p.57.
5 Ibid., p.57.
As we have just seen, Putnam does not countenance such a formulation, since his prime target is the correspondence theory of truth. He sees his internalist theory of truth as being a coherence theory, in which truth is

'some sort of ideal coherence of our beliefs with each other and with our experiences as those experiences are themselves represented in our belief system'\(^1\).

However, obviously our formulation of what truth is for the internal realist is not a correspondence theory of truth in the normal sense — that is, in the metaphysical realist sense — where truth is correspondence with the mind-independent language-independent world. Indeed, it is open to us consistently to admit that what correspondence to the world-as-characterized-by-language boils down to is idealized rational acceptability, or coherence of our beliefs with each other and with our experiences. But, in formulating the internal realist’s notion of truth in the way he does, Putnam leaves it far from clear as to what is the force of his naming the doctrine 'internal realism'. For, as we have seen, his formulation firmly places the internalist’s notion of truth in the category of coherence theories of truth. And traditionally, coherence theories of truth have been identified as anti-realist theories, as opposed to the correspondence theory, which has been identified as realist. Thus, I see the advantage of our formulation as being that it captures the realist flavour of internal realism, but without being the kind of correspondence theory of truth which Putnam correctly rejects. What makes internal realism, as we have characterized it, a realist doctrine is that it (quoting Davidson again)

\(^1\) Ibid., p.50.
'reestablish[es] unmediated touch with the familiar objects whose antics make our opinions true or false'. With metaphysical realism, as we have seen, there is no unmediated contact with the familiar real world, because of that doctrine's essential connection with epistemological scepticism.

Davidson's argument criticized

Now, returning to Davidson's paper, we have seen how the wholly internalist model we arrived at towards the end of the last chapter is very similar to Davidson's position. And we have seen Davidson's argument for his claim that the idea of there being even a partial failure of intertranslatability between languages is untenable, and hence, that the idea of there being different conceptual schemes is also untenable. His argument is based on his account of translation, with its principle of charity. There is a crucial element of choice in his account. There is always a choice as how the sentences of another language are translated into our language. But, given this essential element of choice, and given the principle of charity, I cannot see how, on Davidson's account of translation, we should ever arrive at statement like 'This bone has "supernatural" powers' as a translation of a foreign speaker's sentence. (The shudder quotes here indicate that the translated word 'supernatural' is understood in the context of how the concept is employed in aboriginal reasoning -- thus, it is understood by the translator not to be the same as our concept super-natural.) There are two reasons why this should never happen. The first is that we should never let it happen. Given the desirability of optimizing
agreement (the principle of charity), why would we not opt for a systematic translation of a language which only ever implies mere differences of opinion, rather than the more drastic difference of conceptual scheme? We have seen above how an alternative translation could be arrived at in preference to 'This bone has "supernatural" powers'. The alternative -- namely, 'This bone is very rare and strong' -- represents merely a difference of opinion, since we are of the opinion that the bone is common and fragile. However, the former translation introduces a new concept -- that of "supernatural" power as possessed by particular objects -- and thus it represents the more drastic, and far less charitable, difference of conceptual scheme. Now, why could we not develop a systematic translation of any given foreign language which would render such a "more charitable" translation of each and every sentence of that language? (Certainly, this task would be extremely difficult, but perhaps possible with the aid of computers.)

Given Davidson's claim that there is always a choice as to how to translate a foreign sentence -- that no 'appeal to evidence' can 'force us to decide' how to translate it -- then surely he should be committed to a radical retranslating of all foreign languages, producing translations which represent differences solely of opinion, and never differences of conceptual scheme. It seems to me that for Davidson to accept any of the current translations of foreign languages -- with their implications of differences of conceptual scheme -- he would thereby be accepting a counterexample which would refute his account of translation and his principle of charity. For it is "more charitable" never to imply a difference of conceptual scheme.
Now, I see nothing intrinsically wrong with advocating such a drastic retranslating of all foreign languages, so that all of the statements thus translated operate only with concepts which are already employed in our own language. And I think that in order for his views to be consistent Davidson should advocate such retranslation. Hence, so far there is no serious problem for Davidson's account. But now we come to the second reason why we should never arrive at a statement like 'This bone has "supernatural" powers' -- that is, a statement which indicates a difference of conceptual scheme -- as a translation of a foreign sentence, given Davidson's account of translation. I think that this second reason, unlike the first, is problematic for Davidson's account. We have just seen that given the principle of charity we should translate a foreign language so that the translated statements display at worst differences of opinion, rather than a difference of conceptual scheme. In other words, any statement in translation should only employ concepts as they are already in use in our own language. But what I would now ask Davidson is how could it turn out that a statement in translation employed anything but concepts as they are already in use in our own language? For Davidson, translation is a matter of correlating sentences in the foreign language with sentences in our own language. Therefore, the concepts as expressed in the sentences so correlated must be employed in our language prior to this correlating. Thus, given Davidson's account of translation, I cannot see how we could possibly arrive at a translation of a foreign sentence which translation employed an unfamiliar concept.

Thus, I cannot see how, on such a view, a scientific language-community such as our own could possibly arrive at a statement like
'This bone has "supernatural" powers' as a translation of a foreign sentence. The aborigines' concept of "supernatural" power as possessed by particular objects is not one with which our Western scientific language is familiar -- we have no ways of reasoning employing such a concept. As we have seen, the situation cannot be represented as a mere difference of opinion. It is not simply the case that the aborigines hold that this bone has super-natural powers, and we hold that it does not. The aborigines' question of whether a particular object has "supernatural" powers is not an issue in our language. To use Hacking's terminology again, the statement that the bone has "supernatural" powers is not either-true-or-false in our language -- that is, it is not even a candidate for a truth-value. Thus, neither the sentence 'This bone has "supernatural" powers' nor the sentence 'This bone does not have "supernatural" powers' is up for consideration as a useful unit of communication in our language.

However, the fact is that we do arrive at statements such as 'This bone has "supernatural" powers' as translations of foreign sentences. Such translations, which I claim employ concepts which are new to us, are counterexamples to Davidson's account of translation. And hence, I argue that the conclusions he draws from his account, involving the incoherence of the idea of a conceptual scheme, are refuted.

Now, Davidson might well argue in response to our suggested counterexample that we have begged the question of conceptual schemes in translating the sentence as 'This bone has "supernatural" powers', rather than simply 'This bone has supernatural powers'. That is, our
qualified translation does not square with Davidson's notion of translation as simply the correlating of the sentences of the foreign language with sentences in our language. However, I think that our example would be quite typical of the kind of sentences that real translators would come up with in their translations of languages like the aboriginal one. That is, searching for a translation, they would consider the foreign sentences and their parts in the context of how they fit into examples of reasoning, in an attempt to understand the concepts as they are used. Now, often it might be that to translate just one sentence of the foreign language adequately would take many sentences in our language. So, to make a useful translation, translators would be forced to employ (sometimes gross) approximations in correlating sentences and parts of sentences, qualified with explanations of how differently the correlated words and sentences, and the concepts they express, fit into the respective cultures' styles of reasoning.

I think that there are even more clear-cut cases of totally unfamiliar concepts being expressed in our translations of foreign languages. They are, however, much rarer than the common cases exemplified by our "supernatural" bone case. Such cases are indicated by expressions in our language which are actually taken directly from foreign languages, because our language had nothing even approaching the concepts employed in these languages. I am thinking here of the terms 'nirvana', taken from Buddhist doctrine, and 'tabu', taken from the Tongan language. These cases provide further counterexamples to Davidson's account of translation, and his rejection of the notion of conceptual schemes.
In his philosophy of language, Davidson is very wary of the notion of meanings as entities. Translation, however, is perfectly straightforward to him: a definitive translation system is provided for a foreign language as soon as one develops a (Taskian) theory of truth for that language. The notion of meaning is not employed in Davidson's account of translation. But this is where Davidson's notion of translation differs from what I have called 'the common sense notion'. I think that the common sense notion is the one that real translators operate with. According to this notion, translation proceeds by first learning what particular linguistic expressions mean, as they are used in a culture. This involves a thorough investigation of the linguistic and non-linguistic contexts in which the expressions are used. (The importance to a translator of both descriptive linguistics and ethnology, in the discovery of the meanings of the expressions of a foreign culture, is very well illustrated by Eugene Nida in his 'Linguistics and Ethnology in Translation-Problems'. After thus discovering the meaning of the expressions, the translator can then attempt to express the same meanings in our language. However, as we have said, often our culture will not employ the same concepts as the foreign culture, and hence our language will not have convenient expressions for those concepts. The translator then has the options of using an existing expression for a concept of ours which is somehow related to the foreign concept, with a careful explanation of how our

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concept differs from the foreign one; or alternatively, using the foreign expression itself, with an explanation of its meaning.

Now, the notions of meaning, concept, and style of reasoning are far from unproblematic — criteria of individuation and identity for each of these notions are unclear. And hence, criteria for adequacy of translation, given the common sense notion, are also not clear-cut, and translations are never definitive. On Davidson’s account of translation, however, as we have mentioned, a theory of truth for a language does provide a definitive translation of that language. Nevertheless, I hold that there is a definitive meaning expressed by the aborigine’s statement. And this meaning is what translators try to discover in investigating the foreign culture and its language. Now, although there may be no definitive translation available, such translators are at least searching for the best way of expressing the aborigine’s actual meaning. And I think that it can be clearly established by translators employing this method that certain translations are categorically incorrect, even if they are provided by acceptable theories of truth. For example, a Davidsonian translator might develop a theory of truth for the aboriginal language which determines that sentence s of L (the aboriginal language) is true just if this bone has supernatural powers. But we have seen that the aborigine is not saying that this bone has supernatural powers. The Davidsonian translator’s translation does not convey the same meaning as the aborigine’s statement. To convey her meaning, we have to do quite a bit of explaining about her culture’s style of reasoning, and how her statement fits into it. After we have done this we may perhaps risk using the word ‘supernatural’ to express her concept (though enclosing
the word in shudder quotes might be safer), in the hope that readers will understand its special meaning when used as a translation of the aborigines’ expression.

Because I accept the common sense account of translation — along with Kuhn, Hacking, and I presume most people, including most real translators — rather than Davidson’s account, I consider his whole emphasis upon translation, in dealing with the idea of a conceptual scheme and conceptual relativism, to be wrong-headed. Once Davidson, at the very beginning of his argument, defines a conceptual scheme as a set of intertranslatable languages, he misses (albeit deliberately) the point of conceptual schemes and conceptual relativism — no wonder he finds the very idea of a conceptual scheme to be incoherent. Different conceptual schemes are incommensurable, rather than unintertranslatable.

In this chapter we have found Davidson’s account of translation, and his way of dealing with the idea of a conceptual scheme and conceptual relativism, to be unsatisfactory. However, if we are to reject justifiably Davidson’s dismissal of the idea of a conceptual scheme, then we must provide a satisfactory account of conceptual schemes. And, in thus doing more justice to the issue than Davidson, we must also deal with the Putnamian problems which led us at the end of Chapter 2 to our wholly internalist/Davidson-like model. Hence, it is with the aim of providing an adequate account of conceptual schemes, or world-views, and relativism, that we now turn to Rudolf Carnap’s discussion of linguistic frameworks.
CHAPTER 4

CARNAP'S LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORKS

In 'Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology' Carnap is concerned with the problem of what ontological status is to be accorded to abstract entities. He asks the question:

'Are there properties, classes, numbers, propositions?'\(^1\).

In order to understand this problem more clearly Carnap draws what he considers to be a fundamental distinction between two kinds of questions concerning the ontological status or reality of entities. This distinction relates to the linguistic framework in which the particular kind of entities in question are talked about. First, there are the questions asked within the linguistic framework as to whether the particular entities of the relevant kind exist. Such questions Carnap calls 'internal questions'. Secondly, there are questions of the existence or reality of the relevant system of entities as a whole. Carnap calls these 'external questions'. The answers to internal questions are discovered by either logical or empirical means. External questions, however, are problematic.

In order to clarify this fundamental distinction we shall first consider with Carnap the simplest kind of entities dealt with in our everyday language: 'the spatio-temporally ordered system of

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\(^1\) Carnap, R., *op.cit.*, p.206.
observable things and events. Once we have accepted the thing
linguistic framework we can ask and answer internal questions. Carnap
gives the following as examples of such questions: 'Is there a white
piece of paper on my desk?'; 'Did King Arthur actually live?'; and 'Are
unicorns and centaurs real or merely imaginary?'. The answers to such
questions are to be found by empirical investigation. The thing
linguistic framework, like other linguistic frameworks, comes complete
with rules for confirming or disconfirming evidence for possible
answers; though Carnap points out that people actually operating in a
linguistic framework will usually operate out of habit rather than
deliberately according to a rational procedure. Carnap argues that the
concept of reality presupposed in these internal questions in the thing
linguistic framework is an empirical, scientific, non-metaphysical one.
He writes:

'To recognize some thing as a real thing or event means to
succeed in incorporating it into the system of things at a
particular space-time position so that it fits together with
other things recognized as real, according to the rules of the
framework'.

Now we come to the very difficult external question concerning
the reality of the system of things and events as a whole. Carnap
argues that this question is raised neither in everyday language nor by
scientists. It is only raised by philosophers, and notoriously the
problem is never solved. Now, Carnap holds that the reason that it is
never solved is that the question is incorrectly framed. It is framed
as if it were a scientific or theoretical question. But, as Carnap

1 Ibid., p.206.
2 Ibid., p.207.
argues:

'To be real in the scientific sense means to be an element of the system; hence this concept cannot be meaningfully applied to the system itself'.

He goes on to say that those who pose the question of the reality of the thing world as a whole are perhaps asking a practical question about the structure of language, rather than the nonsensical theoretical one as formulated. Thus, the only meaningful external question is whether or not we should accept and use the linguistic framework in question.

Now, Carnap recognizes that in the case in point -- the thing linguistic framework -- we do not deliberately choose to accept the framework. As he points out, we rather learn to use it as a matter of course. However, he continues as follows:

'Nevertheless, we may regard it as a matter of decision in this sense: we are free to choose to continue using the thing language or not; in the latter case we could restrict ourselves to a language of sense data and other "phenomenal" entities, or construct an alternative to the customary thing language with another structure, or, finally, we could refrain from speaking'.

Thus, although initially we do not so much choose to accept the thing linguistic framework as "grow up with it", nevertheless we can still ask the external practical question about the linguistic framework as a whole: that is, should we continue to use this thing language?

But now we come to a crucial point in Carnap's account. Suppose that we answer the above question in the affirmative -- that is, suppose that we decide to accept the thing linguistic framework. Now,

1 Ibid., p.207.
2 Ibid., p.207.
Carnap states that he has no objection to our saying that we have accepted the world of things. But Carnap argues that this must not be taken to mean that we have accepted a belief in the reality of the world of things. This is because the question of whether to accept or to reject a given linguistic framework is not a cognitive or theoretical question, and therefore there is no such belief or assertion or assumption. Carnap states:

'To accept the thing world means nothing more than to accept a certain form of language, in other words, to accept rules for forming statements and for testing, accepting, or rejecting them'.

Of course, as Carnap continues, once we accept the thing linguistic framework we are led, on the basis of empirical observation, to the belief and assertion of certain statements as to the reality of certain things: for example, that there is a white piece of paper on my desk, and that unicorns and centaurs are merely imaginary. However, a statement as to the reality of the thing world cannot be among these statements because it cannot be formulated in the thing linguistic framework.

But if our accepting a particular world of entities is not based on a belief in, or assumption of, the reality of that world of entities, then why do we accept such a world? That is, on what do we base a decision to accept or to reject a particular linguistic framework? Carnap argues that although the practical decision itself is not theoretical or cognitive, nevertheless it will be influenced by theoretical knowledge. What factors are relevant to the decision will

1 Ibid., p.208.
be determined by what the language is to be used for. For example, if the purpose of the language is to communicate factual knowledge, then the crucial factors to be considered, Carnap suggests, might be efficiency, fruitfulness, and simplicity of the linguistic framework in question. Now, questions as to what extent the linguistic framework in question -- in this case the thing linguistic framework -- has these qualities are theoretical questions. That is, the answers to them are matters of fact, which we come to know through our empirical experiences. However, Carnap emphasizes that these questions cannot be identified with the question of realism. They are questions of degree, not yes-no questions as is the question of realism. It is a matter of fact, which we know from experience, that the thing linguistic framework is very well suited to the purpose of communicating factual knowledge. It is simple, fruitful and highly efficient when used for this purpose. But this is not to say that the thing world is real, nor even that it is likely that it is real. Carnap writes:

'However, it would be wrong to describe this situation by saying: "The fact of the efficiency of the thing language is confirming evidence for the reality of the thing world"; we should rather say instead: "This fact makes it advisable to accept the thing language".'

Now, we have just seen Carnap's distinction between internal and external questions as it applies to a factual linguistic framework. Questions asked within a given factual linguistic framework about the reality of particular entities are theoretical or cognitive questions. Their answers are to be found in empirical observations, in accordance with the rules for evaluating evidence which form part of that

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1 Ibid., p.208.
linguistic framework. The external question, purportedly concerning the reality of the whole world of relevant entities, cannot be meaningfully interpreted as a cognitive question. Rather, it can only be understood as a practical question, concerning whether we should accept or reject the linguistic framework in question. We shall now briefly examine an example Carnap gives of a logical linguistic framework to see how his fundamental distinction applies to it. The logical linguistic framework which Carnap describes is the one for the system of natural numbers.

Internal questions for the natural number linguistic framework are questions like 'Is there a prime number greater than a hundred?’. In this case the answers to such questions are not to be found by empirical investigation on the basis of the rules for evaluating evidence. Rather, they are to be found by logical analysis, based on the rules for natural numbers which form part of the linguistic framework. Thus the answers are logically true, or analytic.

In addition, however, the question 'Are there numbers?', or 'Do numbers exist?', can be meaningfully interpreted as an internal question in this logical linguistic framework, contrary to the comparative question in a factual linguistic framework. Carnap points out that

'there is the internal question which, together with the affirmative answer, can be formulated in the new terms, say, by "There are numbers" or, more explicitly, "There is an \( n \) such that \( n \) is a number". This statement follows from the analytic statement "Five is a number" and is therefore itself analytic'.

1 Ibid., p. 209.
Thus, as Carnap argues, nobody who meant the question 'Do numbers exist?' as an internal question would seriously consider a negative answer.

However, as Carnap continues, philosophers see this question as posing a serious philosophical problem, and there have been protracted arguments for each answer. From this he infers that they do not mean the question to be taken in the internal sense. They do not intend the question to be asked within the natural number linguistic framework. Rather, they intend it to be asked prior to the acceptance of that linguistic framework. As Carnap explains, they are asking about the ontological status of numbers: that is, whether or not numbers are real, or exist as independent entities (though, of course, they would be real or exist in a non-material sense). Carnap argues that these philosophers have failed to formulate this question in terms of the common scientific language, and that therefore they have failed to give the question any cognitive content. Therefore, Carnap concludes, their question is only meaningful if interpreted as the practical question of whether or not to accept the natural number linguistic framework. As a theoretical question it fails: it is a pseudo-question.

Thus, we have seen an example of each of the two kinds of linguistic frameworks: factual and logical. And we have seen the two kinds of meaningful questions -- internal and external -- as applied to each linguistic framework. Theoretical or cognitive questions are internal questions -- those asked within a particular linguistic framework -- and are unproblematic. External questions -- those asked about the linguistic framework as a whole -- are non-cognitive practical
questions (such as 'Should we accept this linguistic framework?'). With respect to these latter questions Carnap says the following:

'The acceptance cannot be judged as being either true or false because it is not an assertion. It can only be judged as being more or less expedient, fruitful, conducive to the aim for which the language is intended. Judgments of this kind supply the motivation for the decision of accepting or rejecting the kind of entities'.

We have also seen that there is another kind of external "question" which only philosophers ask. They hold that we should ask an ontological question about the system of entities as a whole. They hold that we should only accept the linguistic framework in question when the answer to this ontological question is that the system of entities is real. But we have seen that Carnap argues that such "questions" turn out to be pseudo-questions, since any alleged external statement of the reality of a system of entities is a pseudo-statement.

Now, I believe that Carnap's account of linguistic frameworks and internal and external questions provides us with the basis for clarifying the issues which concern us in this thesis. However, in making use of his account in what follows, we will go a deal further than Carnap himself does. Thus, what follows will in part be a development of Carnap's account, and one with which he probably would not be at all comfortable. Carnap's concern is with scientific language and its progress towards being the ideal language. Our concern is quite different.

1 Ibid., p.214.
Carnap's important insight

I consider Carnap's most crucial insight to be one which he never actually states, but seems merely to presuppose -- perhaps because it seemed to him too obvious to mention. It is that any cognitive question that we ask, or cognitive statement that we make, is necessarily asked or made within a particular linguistic framework. Though this presupposition seems obvious and innocuous, it has drastic consequences for metaphysical realism, as we will see in the remainder of this chapter.

In addition to this insight we will employ a distinction which Carnap does not explicitly draw between accepting a linguistic framework and operating within a linguistic framework. We each accept countless different linguistic frameworks. For example, we Westerners all accept the thing linguistic framework, the number linguistic framework, some form of ethical linguistic framework (we make statements about what we should and should not do), and so on. And we can legitimately be said to accept them all simultaneously. All 'accept' means here is that we are proficient in that linguistic framework, and that there are situations in which we would operate within that linguistic framework because we judge that it is fruitful or conducive to our aim to do so. Now, there are degrees of acceptance. One limiting case, for example, is where I might find the Skinnerian mechanistic account of human behaviour a particularly impoverished one, but nevertheless I will operate within that linguistic framework in answering an exam question, solely because I know it to be the examiners' preferred linguistic framework in the analysis of human behaviour. In such a case I may
arguably be said barely to accept the Skinnerian linguistic framework. At the other end of the spectrum, however, there can be no argument about the claim that I accept the thing linguistic framework: I operate within it a great deal of the time.

Now, it was mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 1 that Carnap does not make the distinction that we were about to draw between uses of the concept linguistic framework which have fairly mundane uninteresting implications, and uses of the concept which have far deeper more interesting implications -- in particular, relativistic implications. At the deeper level, different linguistic frameworks give rise to different and incommensurable world-views. As we have seen in the previous chapter, it is exclusively this level that concerns Davidson in his investigations of the concept of conceptual schemes (or linguistic frameworks).

However, I believe that it is very revealing to follow Carnap in not focussing immediately on the dramatic incommensurability of world-views at this deep level. As we saw in Chapter 1, at the more mundane level different linguistic frameworks deal with different parts or aspects of the unique real world. Thus, although each linguistic framework thereby gives rise to a different view of the unique real world, all of these views taken together are compatible. Hence, if this mundane level were all that there was to the concept of linguistic frameworks, then all linguistic frameworks taken together would form a unique consistent language -- language as such. But even if this were the case, one still would have to take care that whenever one asked a question or made a statement about any particular entity, one asked or
made it with in the appropriate linguistic framework. So, for example, if someone were to say that we cannot be certain that 7+5=12, since we might find out by exhaustive empirical investigation that 7 things plus 5 things occasionally add up to 13 things, then that person would be operating in a linguistic framework inappropriate to the statement '7+5=12'. The linguistic framework appropriate to this statement is the natural number linguistic framework, which has a logical nature. The person disputing that 7+5=12 is operating in a factual linguistic framework, one dealing with things in the material world. The rules of evidence in such a linguistic framework are completely different from the rules of logical proof in the natural number linguistic framework. The mistake the person in this example would be making is something akin to the old notion of a category mistake. I think that the notion of a linguistic framework as used at this mundane level is quite uncontroversial — even Davidson would allow this use. But I think it is of considerable value to us to investigate it here, so as to draw out just how the notion as used at the deep level is different — that is, just how it is that different linguistic frameworks/world-views are incommensurable.

So, let us consider a case we have previously seen as an example of different linguistic frameworks giving rise to different and incommensurable world-views. Consider again a monist linguistic framework (à la Spinoza) and a pluralist linguistic framework. Suppose that a monist and a pluralist are having a philosophical dispute with one another. And suppose that the monist only ever operates wholly within the monist linguistic framework, and the pluralist only ever operates wholly within the pluralist linguistic framework. (We are
supposing this for the sake of argument only. We shall return to
comment on such suppositions shortly.) Now, suppose that during the
dispute the pluralist points to an object and says, 'That so-and-so is
an individual existent'. If the monist were then to say to the
pluralist, 'No, you are wrong: that object is merely a so-and-so-ish
manifestation of the one substance', then I hold that she would be
making a mistake in exactly the same sense as we have just seen in the
previous paragraph. The pluralist’s statement was made in the pluralist
linguistic framework. The monist, however, interpreted it in terms of
the monist linguistic framework. This latter linguistic framework is
not appropriate for dealing with the object that the pluralist is
talking about; the pluralist linguistic framework is. The monist
linguistic framework is not appropriate just as the thing linguistic
framework is not appropriate for dealing with numbers.

Now, it may well be objected here that the two cases are
patently not the same. In the case of the thing linguistic framework
and the number linguistic framework, each framework deals with different
parts or aspects of the world. Thus, the objects that each is concerned
with are different, and each is inappropriate for dealing with the
other’s objects. In the above pluralist-monist case, however, the
objects that each linguistic framework is suited to dealing with are
identical — namely any objects which we might encounter around us via
the senses. Now, such an object is the one pointed at by the pluralist
in our example. So it is not the case that the monist linguistic
framework is inappropriate for dealing with the objects which the
pluralist is referring to. And thus (so the objection goes), we have
not made a mistake akin to a category mistake.
Now, in answering this objection we will elaborate Carnap's account in a way which, once again, he perhaps would not wish to endorse. In our development we allow that there are linguistic frameworks within linguistic frameworks.

Linguistic frameworks within linguistic frameworks

In saying that the pluralist and the monist are dealing with the same object, we are operating in a linguistic framework which encompasses both the monist linguistic framework and the pluralist linguistic framework. This more general, or higher level, linguistic framework is the phenomenalist linguistic framework. In this framework we deal with phenomena, or object-appearances -- for example, we deal with house-appearances, and heat-appearances, and Bob-Hawke-appearances, and so on. Now, to make anything more of these object-appearances we will operate in more specific linguistic frameworks within (as subsets) this more general framework. Thus, we may choose to operate in the monist linguistic framework, in which we say that each object-appearance is a mode of the one substance; or we may choose to operate in the pluralist linguistic framework, in which we say that each object-appearance is an individual existent. Or indeed, we may choose to operate in any number of other frameworks: such as the sense data linguistic framework, in which we say that the object-appearances are nothing but isolated appearances -- that is, that they are not appearances of anything.

However, returning to our example, given that the person pointing to the object is obviously operating in a pluralist linguistic
framework, then there are only two meaningful responses open to us. First, we can **also** operate in the pluralist linguistic framework, and adjudge her statement as true or false based on the rules of that framework -- in which case we would adjudge her statement true. Alternatively, if we do not accept the pluralist linguistic framework, then we can operate in the wider phenomenalist linguistic framework -- in which case we would make some statement to the effect that the pluralist has accepted a linguistic framework which is less expedient, or less fruitful (etc.), than some other framework: say, the the monist framework. We **cannot** make a meaningful response if we are operating within the **monist** linguistic framework, because we cannot even make sense of the pluralist's statement if we are operating within that framework. This is because we cannot even recognize the object of the pluralist's statement except by operating in the phenomenalist framework, and thereby seeing that the object-appearance which the pluralist points out as an individual existent is what we as monists point out as a mode of the one substance.

Thus, if the pluralist is operating wholly within the pluralist linguistic framework, and we are operating wholly within the monist linguistic framework, then the objects about which she and we are speaking are different; even though it is obvious from within the phenomenalist framework that she and we are pointing out the same object-appearance. Hence, we have just seen the argument for the claims above that the pluralist linguistic framework is inappropriate for dealing with the object of the monist's statement, and that therefore the pluralist's claim that the monist is wrong constitutes a mistake akin to a category mistake.
Now, the example we have just seen illustrates our first development of Carnap’s account: we hold that there are (more specific) linguistic frameworks within (more general) linguistic frameworks. It is difficult to judge whether Carnap would be happy with this development, since he does not explicitly deal with the question. But regardless of his opinion, I hold furthermore that there are any number of levels of linguistic frameworks -- that is, frameworks within frameworks within frameworks, and so on. To see what effects this has on our quasi-Carnapian account, we shall next re-examine a question concerning a logical linguistic framework.

Consider once again the natural number linguistic framework. As we saw earlier in this chapter, Carnap holds that there are only two ways in which the question ‘Are numbers real?’ can be meaningfully interpreted. First, it can be interpreted as an internal question, in which case the answer is trivially affirmative. This interpretation is the only cognitive one. Secondly, it can be interpreted as an external practical question about the linguistic framework as a whole: that is, the question whether we should accept the natural number linguistic framework or not. Carnap draws a sharp distinction between cognitive questions and practical questions. Cognitive or theoretical questions are by definition internal questions -- they are asked within a particular linguistic framework; and their answers are determined according to the rules of that linguistic framework, and stated within that framework. Practical questions, however, are external questions -- they are asked outside of a linguistic framework, about that linguistic framework.
However, our claim that there are different levels of linguistic frameworks provides us with another possible interpretation of the question 'Are numbers real?'. This third interpretation makes the question an external one — that is, asked outside of the natural number linguistic framework — and yet, nevertheless, a cognitive or theoretical one. This is possible just if the question is interpreted as being asked within a wider linguistic framework, which encompasses the natural number linguistic framework. So, for example, if we understand the question as being asked within the set theory linguistic framework, then it is a cognitive or theoretical question, whose answer we can determine according to the rules of the set theory linguistic framework. If we discover that the natural number system can be constructed from the axioms of set theory (which they can), then we have proven that the answer to the question 'Are numbers real?' is affirmative. (I am not suggesting that this example can be generalized; that all ontological questions can be decided within some subsuming linguistic framework or other. Indeed, I have not been able to think of a similar example from a factual linguistic framework. Certainly, although the monist and pluralist linguistic frameworks are subsumed by the phenomenalist linguistic framework, the ontological issue at stake between them is not decidable within this, or any other, subsuming framework.)

Of course, when philosophers ask the question 'Are numbers real?', they do not intend the question to be understood as internal to the natural number linguistic framework, nor internal to the set theory linguistic framework, nor for that matter internal to any linguistic framework at all. They are concerned with the absolute reality of
numbers, independent of all frameworks: theirs is an ontological question; allegedly both cognitive and external.

Now, we have already seen that Carnap holds that the question 'Are numbers real?', when intended in this philosophical way, is meaningless -- a pseudo-question. However, if we examine in more detail his response, we will see a crucial difference between his account of linguistic frameworks and our development of his account. Carnap writes:

'Unfortunately, these philosophers have so far not given a formulation of their question in terms of the common scientific language. Therefore our judgment must be that they have not succeeded in giving to the external question and to the possible answers any cognitive content'.

Now, my response to Carnap here is that of course these philosophers have not given a formulation of their question in common scientific terms. If anyone were to give a formulation of these philosophers' question in common scientific terms, then it would not be their question: that is, it would not be the external philosophical question 'Are numbers real?'. Rather, it would be an internal scientific question; just as the question 'Are numbers real?', asked in set theory terms, is an internal set theory question and not a philosophical question. The point here is that in our account the whole language of science is just another linguistic framework. Admittedly it is a vast one, but it is by no means an all-encompassing framework.

Now, I agree with Carnap that the philosophical question 'Are numbers real?' is a pseudo-question, without cognitive content, but not

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1 Ibid., p.209.
quite for the same reason as Carnap gives. Carnap rejects the question because so far philosophers have failed to formulate it in common scientific terms — as if it were the case that it is at least possible that they might provide such a formulation; and that if they did so succeed, then they would be asking a philosophical question with cognitive content. But by our account, as we have seen, they would simply be asking a run-of-the-mill internal scientific question. Our reason for rejecting the philosophical question 'Are numbers real?' is based on the essential nature of philosophical questions: that is, they are supposed to be concerned with ultimate reality, or reality per se, and not reality as defined by some linguistic framework or other; and hence, their nature is supposed to be both cognitive and absolutely external. But according to our account, whatever is expressed linguistically must be expressed in some particular linguistic framework or other. And therefore, there can be no genuinely external cognitive question; from which follows that there can be no meaningful philosophical questions, such as 'Are numbers real?'

Pseudo-relativism

Our quasi-Carnapian account of linguistic frameworks at the mundane level can lead us into what I will call 'pseudo-relativism'. As the name implies, the doctrine is not true relativism, but the reasons that it is not are illuminating with respect to true relativism at the deep level. In developing this false doctrine, we will consider examples which will be found implausible; but the reasons why they are implausible are illuminating.
Now, we claimed above that the monist and pluralist linguistic frameworks talk about different objects. And we said that therefore, if someone only ever operated in the monist linguistic framework, then that person would be unable to interpret the pluralist’s statement 'This so-and-so is an individual existent' correctly. But now consider our everyday discourse, in which we move naturally from one linguistic framework to another, as we talk about different subjects (such as the weather, current events, politics, philosophy, sport, other people, interpersonal relationships, science, etc.) to different kinds of people (such as acquaintances, colleagues, close friends, strangers, children, lovers, doctors, students, etc.). If we were to attend closely to this ever-changing discourse, we might discover not only that we operate within different linguistic frameworks as we discourse about different subjects with different correspondents, but further, that the statements made in one linguistic framework either do not make sense, or mean something quite different (and unintended), if interpreted within another linguistic framework.

Each linguistic framework is concerned with particular subject matter; and even if two frameworks use the same expression to refer to their respective subject matters, it may well be that the objects thus referred to are nevertheless different -- that is, that the expression has different meanings as used in the two linguistic frameworks. And this is so even in cases where a physical act of pointing is employed in an attempt to uniquely identify an object. For example, suppose an aesthete friend of mine points to a certain church and says, 'That church is a particularly beautiful example of gothic architecture'. She is thus operating in an aesthetic linguistic framework. Now, to
understand her statement I must also operate in that linguistic framework. Effective communication would not take place, for example, if I attempted to interpret her statement within a religious linguistic framework. We may suppose that I worship in that particular church, and that when I make a statement such as 'I worship in that church', the word 'church' means something quite different from the same word in my friend's statement. To me, we are supposing, the word 'church' has a very personal and important meaning: it means the place where I commune with God. To my friend, however, it simply means a building — albeit a particularly beautiful one. Now, if it were the case that the word 'church' and the sight of my place of holy communion caused me to think only in terms of the religious linguistic framework, then clearly I would fail to understand my companion's statement.

Now, let us consider one more such (admittedly implausible) example. Imagine a keen young runner from the outback, who learns easily, in her first ever lesson at school, the importance of warming up before racing; but then is confronted with the totally unfamiliar geometry linguistic framework, and is unable to make any sense of the concepts of area of a circle, radius, pi, and the square of a number. ('Where in your body is pi?'; 'If you square your number, does it make you run faster?') Clearly, the statements of one linguistic framework cannot be understood from within the other.

Now, the point of the examples we have just seen is that even at the mundane level linguistic frameworks are incommensurable. That is, at this level different linguistic framework's determine that different objects, qualities, concepts, etc., are real. When we operate
wholly within the athletics linguistic framework, there are bodies containing muscles supplied with oxygen by the blood, and so on; but circles and pi and squares of numbers are not part of the Real as characterized by this framework. And similarly, the Real as characterized by the geometry linguistic framework includes circles and pi, but bodies and muscles are not real. In the religious linguistic framework there are God, prayer, communion, The Holy Ghost, sin, redemption, and so on; whereas, the aesthetic linguistic framework instead determines that beauty, form, colour, proportion, physical works of art, and so on, are real. And finally, the pluralist linguistic framework determines that there are individuals, externality, creation, destruction, and change; whereas, the monist framework admits only one existent: being, in its infinite modes, which alters but does not change. And thus, we might conclude from such examples that even at the mundane level the Real, or what there is, is relative to the linguistic framework in which the knower operates.

However, the relativist thesis just expressed is false. If we reconsider the examples we used to reach it, we will see just why it is false.

Pseudo-relativism criticized

In the monism-pluralism case, we admitted that these two linguistic frameworks can be subsumed by a third -- namely, the phenomenalist linguistic framework -- within which both can be seen as alternative ways of describing the same data. Nevertheless, we said that if the
monist and pluralist both operated exclusively in their respective linguistic frameworks, then they would not be able to understand one another. But this is to ignore the important fact that no one ever does operate in either of these frameworks exclusively. And similarly, in the aesthetics-religion and geometry-athletics cases, we tried to concoct examples in which someone failed to recognize that they were operating in the inappropriate linguistic framework, and hence failed to interpret another's statements correctly. But in reality we move easily -- indeed, largely unconsciously -- from one framework to another at this mundane level. Thus, we are mostly in the appropriate framework to understand and to judge the statements of others.

Occasionally, however, we do find that we are operating in an inappropriate linguistic framework, and must deliberately shift to the appropriate one. This may happen, for example, when we come upon a conversation between two other speakers and interpret a few heard words within a particular linguistic framework, only to become more and more confused as the conversation progresses and the statements appear more and more incongruous. (The portrayal of such misunderstandings is a favourite technique of comedians.) When we become thus confused, we struggle to re-interpret the statements in a way which makes the conversation more congruous -- that is, we search for a familiar linguistic framework which makes sense of the whole conversation. Furthermore, sometimes we are quite unable to shift to the appropriate framework to understand a given statement, simply because we are not proficient in the framework. For example, there are innumerable linguistic frameworks which I am unfamiliar with, such as many mathematical frameworks, many modern physics frameworks, frameworks
concerned with economic theories, etc.

But what it is all-important to remember at this mundane level, and what makes the thesis of relativism at this level false, is that all of these linguistic frameworks are subsumed by our modern Western culture's linguistic framework/world-view. This vast linguistic framework has a particular style of reasoning, which all linguistic frameworks within it share, and hence can be assessed against. Thus, there is crucial common ground between all the linguistic frameworks in our world-view: these linguistic frameworks are commensurable. This is why we can easily shift from one (mundane) linguistic framework to another, even when they are rivals — that is, when they are incompatible. Indeed, it explains how it is that they can be subsumed by another more general linguistic framework, and hence recognized as rivals. And it explains why different linguistic frameworks, which admit the existence of different objects, can be recognized as being compatible: that is, because they can be recognized as describing different aspects or parts of the one real world as characterized by our Western world-view. Whatever mundane linguistic framework someone of our culture is operating in, that person is operating in the modern Western linguistic framework, and hence is operating with the modern Western style of reasoning. Because of this, she can come to understand and judge any statement in any linguistic framework within our world-view, as long as she has the intellectual capacity, and takes the trouble, to become proficient in the appropriate linguistic framework.

However, the case of someone from another culture, with respect to our linguistic frameworks, is completely different. For
example, consider again the aesthete's statement 'That church is a particularly beautiful example of gothic architecture'. What would be involved in our imaginary aborigine coming to understand this statement? I think it is plausible to assume that it would not be possible to translate this sentence adequately into the aboriginal language: let us assume that the aboriginal culture has no concept of the aesthetics of a man-made building, let alone the concept of different styles of building. Furthermore, let us assume that the aborigines' only art is representational and narrative — that is, that they have no concept of beauty in respect of artworks. Now, given these differences, it is clearly not a simple matter for the aborigine to come to comprehend the meaning of the aesthete’s sentence. To come to comprehend this meaning, she would have to acquire the notion of aesthetic beauty as a function of the form of a human construction, the harmony of proportion, the quantity of light which floods the interior, and the sheer scale of a structure. But all this could not be learned by her in isolation from all our other linguistic frameworks. She would also need to learn the religious significance of the kinds of buildings which were built in the gothic style, and what the light and scale in such architecture symbolized. And therefore, she would need to learn totally foreign ways of reasoning.

These foreign ways of reasoning could not just be added to her own ways of reasoning: the foreign ways are of a style incompatible with her own culture's style. Thus, she could only learn these different ways of reasoning by learning from scratch to operate within our culture's linguistic framework/world-view; that is, by "forgetting" her own culture's style of reasoning, and learning to reason in our style.
Thus, she would learn the logic of our language, what evidence is and how it either supports or falsifies a thesis, and what the fundamental concepts are and how they are employed. And hence we can see just how it is that our two linguistic frameworks/world-views are incommensurable.

Relativism

We have seen that our mundane linguistic frameworks, which Carnap is concerned with, are all subsumed by our Western culture’s linguistic framework; the common ground shared by all of our linguistic frameworks being our culture’s style of reasoning. Therefore, although we only operate in one (mundane) linguistic framework at a time, it is not the case that we accept as real at that time only the particular kinds of entities which that framework is committed to. Because these frameworks are all subsumed by our culture’s linguistic framework/world-view, we, as members of our culture, actually accept all of the entities as real which the various non-rival linguistic frameworks are committed to. That is, our culture’s linguistic framework characterizes a real world, composed of many different kinds of entities. We accept and operate in this linguistic framework, and thereby accept as real the world thus characterized. The linguistic frameworks within this subsuming framework deal with different aspects and parts of the world. Now, because there are some rival linguistic frameworks, the world is not well-defined in all of its parts and aspects. However, our style of reasoning does determine that many linguistic frameworks are not acceptable, and therefore they cannot form part of our culture’s
linguistic framework/world-view: such as the astrology linguistic framework.

Now, following Carnap (and Putnam), the external philosophical "question" of whether the world as characterized by our Western culture's linguistic framework is real is a pseudo-question, without cognitive content. The asking of it presupposes a fictional God's Eye view; a radically non-epistimic notion of truth, which is untenable. It is simply the case that we accept the Western linguistic framework, which is ontologically committed to this world. But, there are other linguistic frameworks/world-views—such as the aboriginal one discussed above, which is incommensurable with ours, because it has a different style of reasoning. This linguistic framework characterizes a world too, consisting of quite different entities to ours. The incommensurability of the frameworks means that there can be no linguistic framework which subsumes both our culture's linguistic framework, and the aboriginal culture's linguistic framework. And therefore, there can be no cognitive question as to which of the alternative worlds is real. Hence, we come to the relativist conclusion: the Real, or what there is, is relative to the linguistic framework, or world-view, accepted by the knower.

So we return to our relativist model from Chapter 2 of many incommensurable linguistic frameworks, each characterizing a real world. But, in that Chapter we mounted an objection to this model, based on Putnam's view of reference, and the incommensurability of linguistic frameworks (pp.85-88). We argued that to know the object to which someone refers, we must operate in the same linguistic framework as that
person. But then, we argued, we cannot refer to alternative linguistic frameworks to our own. Admitting such alternatives presupposes a radically non-epistemic notion of truth -- a God's Eye view -- which we reject as a fiction. And thus, we were lead to our wholly internalist Davidson-like model.

However, the answer to this objection to the relativist model lies in translation. We have seen that translation can be achieved of one culture's linguistic framework into that of another. In this way we can come to identify and to know about another culture's world; though we do not thereby come to know that world, in the sense of being acquainted with it. To come to know an alternative world we must actually live within it: that is, learn to operate in the actual linguistic framework, by living with the people in that culture, and thereby learning to think as the people of that culture do. In other words, we must come to accept the alternative linguistic framework. Few people achieve this, though good translators should. But all I think we need, to satisfy Putnam's essential conditions for reference, is either that someone from our world comes to know the other world, and manages to point it out to us and tell us about it, or that someone from the other world comes to live in ours, and does the same thing -- that is, we are shown the people as they live their lives, and are told about their world-view in our own language. In this way, alternative linguistic frameworks/world-views are identified and characterized in our linguistic framework, though the foreign linguistic frameworks themselves are not part of our linguistic framework, and therefore they, and the alternative worlds-as-characterized, cannot be known in our linguistic framework -- they are not real. Hence, we can conclude that
our relativist model is wholly internalist, presupposing only the epistemic notion of truth.

**Truth within linguistic frameworks**

In the various relativist models in this thesis, we have maintained a common sense account of internal truth, which we introduced in Chapter 1 (pp.30-32). According to this account, a statement made within a given linguistic framework/world-view is true just if what it states to be the case is in fact the case in the world-as-characterized-by-that-linguistic-framework. What this amounts to in practice is that one must identify the relevant evidence in that world-view, as determined by the style of reasoning of that linguistic framework, and then reason in accordance with that style to decide whether the statement is warranted.

Now, this account may be perfectly common sense in our culture’s linguistic framework, but in other cultures’ linguistic frameworks it may not be so. In other cultures’ linguistic frameworks there may well be no accounts of what it is for a statement to be true. It is only our culture’s linguistic framework which is so preoccupied with truth and falsity of statements, and criticism and falsification, and theoretical knowledge. It is only for our culture that it is vitally important to continue to progress towards true accounts of how things are in the world, by critically questioning every claim to knowledge, and attempting to falsify every theory about how things are. Indeed, it is only for our theoretical culture that metaphysical realism versus relativism is an issue at all.
For this reason, we must take care that our defence of the imaginary aborigines' world-view against criticism by the scientific world-view -- for example, on the grounds of technological superiority of the scientific world-view, as in Chapter 1 -- is not misguided. We must bear in mind that it is not the purpose of the defence to champion the aboriginal world-view. Our sole purpose in mounting the defence in Chapter 1 was to prove, within our own modern theoretical culture, that there is no criterion or argument by which this culture can conclude that its world-view is more correct than that of some other culture. Such a defence is necessarily mounted within our modern Western linguistic framework, employing its theoretical style of reasoning -- even though it is an elaboration or explanation of the aboriginal world-view. And thus, such a defence could never be mounted by the aboriginal culture itself -- that is, it could never be part of the aborigines' linguistic framework. Theirs is not a theoretical linguistic framework. And it makes no sense to say that our defence is a reconstruction of how the aboriginal culture might or would defend its world-view if it employed a theoretical style of reasoning. Particular styles of reasoning are essential to particular linguistic frameworks/world-views. Thus, if we hypothesize a different style of reasoning for a culture, then we cease to be talking about that culture and its world-view. To see a defence, such as we mounted of the aborigines' world-view against criticism from within the modern scientific linguistic framework, as a reconstruction of what the aborigines might themselves have mounted, is thus to fail to realize the depth of the incommensurability of the two linguistic frameworks.

However, although other cultures' linguistic frameworks may
not have accounts of what it is for a statement to be true, nevertheless
they do all make statements about their respective worlds; and their
respective styles of reasoning do constitute criteria by which it is
determined what statements are to be accepted, and what are to be
rejected, or what is the case, and what is not. And hence, we might ask
of any given linguistic framework whether the world-as-characterized-by-
that-framework measures up adequately against the criteria supplied by
its own style of reasoning; and hence, whether the world-as-
characterized is in fact real within that linguistic framework.

Now, in the case of non-Western non-theoretical cultures, like
the aboriginal culture, I do not think that this question can profitably
be asked. The question presupposes a notion which only a theoretical
culture employs: namely, the notion of anomalies or counterexamples,
which falsify an account of what is the case. And, more broadly, it
presupposes the notion of consistency or coherence of an account, which
a non-theoretical linguistic framework does not share. Therefore, I
think we must allow that the world-as-characterized-by-such-a-culture’s-
linguistic-framework is the real world lived in by that culture.

However, in the case of theoretical linguistic frameworks —
such as our own culture’s framework, and those of earlier scientific
cultures — the question of whether the worlds-as-characterized-by-the-
frameworks adequately measure up against the criteria supplied by those
frameworks can and should be asked. Taking our own culture’s linguistic
framework as an example, our style of reasoning emphasizes that a true
theory or account must be consistent with all reliable evidence.
Therefore, any confirmed anomalies to a theory of what there is, in our
culture's linguistic framework, in fact falsify that theory. Nevertheless, researchers may persist with such a theory, knowing it not to be correct, in the absence of a better alternative theory, in the hope that the theory can be improved, and perhaps eventually explain all the evidence. But whenever there are anomalies to a theory, our style of reasoning dictates that the theory is not true; and hence, the aspect or part of the world which the theory characterizes should not be accepted as real. Therefore, if, say, there were anomalies to the current theory of the sub-atomic structure of matter, then our culture would have to admit that it did not know how the real world is in the sub-atomic aspect. In other words, the world-as-characterized-by-our-linguistic-framework would be ill-defined in this aspect. We would only judge that this world-as-characterized failed to measure up adequately against the modern Western style of reasoning if there were bona fide anomalies to accounts of what there is which our culture held to be true. If there are no such cases, then we must allow that the world-as-characterized-by-our-linguistic-framework is the real world we live in.

Similarly, in past cultures' linguistic frameworks that employ the notion of consistency of an account with the evidence, we can assess their worlds-as-characterized against their own criteria of adequacy supplied by their style of reasoning. If such a culture simply ignores an anomaly, with no reason that is valid according to their own style of reasoning, and accepts as true an account of some aspect of the world, then we can judge that their world-as-characterized in that aspect is not the real world that they live in. That is, we can judge that in this respect they have got things wrong about the world they live in. (Indeed, it is such situations which can produce a crisis in a
scientific culture, which can in turn lead to a Kuhnian revolution.) So, for example, the results of the Michelson-Morley experiment, which determined that the speed of light is constant, irrespective of the frame of reference, was an anomaly to the Newtonian characterization of the physical world. This evidence falsified the Newtonian account, which, despite the anomaly, was accepted as true at the time. Thus, that culture’s world-as-characterized did not measure up to the criteria for truth provided by the style of reasoning of its own linguistic framework. And hence, we can judge that its world-as-characterized is not real in all its aspects. The real world for that culture is less well-defined than the culture was prepared to admit.

However, I think that we must assume that the world-as-characterized-by-a-linguistic-framework is more or less the real world lived in by the theoretical culture concerned. If such a culture was adjudged by someone to have got much of its world-as-characterized wrong, then we would have to assume that that person had misread the style of reasoning which she assigned to that culture’s linguistic framework. For it would be a very dubious judgement to assign a style of reasoning to the linguistic framework of a culture, which that culture largely failed to apply.

Conclusion: the Relativist Paradox

We have developed an account of linguistic frameworks, based on Carnap’s notion, and also employing Hacking’s notion of styles of reasoning. In this account, the various linguistic frameworks which a given culture
operates with are all subsumed by the culture’s linguistic framework or world-view. This subsuming framework has a characteristic style of reasoning, which is the common ground binding the culture’s individual linguistic frameworks into a world-view. This world-view characterizes a world. The world-as-thus-characterized is the real world which the culture lives in. Different cultures have different linguistic frameworks/world-views, having different styles of reasoning, and characterizing different worlds. These world-views are incommensurable, by virtue of their different styles of reasoning. Thus, we have come to our relativist conclusion: the Real, or what there is, is relative to the linguistic framework accepted by the knower. And we have finally settled on our relativist model of many incommensurable linguistic frameworks, each characterizing a real world. This model, we have seen, is wholly internalist, presupposing only an epistemic notion of truth: translation enables us to identify alternative world-views from within our own, although we cannot know the actual alternative worlds.

Having reached our relativist conclusion, we should finally consider the Relativist Paradox. The Relativist Paradox is generated in the following way. The statement of relativism — that is, that the Real is relative to the linguistic framework of the knower — is made within our Western theoretical linguistic framework. Nevertheless, the thrust of the relativist claim is that given any linguistic framework, the Real is relative to that framework. However, from this it follows that the reality of relativism itself is relative to our linguistic framework. And thus (so the argument goes), the stating of the relativist claim generates a reductio ad absurdum: relativism applies to all statements in all linguistic frameworks; from which follows that it
does not apply to statements in linguistic frameworks other than that in which it is stated.

Now, this "paradox" in fact presents no problem for our account of relativism. The argument revealing the "paradox" presupposes the externalist perspective, which, of course, relativism does not countenance. We readily admit -- indeed, it is fundamental to the argument for relativism -- that the statement of relativism is made within our Western theoretical linguistic framework; and that therefore the reality of relativism is relative to this framework. But, we do not thereby see it as being merely relative to our framework -- as if the Real could be anything but relative to our framework. In other words, those who argue that the relativity of the reality of relativism undermines the thrust of the relativist's claim are presupposing the radically non-epistemic notion of truth, which we have rejected as untenable. As we have seen, our intention in our argument for relativism is to show, within our Western theoretical linguistic framework/world-view (where else?), that the Real is relative to the linguistic framework of the knower.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


