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**The Ontological Status of Truthmakers:  
An Alternative to Tractarianism and Metaphysical Anti-Realism**

While it is a solid fact for the overwhelming majority of philosophers that most of our empirical statements are either true or false and that our truth-talk is legitimate discourse, the consensus comes to a halt when one asks what actually “makes” an empirical proposition true. As a matter of fact, even the very assumption that certain kinds of entities make truths seems debatable—as exemplified by many deflationists and pragmatists. In *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Donald Davidson famously declared: “Nothing . . ., no *thing*, makes sentences and theories true: not experience, not [Quine’s] surface irritations, not the world, can make a sentence true.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Barry Allen in his provocative book *Truth in Philosophy* claims that “[s]tatements are not *made* to be true at all; instead, they are made to circulate, to pass for true.”<sup>2</sup> Although a pragmatist approach of this sort which pays due attention to the essential connection between truth and the actual agents (*qua* speakers of a language) has its attractions, philosophers with such anti-realist tendencies have in general failed not only to offer a convincing account of truth and its generally stable nature but also to meet the cogent criticisms of the realist thinkers who commonly believe in a robust notion of truth and truthmaking relations. On the other hand, there are significant problems faced by the realists, especially when it comes to explaining, and locating the source of, such alethic robustness.<sup>3</sup> The classical correspondence

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<sup>1</sup> Davidson, D. (1985). *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> Allen, B. (1995). *Truth in Philosophy*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> The etymological root of ‘alethic’ is the Greek term ‘aletheia’ (literally, “unveiling” or “disclosure”); it is commonly translated to English as “truth.” When contemporary analytic philosophers employ ‘alethic’, they understandably strip the term of its historical (mainly, Heideggerian) connotations. It is simply used as an adjective semantically equivalent to the less attractive term ‘truthic’. On the other hand, *alethic realism* is characterized by W. Alston as the view that “[a] statement (proposition,

theory of truth is often regarded as irredeemably flawed on the basis of the fact that it has not been possible to make sense of the entities, most prominently facts, to which our true sentences are supposed to correspond. Many people think that L. Wittgenstein's theory collapsed spectacularly when he later renounced the particular ontology and the associated philosophy of language he had confidently portrayed in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Despite the widespread recognition of his attack on realistic factualism, not everybody today seems to be fascinated by the post-later-Wittgensteinian vogue of picturing human cognizers as more or less doomed to socio-linguistic games. More recently, David Armstrong has offered an interesting account aimed at reviving metaphysical realism *à la Tractatus* and formulating a theory of truthmaking. In this paper, I will first briefly review his arguments for a traditional sort of factualism. Then, I will formulate a response to Armstrong's metaphysical-alethic account from the standpoint of a defender of scheme-based semantics. Lastly, I will raise an objection to Hilary Putnam's understanding of what can be said to exist independently of human cognizers and will make an attempt to combine the strengths of the realist and anti-realist positions with respect to the ontology of propositional truthmaking.<sup>4</sup>

### *1. Truthmaking According to a Metaphysician*

Armstrong contrasts his *factualism*, the idea that the world is made up of facts not objects, with the Quinean *thingism* according to which only the subject term of a proposition must be taken with ontological seriousness. From the factualist viewpoint, particulars and universals combine non-mereologically to yield the states of affairs of the world (viz., the

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belief . . .) is true if and only if what the statement says to be the case actually is the case." (Alston, W. P. (1996). *A Realist Conception of Truth*. London: Cornell University Press, p. 5)

<sup>4</sup> In this paper, I will focus on some of the metaphysical issues surrounding the truthmaking relation. I should, however, point out that my account can be seen to jibe well with certain contextual theories of propositional truth produced recently on the *semantics* front. For some exceptionally illuminating accounts, see Horgan, T. (2001). "Contextual Semantics and Metaphysical Realism: Truth as Indirect Correspondence," in M. Lynch (ed.), *The Nature of Truth*. Cambridge: MIT Press, and also Lynch M. (1998), *Truth in Context: An Essay on Pluralism and Objectivity*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

truthmakers) and propositional truths.<sup>5</sup> This idea rests not only on the supposition that mind-independent reality is structured but, more crucially, that it has a propositional structure (without implying that it is linguistic). At this point, given Armstrong's obvious Aristotelian and Tractarian tendencies, it is tempting to view him as an old-fashioned metaphysician who is comfortable with the idea of freely positing ontological entities or constructing explanatory schemes within the confines of armchair metaphysics. But Armstrong is a professed naturalist; he believes that "the space-time system is all that there is . . ."<sup>6</sup> For Armstrong, the physical sciences, rather than *a priori* metaphysics, hold the promise of giving us a complete description of the ultimate building blocks of our world—an account of the most elementary or foundational particulars, universals, and states of affairs.

This combination of factualism and naturalism is *prima facie* a reasonable view. But it also poses a potential threat to Armstrong's overall theory. How can we account for negative truths if the thesis of naturalism is correct? What is the truthmaker of a statement that talks about a merely possible situation? Faced with the first problem, Russell introduced negative facts into his ontology in order to explicate the truthmaking relation associated with such propositions. Obviously, this cannot be a satisfactory option for a naturalist metaphysician. The number of negative propositions is infinite and the totality of negative facts which are supposed to make negative truths is an unpalatable and problematic addition to reality. Hence, one crucial task confronting a naturalist who also holds that there are no truths without related truthmakers is to find out what makes negative truths true without slipping either into thingism or towards extravagant ontologies.

Armstrong's solution to this predicament is to argue that first order actual states of affairs are all we need to generate various sorts of truths. The theoretical device he employs to get this idea off the ground is supervenience. Simply stated, for Armstrong an entity Y supervenes on another entity X if and only if X's existence necessitates or entails that of Y. In other words, given X we get Y *gratis*. This conceptual tool can now be employed to explain the truthmakers of negative propositions. Take a very simple universe with two actual states of affairs, Fa and Gb. We

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<sup>5</sup> Armstrong, D. M. (1997). *A World of States of Affairs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 114-119. See also Olson, K. R. (1987). *An Essay on Facts*. Stanford: CSLI, p. iv.

<sup>6</sup> Armstrong, *A World*, p. 5.

assume for the sake of simplicity there are no relational properties in that world. What would be the truthmaker of the true propositions not-Fb and not-Ga? Armstrong thinks that the two positive states of affairs and a second-order state of affairs (i.e., that Fa and Gb are the only first-order states of affairs) are sufficient to make the two negative statements true. The two negative truths supervene on the positive truths in that world. To give another example, if “Fa” is contingently true “after the original instantiation [of F by a], all the further relations postulated *supervene*.”<sup>7</sup> Propositions like “it is true that Fa” and “it is true that it is true that Fa” are thereby made true, but our ontology does not suffer from a pernicious inflation of truthmaking relations springing from just one contingent (actual) state of affairs because there is no increase of being in this case. It is the subvenient entity that really exists; whatever supervenes on it is, ontologically speaking, nothing more than that metaphysical base. More crucially—at least for the purposes of this paper—a closer reading of Armstrong yields that the relation of supervenience, as he understands it, takes place between *truthmakers* and *truths* as well. In other words, for Armstrong basic states of affairs make all other kinds of states of affairs and basic (first level) truths out of metaphysical necessity. Both cases involve internal relations such as ontological necessitation, entailment, and supervenience.<sup>8</sup> In a nutshell, not only truthmakers but truths themselves belong to ontology.

This metaphysical account calls for a distinction between the *first-class* and *second-class* properties. The former are alleged to be the genuine properties and, as such, are found among the real furniture of the world independently of our ways of predication or conceptualization.<sup>9</sup> At the most basic level of ontology we have the first-class particulars and first-class universals all of which are to be identified and studied by empirical sciences. Despite the fact that they are the ultimate furniture of

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<sup>7</sup> Armstrong, *A World*, p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> See Armstrong, *A World*, especially pages 12, 13, 87, 115, 131, 135. Armstrong somehow obscures this fact since he never explicitly says that truths supervene on truthmakers. A close reading, however, makes it sufficiently clear that for Armstrong the relation between a truthmaker and a pertinent truth is *specifically* that of supervenience.

<sup>9</sup> One may feel that the physicalist’s favorite properties like mass and charge are most likely to fill the bill, but Armstrong is careful to point out that the exact identity or nature of those properties is an *a posteriori* matter to be investigated by natural sciences. (*A World*, p. 25, p. 43, and p. 46)

reality or existence they may turn out to be complex entities.<sup>10</sup> By the same token, the first-class universals are the constituents of ultimate truthmakers, to wit, the first-class states of affairs. A first-class atomic state of affairs is composed (as a non-mereological whole) of a first-class particular and one or more first-class universals. The world is really the totality of such (actual) states of affairs, and we may never know what they are or how they are constituted. What is being revealed to our experience or cognition, the argument goes, are the second-class of properties, relations, and states of affairs. Colors, to give an example, are second-class properties and, therefore, are not, properly speaking, universals. Similarly, a cat's being black is a second-class state of affairs. Two questions arise: first, what is the ontological status of the second-class properties, particulars and states of affairs; and, second, what is the metaphysical connection or bridge between them and the real universals and states of affairs?

Take the second question first. Armstrong contends that the required bridge is readily provided by the relation of supervenience. The thesis is that

[g]iven all the first-class states of affairs, all the second-class states of affairs supervene, are entailed, are necessitated. This will involve the supervenience of all second-class properties that can be truly predicated.<sup>11</sup>

If we adopt supervenience, we thereby admit that there may be no difference at the level of supervenient (second-class) entities without some difference at the subvenient level, i.e., the level of first-class entities. This is the ontological connection needed between the first-class and second-class properties, particulars, and states of affairs. When we form true sentences of the form "S is P" in a given language, the ground for our alethic success lies in the way the first-class states of affairs are formed or structured. The predicate term of such a sentence (truthfully, veridically) attaches to its subject term mainly because of the combinatorial behavior of the first-class particulars and properties. For Armstrong, it is those first-class constituents which generate, affect, and sustain the supervenient states of affairs.

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<sup>10</sup> For example, a property may be structural in its being composed of a property and a relation. Armstrong allows the possibility that all universals are complex in this way. See Armstrong, *A World*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>11</sup> Armstrong, *A World*, p. 45.

Since Armstrong does not regard the supervenient entities as an ontological addition to the subvenient ones, he may seem to be denying the reality of second-class entities. Curiously, however, Armstrong is not willing to say either that they do not exist or that they are unreal.<sup>12</sup> I think this is because Armstrong realizes, notwithstanding his firm conviction that truthmaking *really* takes place at the most basic ontological level, that it is an exceedingly implausible and untenable move to claim that truths are found only at that subvenient level or that our homely truths are mere fictions or linguistic creations having nothing to do with the real truthmaking relations engendered by the first-class entities. Armstrong concedes, therefore, that our phenomenal truths cannot be totally unreal in an ontologically pejorative sense of the term. Actually, from an epistemological point of view, the second-class states of affairs are more real to us; they are what we come into cognitive contact with in our exchange with the environment. In what Armstrong calls “the order of being,” however, they are secondary or lesser things.

If this account is correct, there is no way we can semantically descend from the second-class properties to the first-class ones.<sup>13</sup> Universals are not meant to “give semantic values to general words and phrases”; their function is a metaphysical one in the proper sense of the term. We need universals, for example, in order to account for the resemblances of the objects we observe around us. (Hence, it makes sense for Armstrong to claim that metaphysics can be done *a priori*, while the empirical sciences still have the responsibility of finding out and studying the ultimate elements of existence.)

This presents us with a contentious alethic-metaphysical picture along the following lines. One prominent philosophical desideratum for most theoreticians of propositional truth and knowledge is to give a defensible account of human cognizers’ ability to establish successful connections to the world or, more succinctly, of getting things right. For many, this inevitably requires coming to grips with the concept of propositional truth from an intensional as well as extensional perspective. Armstrong’s radical reification of truthmaking, on the other hand, is motivated by the conviction that ordinary truth conditions can be investigated in

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<sup>12</sup> Armstrong believes, for instance, that the second-class properties can “bestow causal efficacy on the particulars that they are properties of . . .” (*A World*, p. 45).

<sup>13</sup> Wittgenstein’s attempt in the *Tractatus*, as Armstrong correctly points out (*A World*, p. 45), was bound to fail. No such archeology is possible from the ground level of semantics into buried fortunes of ontology.

predominantly metaphysical terms and that an ontological account of the makers of truths alone can be expected to yield alethically significant results.<sup>14</sup> The critical issue that must be addressed in this context is, of course, about the nature of the making of our mundane or phenomenal truths given the undeniable impossibility of a semantic descent from the second-class to first-class states of affairs and properties.

Armstrong characterizes the second-class universals and particulars as supervenient upon the first-class in that the latter are purported to entail or necessitate the former. He attempts to clarify this further by stating that the supervenient entities constitute no addition to being, once we are given the respective subvenient entities. These two claims are clearly *not* equivalent although textual evidence suggests that Armstrong thinks otherwise. Consider a second-class state of affairs like John's being six feet tall. Assuming the thesis of physicalism, we can allow that this state of affairs is ontologically no addition in being to the first-class particulars, relations, and properties. For instance, John can plausibly be regarded from the analytic—and physicalist—metaphysician's perspective as a corporeal entity described by a hypothetical completed physical science. Hence I submit that we can sympathize with the reductionistic realist's intuitions when he argues that it is an untenable idea that there is another being, John of our mezzo-universe, in addition to a certain assembly of the elementary particles which are brought together in accordance with the laws of (completed) microphysics to give rise to the existence of what we perceive as "John." I am inclined to think that this idea is not entirely problem-free but I will not question it here. What is evidently problematic in Armstrong's theory is the account he gives of the relationship between the first-class properties of the in-itself reality and predicates of natural languages—and, in turn, of the connection between the two classes of states of affairs. I will argue that there is not much plausibility to the claim that we obtain phenomenal properties and states of affairs out of the first-class entities by virtue of "noumenal" relations such as being connected through supervenience, metaphysical necessitation, or entailment.

## *2. A Question Concerning the First and Second Class Entities*

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<sup>14</sup> Hence, Armstrong (*A World*, p. 131) deprives himself of theoretical tools or intermediaries such as propositions which many analytic philosophers cheerfully use as a buffer zone between epistemology and ontology.

So far as an ontological project like Armstrong's is concerned, the question of our conceptual or epistemic access to the facts of the world does not appear to be a relevant issue. In other words, the philosopher dealing with the task characterized thus far is responsible only for offering a theory of how reality is constructed metaphysically but not, for instance, how we can get knowledge of that ontological structure or what conceptual tools would be more suitable for its accurate representation. According to the sort of factualism defended by Armstrong, actual states of affairs and truths entailed by them would generally be part of ontology even if the world were uninhabited by cognitive agents who could bear witness to the presence of those states of affairs. I will call this view, which is a combination of metaphysical realism and metaphysical factualism, *Tractarian Realism* (TR).<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, the ultimate states of affairs or truthmakers *are* metaphysically embedded in reality, and their existence does not in any way depend on intensional determinations.<sup>16</sup> Thus, a Tractarian Realist is unlikely to be impressed by our having to employ a language in dealing with ontological matters. As P. Moser puts it, "[l]inguistic relativity of the notions and statements of an ontology does not entail linguistic relativity of what those notions are about."<sup>17</sup> For a TRist, the fact that we use language and conceptual schemes to talk about facts does not show that those facts themselves are linguistic. From a slightly different perspective, linguistic relativity is detrimental to, or "contaminates," our conceptual schemes, not the facts out there. In

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<sup>15</sup> Armstrong uses the term 'factualist metaphysics' for the sort of activity he is engaged in. (*A World*, p. 4) I tententiously call his position Tractarian Realism for I will tackle the issues related to his thesis on the ontological nature of truthmakers and truths within the framework of my critique of realism. Let me also add that my coining this term does not in any way imply that there are salient similarities between the early Wittgenstein and Armstrong concerning the structural dynamics of truthmaking—actually, the former never offers an ontological account or analysis of truthmakers. It is only meant to indicate that Armstrong, like the early Wittgenstein, envisages a world of states of affairs or facts which are strictly non-mental.

<sup>16</sup> To stress an obvious point, here I am not taking Armstrong as representing *the common* alethic realist perspective on the making of propositional truths. The majority of alethic realists such as William Alston, Michael Devitt, and Alvin Goldman would definitely balk at the onto-alethic project Armstrong engages in. The critique I offer here is motivated by the conviction that it can be very instructive to see why Armstrong's particular view which comes with a purely ontological account of truthmaking presents a serious philosophical issue.

<sup>17</sup> Moser, P. (1993). *Philosophy After Objectivity*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, p. 37.

general, then, a TRist would insist that a metaphysical conclusion cannot be drawn from what is essentially an epistemological premise.

About a century ago, factualism had some alethic attraction as it appeared to provide a straightforward answer to the question of determination of the truth conditions of our empirical propositions. While the “linguistic turn” of the past century substantially undermined realistic factualisms, the later-Wittgensteinian spell on philosophy is not the single dominant force found in the contemporary reaction to TR. Hilary Putnam, who has contributed significantly to the relevant debate, put forward a controversial account informed and fashioned by certain Kantian—in addition to obviously Wittgensteinian—themes and ideas. On Putnam’s internalist account, realism recognizes the essential role of linguistic and conceptual contributions made by human cognizers in the identification or individuation of the objects of knowledge and in the constitution of the makers of truths. While Kant thinks that the conditions of the possibility of (the objects of) experience are provided by a set of universal rules or categories, Putnam relativizes these conditions to the conceptual repertoire of the speakers of particular languages. This position, which can be called *Pluralistic Kantianism* (PK), holds that mind-independent reality does not single out and present to us one among many relations; rather, human agents do it within conceptual schemes with particular intentions in their minds.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, a world without languages would not contain any “facts” as we normally understand the term. The truth conditions of our statements can only be formed and fashioned within the conceptual borders of human language, and there is no single correct or veridical scheme in which truths are produced.<sup>19</sup>

In the later phase of his philosophy, Putnam gradually moved away from (certain aspects of) James’s pragmatism and got closer to the realist tenet that “the world is as it is independently of the interests of describers.”<sup>20</sup> While there is little doubt that these statements are to get a nod from the knowing realist, it is nonetheless important to be clear concerning what Putnam retains of internal realism or his version of

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<sup>18</sup> See Putnam, H. (1982). “Why There Isn’t a Ready-Made World,” *Synthese* 51, pp. 142-143.

<sup>19</sup> Lynch defends a similar view and prefers the term ‘relativistic Kantianism’. See his *Truth in Context*.

<sup>20</sup> Putnam, H. (1994). “Sense, Nonsense, and the Senses: An Inquiry into the Powers of the Human Mind” (The Dewey Lectures), *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. xci, no. 9, p. 448.

Pluralistic Kantianism. One question Putnam never gives up asking is “*from whose point of view is the story being told?*”<sup>21</sup> Despite various alterations in Putnam’s ideas since the late 70’s, he never wavers in his renunciation of the notion of the thing-in-itself and noumenal properties. While Kant thinks that noumena are forever opaque to human mind and knowledge, Putnam maintains that “we don’t know what we are talking about when we talk about ‘things in themselves’.”<sup>22</sup> He frequently reminds us that it is human cognizers who divide the world into objects, properties, relations, states of affairs, etc., and that it makes no sense to think that the world divides itself up into fixed objects or structured states of affairs. However, he is careful in reminding the reader that mountains, cats, and chairs are not creations of mind and language. This is why in his later phase Putnam comes to regard Dummett an “anti-realist” and Goodman an “irrealist.”<sup>23</sup> In spite of such affinities with realism(s), scheme-based semantics, broadly speaking, unapologetically “subverts” the extensionalist program which takes the truthmaking relation as pertaining to translinguistic entities. The gist of the anti-TRist point here is that there are no facts in reality to direct, guide, and determine the correct conceptualization of facts. Alethic determinations can take place solely within the existent borders of languages and schemes collectively generated by human agents. As a result, a purely extensionalist approach to facts is unacceptable.

Putnam’s version of PK and Armstrong’s TR conflict in two principal ways. First, according to Putnam there are no in-itself entities (such as noumenal objects, properties, relations, and states of affairs). Second, since truths are “made” within languages or conceptual schemes, Putnam firmly believes that it is unintelligible to talk of truths existing in the absence of such conceptual tools or media. Still, Putnam is sympathetic to the idea that there is a relation of supervenience between the non-intentional facts (i.e., what Simon Blackburn calls the “base totality”) and the semantic or intentional ones (i.e., facts about reference, truth, etc.).<sup>24</sup> The base totality here is understood in terms of the physical and behavioristic elements of our conceptualized world rather than with

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<sup>21</sup> Putnam, H. (1986). *Reason, Truth, and History*. London: Cambridge University Press, p. 50.

<sup>22</sup> Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History*, p. 36.

<sup>23</sup> Putnam, “Sense, Nonsense, and the Senses,” p. 446.

<sup>24</sup> Putnam, H. (1994). “Comments and Replies” in P. Clark and B. Hale (eds), *Reading Putnam*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 251-252.

reference to parts/aspects of a mind-independent reality. With this qualification we can admit that the facts about our referring, say to a rabbit, supervene on those related to the physical circumstances and our linguistic behavior in the presence of rabbits. Or, to use a moral analogy, two members of a certain cultural and linguistic community acting and thinking exactly the same way in a given case of moral judgment cannot be said to differ in moral worth. This endorses the plausibility of the thesis of supervenience. However, these examples do not show that the base totality determines the facts of the higher level. The reason for this is that if one wants to understand or explain the kind of supervenience involved in the act of referring or making a moral judgment, she will not look at the facts about an agent's behavior or the surrounding physical circumstances. Rather, she will look "from above," i.e., from the standpoint of the higher-level facts, not the other way around.<sup>25</sup> If a scientist gives the description of a moral fact fully in terms of human behavior and physical conditions, we still cannot be said to obtain the fact in question. Similarly, a purely physical and behavioral characterization of a cognitive agent referring to an object fails to determine the fact about that particular instance of reference. In this sense, there is no incoherence in being a realist (i.e., in locating the subvenient base in the world and not in language) and, at the same time, rejecting "the *explanatory relevance* of the base totality for semantic facts."<sup>26</sup>

Now consider an institutional fact, to use the Searlian terminology,<sup>27</sup> such as "The Black king is checkmated" which takes place at a certain moment in a particular chess game. For Armstrong, this is, one can assume, a second-class state of affairs and as such it supervenes on the existence of a certain set of first-class objects, relations, and properties. Of course, such supervenience between the first class entities and the facts about that particular chess game must be mediated via certain other supervenience relations pertaining to some *general* facts which find their expressions in a set of definitions about the legitimate moves of individual pieces in chess (e.g., "It is a fact that in a chess game the king is captured when such and such happens."). And both the particular and general facts involved in this instance must ultimately be based upon the first class facts

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<sup>25</sup> Putnam, "Comments and Replies," p. 252.

<sup>26</sup> Alcock, L. M. (1996). *Real Knowing: New Versions of the Coherence Theory*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 171.

<sup>27</sup> Searle, J. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 50-53.

about the elementary particles of the universe—for those are the ones, according to Armstrong, that have ultimate existence. We can further suppose that the particular fact under examination can be described precisely by an ideal (physical) science that catalogues and explains the ultimate building blocks of the physical reality. Such descriptions would include the configuration of subatomic particles making up the two players, the chessboard, and so on. Moreover, these objects (the players, the pieces, etc.) and their movements cannot be, from a purely material or physicalist point of view, ontologically more than what such a science describes them to be. Yet it seems clear to me that the level of first-class entities by and in themselves cannot determine the second-class states of affairs since the latter is inextricably intertwined with human agents' irreducible semantic or intensional contribution. Consider the following hypothetical example: a physical scientist of the future manages to communicate with an extraterrestrial via electromagnetic waves. Assume also that both the scientist and the extraterrestrial have independently developed the ideal microphysical science that Armstrong imagines. The scientist then transmits to the alien information about all the “base level” facts related to that particular instance of checkmate; that is, he describes the subatomic occurrences in the players' body and in the physical environment when White performs the move resulting in a checkmate. In that case, the alien would know all there is to know about the subvenient ontological base of the second-class state of affairs. Still, the extraterrestrial would not understand the second-class fact related to what humans call a checkmate because without the intensional elements of language and an understanding of the constitution of our phenomenal world he would be unable to grasp the event as an occurrence in a chess game. What is suggested here is not that the second-class entity is ontologically more than the subvenient base. Rather, the claim is that we do not immediately get the second-class states of affairs once we are given the first. If this is the case, Armstrong is mistaken in believing that his “no addition of being” argument is sufficient to show that the subvenient level yields the supervenient irrespective of semantics and our ways of conceptualization. As Putnam's argument above implies, one has to look from above to understand why supervenience really holds between the first and higher class entities. Armstrong may be right in maintaining that the direction of ontological determination goes from the base to the second level. His account fails, however, to be an enlightening one in terms of explicating our second-class properties and states of affairs as he fails to

distinguish ontological from semantic determination. This brings us back to a point Putnam emphasized repeatedly: our ways and tools of conceptualization and, in particular, the intensional or semantic elements cannot be factored out in our attempts to provide an account of the external reality or the world. Even a God who is omniscient only with respect to the base totality of the states of affairs would presumably be unable to understand a checkmate.<sup>28</sup>

The main problem about Armstrong's account of truthmaking-as-supervenience is conspicuous in the case of institutional facts. However, a realist might argue that "hard facts" such as "Grass is green" or "This book is covered with dust" present a notably different onto-alethic picture. It must be admitted that facts about physical objects are fairly different from those about morality, politics, games, and so on. The Tractarian realist will then maintain that the argument against truthmaking-as-supervenience must have limited theoretical usage. I think there are (at least) two ways to respond to this objection. One response, whose detailed discussion remains beyond the scope of this paper, capitalizes on the idea that our linguistic, conceptual, and cultural contribution must have a constitutive role in the generation of *both* hard *and* soft facts.<sup>29</sup> The second type of response is more fundamental. It comes directly from Kant and is about the nature of *finite cognition*. To repeat, the TRist position is that the mind-independent existence of hard facts is principally due to the mind-independent existence of external (physical) objects, and, in this sense, human agents' "subjective" contribution is irrelevant to the generation of truths. This effectively means that alethic-supervenience between the higher and lower classes is secured at least for hard facts. A Kantian response to this position which may also be called Ontological Speciesism is that it ignores the fact that we actually have no idea how, say, grass or

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<sup>28</sup> And I believe this is rather consistent with our notion of God: when we say, for example, that God knows what is in people's hearts, we are hardly talking about the atoms or electric/physiological events like action potential or the organ with its blood, aorta, veins, and so on. God's alleged knowledge in this sense seemingly requires some kind of "second-class beholding" which cannot be dissociated from a certain tradition of religious discourse. What I am (very speculatively) claiming is that God could not communicate his thoughts and demands if his ontology and epistemology were restricted only to the level of Armstrong's first-class entities.

<sup>29</sup> That is to say, our discourse about physical objects too is inevitably indexed to the conceptual tools of actual linguistic communities. See, e.g., Putnam, "Comments and Replies" and Lynch, *Truth in Context*.

dust would appear to an extraterrestrial whose cognitive system produces radically different representations of the external reality.<sup>30</sup> To state the underlying idea here in a different terminology: if we admit that truth conditions of particular propositions cannot individuate and establish themselves in mind-independent reality *sub specie aeternitatis*, we also have to admit that what appears to us as objects and facts cannot be fixed furniture of the realm of existence.

The net upshot of these considerations is that supervenience as a metaphysical relation between ontology-based truthmakers and truthbearers (which describe our *phenomenal* world) cannot do the alethic trick TR envisages. A pluralistic Kantian approach to the truth conditions of our empirical statements has the consequence that truthmakers cannot be “embedded” in mind-independent reality.<sup>31</sup> The ontology-based approach to truth is misguided because, using Hume’s expression, it “spreads” what cognitive agents conceive as truthmakers on external objects or reality. According to PK, *even* what appears to us as hard facts are radically different from the TRist’s ontological states of affairs. Thus, the idea that propositional truths are produced in a fully extensional manner regardless of actual cognitive and linguistic constraints must be rejected.

A similar PKist argument can be given with regard to the first-class properties and second-class predicates: even though our phenomenal properties are indeed no addition of being to the base level, it is a mistake to think that reality, on and by its own, can make the necessary arrangements in the realm of elementary objects, properties, and relations in order to concoct second-class properties such as being yellow, being a good football player, being nostalgic and so on.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the

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<sup>30</sup> Of course, this statement is actually a concise expression of the unintelligibility of what Kant calls Transcendental Realism. See, e.g., Kant, I. (1965). *Critique of Pure Reason*. (tr.) Norman Kemp Smith, N.Y.: St. Martin’s Press, A369. See also fn. 32 below.

<sup>31</sup> In *Truth in Philosophy*, B. Allen provides a cogent criticism of the notion of onto-alethic embeddedness—which he calls *onto-logic*. As he portrays it, onto-logic maintains that “the ‘logical’ possibility of sentential truth-value derives from the ‘ontological’ possibility of beings that ‘are what they are’, that have an identity of their own.” (p. 2)

<sup>32</sup> Some realists like Frank Jackson defend what is called a “primary quality view of color” according to which colors are in fact physical properties of objects. (Jackson, F. (1996). “The Primary Quality View of Color,” *Philosophical Perspectives*, **10**, pp. 199-219.) More specifically, “they are identical with complexes of the properties the physical sciences appeal to in their causal explanations” (p. 199). It is interesting to

ontological individuation of objects *qua* determinate objects in the absence of conceptual schemes (and, more fundamentally, in a way not dependent on the cognitive structure of actual agents) is an implausible and untenable idea. Once the essential constitutive function of cognition and conceptualization is admitted, truthmaking relations can properly be legitimized for they are to be found within, or be characterized with respect to, the world open to finite cognizers who belong to particular linguistic/cultural communities and employ particular linguistic tools.

### 3. *Anti-TR and the Question of the “Ding an Sich”*

In “Realism With a Human Face” Putnam, having criticized anti-realism regarding the existence of things and metaphysical realism, restates a common theme of his internalist (or perhaps post-internalist) period of philosophizing by saying that the world is neither raw material nor mind’s own creation.<sup>33</sup> The problem with such statements, however, is that they achieve little in way of elucidating what “the world” really is. Actually, most realists (in the customary sense of the term) have serious misgivings about Putnam’s alleged realism since, his Kantian tendencies notwithstanding, he openly tries to get rid of the notion of an in-itself reality. To reiterate, while Kant thinks that the noumenal realm is unknowable for finite cognizers, Putnam seems to believe that we cannot intelligibly talk about the in-itself reality. This is chiefly because the notion of an intrinsic property (that is, a first-class property in Armstrong’s sense) “apart from any contribution made by language or the mind” is an empty idea; moreover, it constitutes the “root of the disease” of metaphysical realism.<sup>34</sup>

Putnam’s crucial and problematic move is to pass from the inevitably perspectival character of our concepts (and truth) to the perspectival nature

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note that Jackson himself says in characterizing his account that in the above-mentioned paper he will be concerned principally with color in a thoroughly anthropocentric sense tied to normal humans in normal circumstances. (p. 206) . . . David Hilbert has a good name for this kind of theory. He calls it *anthropocentric realism*. The colors *per se* are observer independent properties, but *which* observer independent properties they are is not observer independent. (p. 208)

<sup>33</sup> Putnam, H. (1990). *Realism with a Human Face*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 28.

<sup>34</sup> Putnam, H. (1987). *The Many Faces of Realism*. LaSalle: Open Court, p. 8.

of reality itself.<sup>35</sup> The issue here is essentially about his ideas on what can and what cannot be taken as mind-independent. It may be helpful in this context to recall and briefly examine the so-called “cookie cutter” conception of reality. According to J. Van Cleve, those who believe that non-doxastic experiential states cannot play a justificatory role sometimes tend to advocate a cookie cutter view of conceptualization and ontology which tells us that “the content of experience before conceptualization is simply a sheet of homogeneous dough, a dough in which no shapes stand out until they have been *stamped* out by the industrious ego.”<sup>36</sup> Van Cleve lists M. Williams and I. Scheffer as allies of F. H. Bradley in defending this view. He cites C. I. Lewis as protesting against it in the following way:

We should be beware of conceiving the given as a smooth undifferentiated flux; that would be wholly fictitious. Experience, when it comes, contains within it just those disjunctions which, when they are made explicit by our attention, mark the boundaries of events, “experiences,” and things. The manner in which field of vision or a duration breaks into parts reflects our interested attitude, but attention *cannot* mark disjunctions in an *undifferentiated field*.<sup>37</sup>

There is indeed something fundamentally misguided about claiming that the content of sense-experience before conceptualization is like amorphous clay which can be put into any shape by our powers of concept formation. Viewed from a different perspective, “even if all perceptual awareness of facts involves judgment, it by no means follows that all we are aware *of* in such perception is a judgment.”<sup>38</sup> It should suffice to remind ourselves that most animals do have some kind of awareness in their encounter with nature presumably without any conceptualization or judgment—as we ordinarily understand the terms—being involved in the process. To give another example from experimental psychology, we can safely assume that human depth perception invariably employs certain cognitive/physiological mechanisms (e.g., the strain felt by the eye muscles due to convergence toward a fixation point in the visual field, or motion parallax which arises out of varying vectorial values associated with the displacement of objects

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<sup>35</sup> Sosa, E. (1993) “Putnam’s Pragmatic Realism,” *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. xc, no. 12, p. 608, p. 625.

<sup>36</sup> Van Cleve, J. (1985). “Epistemic Supervenience and the Circle of Belief,” *Monist* 68, no.1, p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> Van Cleve, “Epistemic Supervenience,” p. 96, italics mine.

<sup>38</sup> Alston, *A Realist Conception*, p. 94.

with respect to their position on the retina) that allow the subject to isolate and focus on objects. And the fact that we have a natural disposition to attend to various aspects/parts of the world outside ourselves even in the absence of concepts accompanying the perception admittedly strengthens Van Cleve's point.

One can use this line of reasoning to deal with the idea that reality is like amorphous dough *with no intrinsic differentiation or heterogeneity*, which we carve up using our conceptual tools.<sup>39</sup> Such a metaphysical picture makes little (if any) sense. If reality is really a homogeneous, undifferentiated field, the variety and multiplicity of human experience (and of the actual world we conceptually create and live in) must stem from the mental, cognitive, and/or linguistic tools that human agents are ordinarily thought to possess. But this leads to another question: "What explains the non-homogeneity of experience if it does not come from outside?"<sup>40</sup> The problem here, so far as I can see, relates to the exact relationship between the conceptualizers and the dough. Can there really be a substantial separation between the two as the dough-model suggests? Presumably, we once were humble members of the animal kingdom without language or conceptual sophistication. If this is the case, it is difficult to imagine how the theory under consideration can ever explicate the mysterious and amazing transformation that, if the dough view is correct, must have taken place from our once being unsophisticated primates possessing no significant conceptual tools to a population of supreme beings whose powers of conceptualization now makes them so indispensable for the Cosmos that in their absence the whole realm of existence would somehow turn into a dull, homogeneous, amorphous dough. What this perspective misses completely is the Quinean point that humans *qua* knowers or conceptualizers can only be continuous with nature, not above or outside it. Language and theorizing emerge in the

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<sup>39</sup> Let me note here that Putnam dismisses the cookie cutter conception of reality on the grounds that it "tries to preserve . . . the naive idea that at least one category—the ancient category of Object or Substance—has an absolute interpretation." (Putnam, *The Many Faces*, p. 36)

<sup>40</sup> John Locke remarks in Book IV, Chapter XI, § 4 of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that it is simply unreasonable to think that perception can be produced in us without "exterior causes." The question I am posing here, however, has a different force: can we really make sense of the idea that minds (or conceptualizers) alone could be the cause or originator of the heterogeneities found in perceptual contents?

natural course of our contact and exchange with physical reality and, in this sense, there is nothing highly privileged about either the mental powers or linguistic tools: they have been formed in nature and they are a part of nature. This argument can, I believe, also be used against the kind of PK propounded by Putnam who actually does not subscribe to the cookie cutter view: it is more reasonable to suppose, in a way which is both Kantian and non-Kantian in different senses, that there are mind-independent, noumenal objects and properties than to argue that there are none other than those humans grace by conceptualizing (or that we cannot meaningfully talk about them).

It seems that Putnam is making the following unwarranted inference in his ontological argument. He begins with the reasonable idea that our statements cannot correspond to noumenal states of affairs if the latter are understood as embedded in a reality existing independently of language and conceptual schemes. From this he makes a transition to the claim that we cannot make sense of such states of affairs and eventually concludes that there is no ‘World’ if this term is to denote the totality of those mind-independent, language-independent, in-itself states of affairs and self-individuating objects. If, in other words, “objecthood” is a flexible and changeable notion depending on our conceptual tools and the ways we picture reality to ourselves, it seems unintelligible to Putnam to speak of a (real) World of (real) Objects to which all our descriptions are mere approximations.

But why not reject the traditional factualist’s alethic account and the idea that we are dealing with noumenal objects in successful instances of veridical representation and admit that there is a well-structured reality with its native “objects,” “properties,” and “relations”—without implying that the in-itself reality has, for instance, a substances-attributes or particulars-properties kind of structure as we understand them? I am inclined to think that Putnam’s claim that the world is neither raw material nor a production of our minds creates a miasma about what it is that we are not creating in the course of conceptualization. Remember that according to Putnam, it is simply absurd to deny that there would be cats and mountains in our absence. The immediate question is: What makes *this* possible? Of course, it must be stressed that Putnam is no friend of extreme (Goodmanian) constructivism. As Alcock notes, he is cognizant of the fact that any attempt to reduce reality to “versions” is bound to fail

since those versions must be versions of something.<sup>41</sup> But what is, after all, that something which gives rise to, or engenders, the various versions if it is, as Putnam tells us, neither another version nor a primordial, amorphous dough? One ought to agree with him that neither of these alternatives make any philosophical sense. It is nonetheless difficult to understand what Putnam is driving at once he deprives himself both of such implausible alternatives and of the idea of an in-itself reality with a certain structure. He remarks elsewhere that an ordinary state of affairs can be described either as “There are three objects on my table” (from the ordinary observer’s point of view) or as “There are seven objects on my table” (from a mereologist’s point of view).<sup>42</sup> Then a realist would naturally like to know what we are talking about when we point out different ways of describing “the same state of affairs” or “the same part of reality.”

In arguing against the Putnamian ontology, we should also mention one strong motivation behind Armstrong’s metaphysical theory. The realist account of universals, Armstrong says, is instrumental in explicating the laws of nature. For Armstrong, laws are essentially relations between (first-class) universals.<sup>43</sup> While this suggestion may be open to debate, it is interesting to note that a metaphysical anti-realist like Putnam is bound to encounter difficulties in explaining why there should be gravitational attraction in our world even in the absence of human cognizers if he rejects the idea that reality is in fact somehow structured noumenally. Of course, we may never be able to fully comprehend *that* structure; but this does not seem like a cogent reason to reject the idea of a reality possessing some intrinsic “nature” of its own. As Putnam will agree, it is sufficiently clear that the phenomenal objects of our world are, in one way or another, constrained in their *kinesis*. And it is very difficult to make sense of this fact without attributing a structure, form, or a kind of power to whatever lies beyond our comprehension, cognition, and conceptualization. Another important point is about the limits of our cognition and conceptualization in connection with the “making” of objects and states of affairs. Most sentient beings on our world (people of very different conceptual schemes, other mammals, and the like) would be affected similarly if hit by a fast truck regardless of the way they sense and (where applicable)

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<sup>41</sup> Alcock, *Real Knowing*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>42</sup> Putnam, “Comments and Replies,” p. 246.

<sup>43</sup> Armstrong, *A World*, pp. 223-231.

conceptualize that particular event-type. Once again, such limitations certainly do require some ontological explanation, and it does not seem like Putnam has any to offer.

In his response to a critic Putnam says: “[b]ecause the notion [of an object] is inherently open . . . the very notion of a ‘totality of all objects’ is senseless.”<sup>44</sup> In light of the discussion above, it is quite clear to me that this is an unsatisfactory and problematic statement. I think, on the contrary, we can adopt the thesis that there is a totality of existent things, without denying that the objects of our world are shaped, fashioned, and constructed via the semantic, conceptual, and cognitive tools we possess and that the objects of the world are bound to be “our objects.” The crucial point is that the picture we get from simultaneously holding these two claims is, *contra* Putnam, not an incoherent one. In fact, it squares far better with our strongest intuitions about external reality. Although Putnam teaches us an important lesson about our properties, relations, and states of affairs, we do not need to agree with him that noumena are some “unnecessary addition” to Kant’s metaphysics,<sup>45</sup> or that there is no real dichotomy between intrinsic and nonintrinsic properties.<sup>46</sup> He correctly observes that in Kant’s philosophy we cannot help but think about noumena, a ground for our experience.<sup>47</sup> However, the main reason for hanging on to something noumenal in our ontological stories does not spring from an almost religious faith, as he suggests.<sup>48</sup> Rather, it is a rational postulate, the need for which was first perceived by Kant.

Thus, there seems to be some motivation for an ontology which is simultaneously anti-TRist and non-Putnamian. A PKist can legitimately base her account on the (minimalist) metaphysical realist assumption that both the cognitive agents and things to be known and/or perceived by them are somehow “in” a reality which exists independently of cognizers. Put differently, the idea of a mind-independent reality does not by itself imply that occurrences of the phenomenal world are isolated from or uninformed by that reality. Kant did not believe it either, though I suspect that this is

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<sup>44</sup> Putnam, H. (1992). “Reply to David Anderson,” *Philosophical Topics*, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 367.

<sup>45</sup> Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History*, p. 61.

<sup>46</sup> Putnam, *The Many Faces*, p. 36.

<sup>47</sup> Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>48</sup> Putnam, “Why There Isn’t,” p. 163.

the idea Putnam has in mind when he attacks the very notion of noumena.<sup>49</sup> Going back to my example of getting hit by a truck: such an occurrence must take place in mind-independent reality, and both the phenomenal objects and phenomenal state of affairs involved in this instance must be sustained by that well-structured, stable reality. In this sense, we are not “removed from” noumenal objects and properties.<sup>50</sup> Hence, to summarize the discussion thus far, we must deny the following three views: (1) there is no in-itself reality, and the category of existence is exhausted by mere phenomena (Goodman); (2) there is a reality beyond all conceptualization which extensionally manufactures miscellaneous levels or classes of states of affairs—the ultimate facts, or base totality—which are, in principle, open to human science/cognition (Armstrong); and (3) while ordinary objects of human perception and conceptualization would still exist in the absence of human agents, this by itself is not a sufficient reason to embrace the notion of a reality with some mind-independent structure (Putnam). In my opinion, this last option is not a viable anti-realist or quasi-realist alternative.

#### 4. *A Sanguine Attempt at Reconciliation*

In the previous section, I have suggested that we shift our focus of attention and emphasis regarding the anti-realist arguments on ontology. Such a shift in the anti-realist strategy may unexpectedly help us persuade the two sides of the debate to sign (grudgingly, I fear) a treaty for metaphysical peace as follows: the realist who wants to hold on to his in-

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<sup>49</sup> One natural construal of Kant’s claim that there cannot be appearance without anything that appears is that what appears to us are actually appearances *of* something that lies behind, and perhaps gives rise to, them. (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxxvi.) Using Armstrong’s terminology, we can state this thought by saying that the second and higher class objects, properties, and states of affairs have to be closely linked, metaphysically speaking, to those of the first.

<sup>50</sup> There are, of course, several ways of understanding the concept of things-in-themselves, and postulating a “noumenal *realm*” is arguably not the best one. According to Henry E. Allison, the distinction Kant draws between noumena and phenomena is meant to signify a difference “between a *consideration* of a thing as it appears and a *consideration* of the same thing as it is in itself . . . . These contrasting ways of considering an object are simply two sides of the same act of transcendental reflection.” (Allison, H. E. (1983). *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*. London: Yale University Press, p. 241.)

itself objects and states of affairs is given that basic metaphysical furniture while the anti-realist is assured that non-omniscient cognitive agents will have nothing (conceptually and epistemically) to do with these noumenal entities in the world they experience and live in. In less fancy language, I am suggesting here that there are alternative ways of formulating the anti-TRist argument and that one which grants the realist the existence of mind-independent objects and properties is likely to come up with an account which accords better with our deep-rooted intuitions about reality. Part of the strength of the realist argument comes, I submit, from the plausible idea that there are objective properties of, and relations between, the things found in the universe. A realist like Armstrong would, of course, go further and maintain that once these universals are admitted as the bases of facts, it becomes difficult to see why linguistic relativity is really an issue for a factual-realist. Conceptual schemes are relevant, the argument goes, solely in the context of the description of those facts, not as having a constitutive role in their formation. And anti-realism is seriously flawed since it fails to do justice to the real properties and relations of objects. I find this intuition understandable although I think TR can hardly be helpful in investigating the actual states of affairs. But it is not very difficult to defang TR on this matter. The realist's reasonable reaction to his opponent's scornful attitude toward the real objects and properties is justified only when it is against the radical anti-realist programs which tend to defend the relativity not merely of conceptual schemes, but also of reality. The Pluralistic Kantian interpretation I favor does not rule out that external (mind-independent) reality comprises structured properties or relations in/between objects. In this sense, there is certainly no need, so far as I can see, for the anti-realist to deny that there are "noumenal occurrences" pertaining to particular things. This means, to put it in a crude manner, that certain occurrences must in fact be taking place in/between objects of the universe even in the absence of subjects who try to understand them. However, such a concession to the TRist does not entail that the truthmakers we confront directly can be individuated in a purely extensional fashion, that is, independently of human cognizers' intensional contribution.

Interestingly, both Pluralistic Kantianism and Tractarian Realism *à la* Armstrong distinguish themselves from the customary correspondence theories which invariably posit truthmaking as an external relation between

the makers and bearers of truth.<sup>51</sup> Such correspondence theories, of course, come with a magical theory of reference which has been among the main targets of Putnam's internal realism. Once that path is abandoned, we can lean toward the idea of an internal relation of truthmaking either within ontology or within conceptual schemes. The former alternative, TR, is evidently an untenable one. The latter, Pluralistic Kantianism, has gradually developed over the last few decades as a serious alternative to customary metaphysical realisms, and it seems to be able to delineate a reasonable ontological basis for the relation of propositional truthmaking.

Therefore, realism regarding the second-class entities—which determine the truth conditions of our truthbearers—is a live option so long as we are not misled about their ontological status. Despite my criticism of TR, I cannot sympathize with Putnam's version of PK. Putnam declares that “our words and life are constrained by a reality not of our own invention,” but goes on to say that it is a “philosophical error” to suppose that “the term ‘reality’ must refer to a single super thing.”<sup>52</sup> In fact, Putnam adds, we constantly “renegotiate our notion of reality as our language and our life develops.” Still, such renegotiations and alterations in our conceptions of reality do not show that the metaphysical realist is guilty of entertaining an absurd idea when she talks about transempirical entities. Furthermore, the mere fact that the truth conditions of our statements cannot be individuated purely extensionally is not a sufficient reason to conclude that the ultimate ontological basis of the truthmaking relation can be done away with via anti-realist maneuvers. Putnam's ambiguous realism, i.e., Pluralistic Kantianism with no noumena, is more accurately characterized as Goodmanianism under the guise of realism and/or Kantianism.<sup>53</sup>

ABSTRACT. This paper aims to describe and defend a Pluralistic Kantian, as opposed to a Tractarian, version of realism vis-à-vis the ontological basis of truthmaking relations. One underlying assumption of my position is that

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<sup>51</sup> For a lucid discussion of internal and external relations see Hymers, M. (2000). *Philosophy and its Epistemic Neuroses*. Boulder: Westview Press.

<sup>52</sup> Putnam, “Sense, Nonsense, and the Senses,” p. 452.

<sup>53</sup> I am indebted to Bruce Hunter, Bernard Linsky, Alexander Rueger, and James Anderson for their comments, criticisms, and suggestions on an earlier version of this paper. I also would like to thank the Killam Foundation for supporting my research.

propositional truth is a robust property and, consequently, is normatively distinct from epistemic justification. Still, it does not follow from this realist contention that truth is generated ontologically, viz., independently of cognitive and intensional contributions of human agents. This point brings my view notably close to H. Putnam's peculiar blend of certain Wittgensteinian and Kantian themes. However, I argue that Putnam's apparent denial of the in-itself reality with an intrinsic structure gives rise to a rather un-Kantian and problematic metaphysical picture. I suggest that the solution to the puzzle may be found in a synthesis of the best intuitions of Armstrong's Tractarian realism and Putnam's quasi-Kantianism.