EPISTEMIC TRUTH VERSUS NON-EPISTEMIC TRUTH: Toward a Revised

Version of  the Correspondence Theory of Truth


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ABSTRACT

Epistemic Truth versus Non-Epistemic Truth: Toward a Revised Version of the

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This thesis defends the idea that truth is a non-epistemic notion that consists in some correspondence relation between our propositions and external reality. Taking into account the criticisms brought to the classical versions of the correspondence theory of truth, I aimed to contribute a new version of the theory developed by Goldman and Alston that avoids these criticisms. In doing that, I first explained the classical correspondence theory and presented these criticisms under the formulation of Inaccessibility of Reality Argument (IRA).

The objection from inaccessibility of reality provided a ground for some philosophers to refute the non-epistemic truth and endorse the epistemic truth instead. An important task of my thesis is to show that the move toward an epistemic account of truth is not justified. I completed this task in two steps. First, I showed that the non-epistemic truth is not inaccessible since we do have some access to external reality and we are able to check whether our propositions correspond to reality. I supported my position by an exposition of Alston's alethic realist account and Goldman's fittingness notion of truth. Second, I presented the difficulties with the epistemic notion of truth and claimed that it does not bring us any closer to truth than the non-epistemic truth does.

ÖZET

"Bilgisel Doğru" "Bilgisel Olmayan Doğru"ya Karşı: Gözden Geçirilmiş Bir Karşılık

Gelme Kuramına Doğru

Deniz Durmuş


Bu tez, doğruluğun, önermelerimiz ve dış dünya arasında bir tür "karşılık gelme" ilişkisine dayanan ve bilgisel (epistemic) olmayan bir kavram olduğunu savunuyor. Tezimde doğruluğu "karşılık gelme" olarak açıklayan kuramın geleneksel versiyonlarını açıklayıp bu versiyonlara getirilen eleştirileri Gerçekliğin Erişilemezliği Argümanı(GEA) çerçevesinde sundum. GEA, pek çok felsefecinin bilgisel olmayan (non-epistemic) doğruluk kuramını reddederek bilgisel doğruluk kuramını benimsemesine dayanak oluşturmuştur. Tezimde gerçekleştirmek istediğim amaçlardan birincisi, gerçekliğe erişimimiz olduğunu göstererek GEA'yı çürütmek ve dolayısıyla bu argümanın bilgisel doğruluk kuramının savunusu için sağlam bir dayanak olamayacağını savlamaktır. Bu amacımı gerçekleştirirken iki felsefecinin doğruluk kuramlarından yararlandım. Bunlardan biri gerçekliğe doğrudan olmasa bile dolaylı bir erişimimiz olduğunu ve dolayısıyla da önermelerimizin gerçekliğe karşılık gelip gelmediğini kontrol edebileceğimizi savunan W. P. Alston'ın *aletik* gerçekçi kuramı; bir diğeri de doğruluğu önermelerimiz ve gerçeklik arasında bir uygunluk ilişkisi olarak açıklayan A. Goldman'ın uygunluk kuramıdır. Tezimdeki ikinci amacım ise, bilgisel doğruluk kuramının sorunlarını tartışarak, bu kuramın bilgisel olmayan doğruluk kuramına oranla avantajlı olmadığını ve iddia edildiği gibi doğruluğu daha erişilebilir kılmadığını göstermektir.

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CONTENTS

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

The revival of interest in the realism-antirealism issue constitutes one of the most important features of current philosophical debate. Questions concerning the ontological status of the world are intermingled with questions concerning the way in which we attain truth. Although in this thesis my main concern is the question of truth, because of the close connection between truth and reality, the discussion will dovetail with a discussion of realism. This thesis defends the idea that truth is a non-epistemic concept that is totally detached from the positive epistemic status of a proposition or belief, such as evidence, justification, warranted assertability etc. I claim that truth is some sort of correspondence between a truth bearer and truth maker. However, there are many versions of the correspondence theory in the literature of epistemology and each version offers a different formulation of what stands for the truth bearer and truth maker. Besides, what type of correspondence relation they are offering also presents diversity. In the first part of my second chapter, I focus on two versions of the traditional correspondence theory -Russell's and Wittgenstein's versions- to which serious objections were made. In the second part, I proceed with one of the most influential arguments against the correspondence theory of truth, which is Inaccessibility of Reality Argument (IRA). My exposition of the argument will be based on Gürol Irzık and Robert Nola's formulation.[1] According to IRA, as it is clearly understood from its name, we have no access to the external reality; and therefore we cannot check the truth of our statements by

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[1] Gürol Irzık & Robert Nola, *Philosophy, Science, Education, and Culture*, (London: Springer, 2005).

comparing them to this reality. That is why, according to this argument, the claim of the correspondence theory that truth is some sort of correspondence between our propositions and external facts is a myth. We are never in a position to compare our propositions to external facts because our perception of external facts is loaded with conceptualization. According to supporters of IRA, this impossibility renders a non-epistemic conception of truth useless as well. Taking support from IRA, some philosophers argued for an epistemic account of truth as the only viable option. By refuting IRA, I aim to eliminate presumably the most important motive behind the move to the epistemic truth. In the third part of this chapter, I give a brief explanation of the epistemic theories of truth. My exposition of epistemic theories is centered on Hilary Putnam's epistemic account of truth. Putnam used to be a defender of the non-epistemic truth in his early periods. His move to epistemic truth as he explicitly states stems from IRA type of reasoning:

> If objects are, at least when you get small enough, or large enough, or theoretical enough, theory dependent then the whole idea of truth's being defined or explained in terms of "correspondence" between items in a language and items in a fixed theory-independent reality has to be given up. The picture I propose instead is … that truth comes to no more than idealized rational acceptability.[2]

Epistemic theories of truth explain truth by making reference to evidence, justification, rational acceptability, warranted assertability, coherence of the set of beliefs or some other positive epistemic status. Non-epistemic theories of truth, on the other hand, regard truth as totally independent of such notions. The truth of a proposition, for a proponent of non-epistemic truth, is not affected by our perceptual, cognitive or evidential limits. The alleged superiority of epistemic theories of truth over non-epistemic ones is based on their capability of making truth more accessible

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[2] Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.41.

to human cognizers. In my thesis, I claim that the origin of this alleged superiority claim is the inaccessibility of reality argument (IRA). If truth consists in some correspondence between our propositions and reality, the inaccessibility of reality brings about inaccessibility of truth as well.

In my thesis, I accept the difficulties with the classical versions of the correspondence theories in terms of the problems in comparing something totally conceptual (our propositions, thoughts, signs, etc.) with something totally unconceptual (mind-independent reality). However, instead of giving up non-epistemic truth and moving toward epistemic truth because of such difficulties, I propose we establish a revised version of correspondence theory that can overcome these difficulties. In the third chapter of my thesis, I explain two projects which emerged in that spirit. One is William Alston's alethic realist account and the other is Alvin Goldman's version of the correspondence theory of truth.

In the first part of the fourth chapter of my thesis, I present various objections to the epistemic conception of truth. Here, while accepting the philosophical importance of having a positive epistemic status for a proposition, I aim to show that the epistemic account of truth cannot be an alternative to the non-epistemic account of truth. I defend the idea that although there is a strong relationship between some positive epistemic status of a proposition and its truth, defining truth in terms of some positive epistemic status a proposition has as epistemic theories do lead to an untenable position. In the last part of this chapter, I present my views on Goldman, Alston and Putnam's positions by discussing their account of truth and reality in relation to IRA. I argue that IRA is not able to present a cogent position in arguing how and why reality is inaccessible to us. I claim that Goldman and Alston provide quite strong and cogent arguments to refute IRA and to

support non-epistemic notions of truth. Drawing on similarities between Putnam's and Goldman's views about reality, I argue that Putnam's ontology can be compatible with the non-epistemic account of truth.

CHAPTER 2

CLASSICAL VERSIONS OF THE CORRESPONDENCE THEORY OF TRUTH

AND THE CRITICISMS

The Correspondence Theory of Truth

The correspondence theory of truth is the most dominant theory which espouses a non-epistemic conception of truth. Besides, it is "the most natural and popular account of truth."[3] Therefore, in my analysis of the concept of non-epistemic truth, I follow an analysis of this theory. According to the most general formulation of the correspondence theory of truth, a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds to reality. Another formulation of the theory suggests that a proposition or a belief is true when it corresponds to a fact in the real world.[4] Lynch refers to the correspondence theory of truth as one form of the realist conception of truth and states the main feature of it as defending the "radically non-epistemic" nature of the concept of truth.[5]

In analyzing some versions of the correspondence theory of truth, there are three elements I shall discuss, because each version has a different referent for these elements. The general claim of the correspondence theory of truth is that a proposition, statement, belief or whatever you take to be the truth bearer is true when it corresponds to some object, fact or simply say to reality. First of all, what the theory takes to be truth bearer is important. In Russell's version of the theory, truth bearers are beliefs. In Wittgenstein's theory, on the other hand, they are propositions.

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[3] Alvin Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.42.
[4] Michael P. Lynch, M., *The Nature of Truth, Classic and Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001), p.9.
[5] Michael P. Lynch, *Truth in Context* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001), p.101.

The second point is what this correspondence relation means and how it takes place. It can occur in a mirroring sense as in the traditional versions of the theory, in a fitting sense as in Goldman's version of the theory or in an isomorphism sense as in Wittgenstein's version of the theory. The third and the last point is about truth makers. There is also some disagreement on what the truth makers, those that render the truth bearers true, are. For example, some philosophers take them to be facts, such as Wittgenstein and Russell.

According to Russell's formulation of the theory in his early periods, truth and falsehood are ascribed to beliefs and they are evaluated in terms of the complex unity the objects of the belief form. When the objects of the belief in reality form a unity in such a way that they represent the same order as they do in one's belief, then the complex unity they form is the fact to which this belief corresponds. For Russell, truth is an external relation that takes place in a mirroring or copying sense in that mind which is copying something outside it that is totally independent of it. In Russell's words:

> A mind, which believes, believes truly when there is a *corresponding* complex not involving the mind, but only its objects. This correspondence ensures truth, and its absence entails falsehood.[6]

As can be understood from the quotation above, the Russellian version of the correspondence theory presupposes our access to an external reality without any noetic interference of our mind. The "*corresponding* complex" he talks about is facts in the external world and we are directly able to detect whether our beliefs correspond to these facts or not.

Wittgenstein's version of the correspondence theory developed in the *Tractatus* is quite similar to the Russellian version in terms of what they take the

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[6] Bertrand Russell, "Truth and Falsehood" In *The Nature of Truth*, ed. Michael P. Lynch (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Pres, 2001), p.23-24.

truth makers to be and how they understand the correspondence relation to take place. Wittgenstein argued for a factual theory of correspondence. The truth bearers are the propositions, and the truth of a proposition depends on its correspondence to a fact in the real world. A proposition is true when the state of affairs it depicts obtains. Our world is made up of facts and these facts are states of affairs. Reality is composed of both the existence and non-existence of states of affairs. In Wittgenstein's words, "We call the existence of states of affairs a positive fact, and their non-existence a negative fact."[7] The correspondence relation in Wittgenstein's version takes place in the sense of isomorphism. According to Wittgenstein, language and reality have the same logical structure. In other words, our propositions represent the same logical properties of the world. The structural identity between language and reality makes possible to determine whether a picture is true or not, because, "In order to tell whether a picture is true or false we must compare it with reality."[8] Although there is a wide controversy on whether *Tractatus* presents a version of the correspondence theory or not for the sake of not disrupting my main topic I will not go into the details of this discussion. However, as it can be clearly understood from my exposition of *Tractatus,* I claim that it does and the version developed in the *Tractatus* is quite similar to Russell's version. These two versions represent the classical form of the correspondence theory to which many objections were brought. Now I will proceed by one of the most penetrative arguments brought to the old versions of the correspondence theory, the inaccessibility of reality argument.

An Argument against Correspondence: The Inaccessibility of Reality Argument

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[7] Ibid, 2.06.
[8] Ibid, 2.223.

The basic claim of IRA in its classic form is that "we cannot check any of our knowledge claims against reality."[9] Two essential explanations of this claim are as follows. The first one is that there are always some intermediaries between us and the external objects that prevent us from seeing external objects directly. The second one is that because of our cognitive functions, what we see is always some type of construction.[10] These explanations bring about the impossibility of comparison with an external object. That is why, the IRA also appeared under the names of *No Comparison Argument* or *No Checking Argument* in the history of philosophy. As Irzık and Nola suggest, IRA is built upon the refutation of some version of the correspondence theory. In their formulation of the argument, Irzık and Nola use the following version of the theory:

"The belief/proposition/statement that p is true if and only if there is something in the world in virtue of which p is true."[11] Being built upon this version of the correspondence theory, the first premise of IRA makes is that in order to determine whether p is true we have to have epistemic access to that thing in the world which makes p true, that is the truth maker. The second premise of IRA is that the first premise is impossible to accomplish because we cannot have epistemic access to the truth maker. From these premises, it concludes that it is not possible to determine that p is true. Usually the claim that we do not have epistemic access to the worldly truth makers refers to a direct or unmediated access. There are two explanations that render such direct or unmediated access impossible. First is that what we, the perceivers, have when we perceive external objects is some kind of a "go-between" such as an idea, impression or representation. They represent, copy, or

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[9] Irzık & Nola, p.12.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid, p.23.

reflect the external object. According to the second interpretation, our perception of external objects is always mediated through some sort of conceptualization and the "go-between" can also be considered as what we perceive through such a conceptualization. Irzık and Nola call this "the-object-as-it-appears-to-us-concept-users".[12] When we try to compare a proposition with a fact, we aim at comparing our impression of the object with the object itself. However, we have no access to the object itself according to IRA. Then what we can do is only to compare our impression of the object with another impression, since we are not in a position to have direct access to the object itself. From this, it follows that "we can never compare our experience of thought with the bare reality; at best we can only compare our experiences or our thoughts, i.e. our "go-betweens", with one another".[13] If that is the case, it becomes obvious that truth in the correspondence sense is inaccessible. Since what we assume to be facts are actually propositions or some sort of go-betweens, when we think that we compare our propositions to some external fact, we in fact compare them to some other propositions. Presenting a discussion between Hempel and Schlick, Alston refers to the arguments against the possibility of comparing a proposition with a fact. According to Hempel, we cannot compare statements with a "reality" or "facts".[14] What we do is compare two propositions instead of comparing a proposition to a fact. When we appeal to perceptual verification to make such a comparison, what we get is another judgment or proposition, not a fact. In Blanshard's words, this "solid fact is a fiction."[15] The line of reasoning that leads to Blanshard's position or IRA is as follows. Firstly, there is always some sort of conceptualization involved in perceptual awareness. Therefore,

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[12] Ibid, p.19.
[13] Ibid, p.21.
[14] William Alston, "A Realist Conception of Truth" In *The Nature of Truth*, ed. Michael P. Lynch (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), p.52.
[15] Brand Blanshard, *The Nature of Thought* (London: George Alen and Ulwin, 1939), p. 228.

perceptual awareness always involves judgments. In other words, it is impossible for us to have perceptual awareness of an object, without judging it to be some object. For instance, what we consider to be a fact such as the fact that there is a table in front of me is actually another judgment and not a fact that makes the proposition "there is a table in front of me" true. In response to this position, Alston argues that even if all our perceptual awareness is propositionally structured and involves judgment, from this we cannot conclude that there is nothing to the perceptual awareness of an object but a judgment. I will provide an extensive discussion of Alston's rejoinder to IRA in the last chapter of my thesis.

IRA immediately reminds us of the "cookie cutter" view of reality. As J. Van Cleve puts it, according to this view of reality, "the content of experience before conceptualization is simply a sheet of homogeneous dough, dough in which no shapes stand out until they have been *stamped* out by the industrious ego."[16] In other words, reality is some kind of amorphous dough, and our concepts play the role of cookie cutters that carve up reality into objects. There are strong objections against this view from some philosophers. Murat Baç points out that taking the content of sense experience before conceptualization as shapeless dough and thinking that we can shape it by our conceptualization in any way is not plausible.[17] In order to support his claim, Baç appeals to animal perception which involves no conceptualization or judgment. Alston gives the example of perception in babies to claim that there is something shaped in perception even though there is no conceptualization.[18] Baç raises an interesting question that shows the implausibility of "cookie cutter" view. He asks "What explains the non-homogeneity of experience

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[16] Murat Baç, "The Ontological Status of Truth Makers: An Alternative to Tractarianism and Metaphysical Anti-Reallism", *Metphysica*, no.2 (2003), p.16.
[17] Ibid, p.16.
[18] William Alston, *A Realist Conception of Truth* (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), p.90.

if it does not come from outside?"[19] It does not seem plausible to think that it is the human cognizers that create the heterogeneities found in perceptual contents. Then there must be a reality which is not amorphous and to which we have some access. I will present a detailed discussion of all these points in the last part of my thesis.

Many philosophers implicitly or explicitly make use of IRA to support their position in defending an epistemic notion of truth. For example, Hempel uses IRA to argue for his coherentist position. According to him, we can only check our propositions via our other propositions. We cannot check them against reality. Hilary Putnam, in defending an epistemic notion of truth, presents a similar position in making use of IRA. Alston attracts our attention to Putnam's presenting epistemic notion of truth as an alternative to non-epistemic truth.[20] Putnam's defense of epistemic truth as the sole alternative originates from his idea that we cannot be in touch with a world that is independent of our conceptualization. In presenting epistemic theories of truth, I will discuss his position in detail. However, since his views have gone under enormous change, I should specify that I will concentrate on his writings where he is seen as a prominent advocate of an epistemic notion of truth. This period refers to late seventies and early eighties. The reason why I chose Putnam in discussing the epistemic notion of truth is that he presents a detailed discussion of epistemic and non-epistemic truth intermingled with discussions of realism. Besides, his views present some similarities to Goldman's views, in spite of the fact that Goldman defends non-epistemic truth and Putnam defends epistemic truth.

Because of the strong support IRA gives to the defenders of epistemic truth, in refuting IRA and defending a non-epistemic notion of truth, it is necessary for me

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[19] Baç, p.17.
[20] Alston, p.184.

to give an account and discussion of epistemic theories of truth. In the following part, I proceed by explaining epistemic theories of truth in order to render my defense of non-epistemic notion of truth more tenable.

CHAPTER 3

EPISTEMIC THEORIES OF TRUTH

Epistemic theories of truth mostly find their ground on IRA. The IRA can be considered an underlying impetus behind many moves toward an epistemic account of truth. If we have no access to bare reality, then claiming that truth consists in a correspondence relation between our propositions and reality would bring no benefit to our epistemic endeavor. Hence, we should look for some other account of truth which can provide us with a more fruitful ground on which we can attain truth. To do this, we should construct a notion of truth that is based on what is in our access. Epistemic theories of truth do this by claiming that a proposition, belief or statement is true if it is justified, warranted, rational, or the like. In other words, epistemic theories of truth define truth without appealing to what is beyond our experience or reach. Hence, it is important to note that their analysis of such notions –justification, warranted assertability, etc. - should not make any reference to non-epistemic notion of truth.

There is a variety of formulations of epistemic theories of truth. The most prominent formulations can be stated as coherence theory of truth and pragmatist theory of truth. Although coherence theory also presents some different versions, generally, we can say that according to this theory of truth, a proposition is true if it is in accord with all the remaining propositions within a belief system. From pragmatist version of the theory, again we can talk about various formulations of epistemic notion of truth. For instance, C. S. Peirce claims that what we mean by truth is "the opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who

investigate".[21] William James, on the other hand, states that "true ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify".[22]

I have already pointed out the vulnerability of correspondence theory of truth to the criticisms which are based on the claims that it is hard to explain how this correspondence relation works and how we are able to detect such a relationship. The most objected feature of the theory is the presupposition of a mind-independent-reality and the relation between the propositions and this mind-independent-reality. Another objection to the theory, which stems from the previous one, is about its rendering truth as something transcendent. Concerning the epistemic status of truth in correspondence theory, truth is "radically non-epistemic". It is totally detached from our evidence, or justification. In Davidson's words, it makes truth "something to which humans can never legitimately aspire."[23] Such shortcomings of the correspondence theory of truth resulted in searching of new theories which offer a conception of truth that is cognizer-dependent. Some philosophers strongly objected to this view and offered an epistemic account of truth that links truth to evidence and hence makes it more accessible for human beings. In other words, these new theories offered a notion of truth that is related to the epistemic conditions of the cognizer. As I stated before, Hilary Putnam is one of those philosophers who rejected the non-epistemic notion of truth. Since Putnam's rejection of non-epistemic conception of truth goes in line with his rejection of metaphysical realism, here I shall explain what Putnam means by metaphysical realism. In *Reason, Truth and History*, Putnam attributes three important characteristics to metaphysical realism. According to this

[21] Charles S.Peirce, "How To Make Our Ideas Clear", *Popular Science Monthly* 12 (January 1878), pp. 286-302. p. 288.
[22] Alston, p.189.
[23] Donald Davidson, "The Structure and Content of Truth", *The Journal of Philosophy*, no.87, (1990) pp. 279-328, p.304.

formulation of metaphysical realism, first, the world is made up of a fixed totality of mind-independent objects. Second, there is exactly one true and complete description of the way the world is.[24] And third is its entailment of some version of the correspondence theory of truth.

Putnam's definition of metaphysical realism is unusual and very broad. We can think of a version of metaphysical realism which only involves the first of the characteristics stated above. Another problem with his definition of metaphysical realism is that he states the second characteristic in a manner as if it necessarily follows from the first characteristic. Putnam is presupposing that if you say that there is a way the world is, then there must be a way in which it can be described. As a defender of metaphysical realism, I believe that one may accept the view that the world is made up of a fixed totality of mind-independent objects, and reject the idea that there is exactly one true and complete description of the way the world is. I commit myself to the first characteristic Putnam states for metaphysical realism, but I do not accept the second one. In my view, the concepts or theories we use in describing the world are contingent. We could have been using drastically different structured languages, concepts, or theories to describe the world. In the same vein, we can reasonably think of other intelligent beings who also do so. Through such cases, we can make sense of the view that there may be many different true descriptions of the way the world is. However, what they describe is the same unique mind-independent reality.

Putnam calls metaphysical realism as he formulates it from an externalist perspective and establishes his internalist perspective in contrast to this position.

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[24] Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History*, p.49.

He defines truth in contradistinction to the definition of truth in external realism as well. In external realism, "the truth of a theory does not consist in its fitting the world as the world presents itself to some observer or observers (…) but in its corresponding to the world as it is in itself".[25]

External realism is an implausible position for Putnam, because it claims for an unmediated relation with a mind-independent reality, a type of relation that would only be available for a god like entity. In other words, this theory favors a "God's eye point of view", that is why, he calls it an *externalist* perspective.[26] For Putnam, we are never in a position to assert the relationship between our mind and the outsider objects independent of a theory or description; hence, there is no way for us to achieve this "God's eye point of view". In order to show the impossibility of mind-independent correspondence between our signs and objects Putnam appeals to his well-known thought experiment which is called "Brains in a Vat".

According to this thought experiment, all of our nerves are connected to a computer and this computer works in such a perfect way that it causes us to feel and experience everything as if we are really going through these experiences and feelings.[27] Putnam states that this argument is self-refuting, because there are no conditions in which we can meaningfully ask whether we are all brains in vat. For Putnam when we are brains in a vat,

> what we now mean by "we are brains in a vat" is that *we are brains in a vat in the image* or something of that kind (if we mean anything at all). But part of the hypothesis that we are brains in a vat is that we aren't brains in a vat in the image (i.e. what we are "hallucinating" isn't that we are brains in a vat). So if we are brains in a vat the sentence "we are brains in a vat"

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[25] Ibid, p.50.
[26] Ibid, p.49.
[27] Ibid, p.5-7.

says something false (if it says anything). In short, if we are brains in a vat, then "We are brains in a vat" is false. So it is (necessarily) false.[28]

If a person is able to think whether "I am brain in a vat" is true or false then it is false; just like the statement "I do not exist". This statement also becomes false as soon as someone utters it. Someone who is brain in a vat does not have a connection to the vat, so she cannot refer to it. What she refers with the words "brain" or "vat" is images. Hence, this hypothesis, Putnam claims, cannot be valid for an internalist position. For the internalist position, it is "only a mere linguistic construction and not a possible world at all."[29]

For the externalist philosopher, on the other hand, it is not that easy to dismiss this argument, because the externalist philosopher accepts a unique correspondence between our signs and mind-independent reality. However, if she is brain in a vat, then logically she cannot have access to such a correspondence relation. The only way to have access to this correspondence relation is to look from God's Eye. Therefore, Putnam claims, Brains in a Vat example presents a serious objection to the classical version of the correspondence theory of truth which assumed that we can have direct access to reality and compare our propositions with facts in the real world. The argument renders an externalist perspective on truth implausible and unintelligible, because we are never in touch with the world, except through our perceptual and cognitive faculties. The way we perceive the world is shaped through our conceptual tools.

> In an internalist view, signs do not intrinsically correspond to objects, independently of how those signs are employed and by whom. But a sign that is actually employed in a particular way by a particular community of users can correspond to particular objects *within the conceptual scheme of those users*. 'Objects' do not exist independently of conceptual schemes.

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[28] Ibid, p.15.
[29] Ibid, p.50.

> We cut up the world into objects when we introduce one or another scheme of description; it is possible to say what matches what.[30]

All these discussions in *Reason, Truth and History* provide a ground for Putnam to establish his internalist notion of truth. For him, the idea of non-epistemic truth presupposes some reference relation to mind-independent reality, which implies a "God's eye point of view". Using Putnam's phrases, only "a magical theory of reference" can succeed in bringing our signs into one-to-one correspondence with mind-independent objects. Since in his formulation, such an external point of view or such a magical theory are never possible, he offers some form of epistemic notion of truth which is formulated in an *internalist* perspective. According to the internalist perspective, we can talk about the objects that constitute the world meaningfully only within a theory or description. Within the context of his internalism, Putnam defines truth as

> some sort of (idealized) rational acceptability – some sort of ideal coherence of our beliefs with each other and with our experiences as those experiences are themselves represented in our belief system – and not correspondence with mind-independent or discourse-independent states of affairs. [31]

Here is another quotation from Putnam where he states the conditions for a proposition to be true: "We speak as if there were such things as epistemically ideal conditions, and we call a statement true if it would be justified under such conditions."[32] Following from this quote, we can formulate Putnamian truth as follows:  P is true if S were in epistemically ideal conditions; S would be justified in believing p under these conditions.

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[30] Ibid, p.52.
[31] Ibid, p.49,50.
[32] Ibid, p.55.

Putnam's point about the impossibility of mind-independent reference should not be understood in the sense that his conception of truth only relates to things that are our creations. His point is rather that our encounter with the world cannot be independent of our conceptualization.

> Internalism does not deny that there are experiential inputs to knowledge, knowledge is not a story with no constraints except internal coherence; but it does deny that there any inputs which are not themselves to some extent shaped by our concepts, by the vocabulary we use to report and describe them, or any inputs which admit of only one description, independent of all conceptual choices.[33]

As can be understood from this quote, the conception of truth Putnam tries to develop covers both objective and subjective elements. The impossibility of mind-independent reference does not leave his account of truth devoid of the effects of external reality. He does not deny the contribution of experiential inputs to knowledge, however, these inputs are not pure; they are "contaminated."    What he means here is that the world is not a ready-made world. We shape the world by our conceptual scheme. At first sight, this sounds like he advocates the view that we create the reality. There are some statements of him which support such an interpretation. For instance, he says that "the mind and the world jointly make up the mind and the world."[34] Such statements make us think that he is an extreme constructivist, however, my interpretation of his ideas in *Reason, Truth, and History* is that what he wants to say is more like that reality appears to us in accordance with the conceptual schemes we have. Therefore, when we change our conceptual tools we encounter a different aspect of reality. Then, reality to which we have access is not static but dynamic and such dynamism is explained with the conceptual schemes we apply in our interactions with it. More precisely, people with different conceptual

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[33] Ibid, p.54.
[34] Ibid, p.xi.

schemes would have access to different aspects of reality. It is our mind which first perceives and then conceptualizes the external objects. In other words, it is our mind which "furnishes" the reality. The reference relation Putnam offers between our words and the external world constitutes the most important divergence point of his internal realism from metaphysical realism as he defines it. As I mentioned before, according to his definition of metaphysical realism, the world has an "exactly one true and complete description."[35] For Putnam, it is unintelligible to talk about such a unique description of the world, because there is no way for us to talk about the reference relation between our words and such a world. Since there is no single description of the world according to him, this reference relation correspondence theory espouses leads to an implausible conclusion. To begin with, Putnam's claim that there is no unique description of the world implies his commitment to a pluralistic ontology. We can explain this pluralistic ontology as the commitment to the view that there are many possible descriptions of the world depending on our conceptual frameworks. In such a case, the reference relation proposed by the correspondence theory becomes problematic. Since "too many correspondences exist"[36], which correspondence relation is the proper one becomes an important question. For Putnam, there is no way of deciding among these relations. This opens the way to the rejection of objectivity in that there is no one single way of describing the world.

The objection he raises against the correspondence theory gives the hint that he accepts the relation of correspondence in his pluralistic ontology. Therefore, I do not see his move from non-epistemic truth to epistemic truth as legitimate. As I mentioned before, Putnam is criticizing the correspondence theory of truth on the

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[35] Ibid, p.49.
[36] Ibid, p.73.

grounds that it is impossible to single out one of these correspondences as the true one. In other words, we cannot choose a correspondence between "our concepts and the supposed noumenal objects without access to the noumenal objects."[37] However, he does not deny that correspondences within conceptual schemes are possible. What he denies is the unique correspondence. He accepts that there may be different conceptual schemes, which fit our experiences, and these schemes may be incompatible. He claims that since truth is not unique correspondence in his view, this does not create a problem for his position.

Alston claims that Putnam's conceptual relativity refers to "surface incompatibilities" of statements, which actually represent the same facts.[38] As an example to "surface incompatibilities", Alston gives two different propositions declaring the temperature, one with Fahrenheit scale and the other with Celcius scale. He states that although they represent the same fact, at surface they seem to be incompatible. These two statements refer to the same reality; however, they are framed within different conceptual schemes. I do not think that Putnam would claim that these two propositions are incompatible even at the surface level. They do not presuppose different ontologies. They just explain the same phenomenon by appealing to different numerical calculations. Therefore, Alston's example does not seem to be a cogent one in refuting Putnam's claim that two theories, which are incompatible, can at the same time be true, since Putnam would not consider these two scales as incompatible.

In order to show that there can be many ways through which we can divide the world into objects Putnam gives an example from mereology.[39] Think of a person in a room in which there is a chair, a table on which there are a lamp and a notebook

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[37] Ibid, p.72-73.
[38] Alston, p.166.
[39] Hilary Putnam, *Representation and Reality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), p. 110.

and a ballpoint pen. Now, suppose we ask this person "How many objects are in this room?" and he answers "Five". Upon this answer, Putnam talks about different parthood relations through which we can conceptualize the objects in this room in various ways and give different answers to this question accordingly. This point does not present a strong counter-argument against the correspondence theory of truth. As Alston states, we can think of many philosophers who proposed drastically different ontologies, and we may not be able to single out one of them as the correct one. For Putnam, this argument refutes the first tenet of metaphysical realism he states; "the world consists of some fixed totality of mind-independent objects." Besides, it shows that facts are dependent on our conceptual schemes. In his words "…*what objects does the world consist of?* is a question that only makes sense to ask *within* a theory or description."[40] In response to Putnam, I want to maintain that these different theories or descriptions can be intertranslatable and hence acceptable to different people who use different theories or descriptions to explain the world. Let us return to the example Putnam gave from mereology. Suppose we ask the same question to another person and he answered "Two". This person took the table and all what is on it as one single object. Now, the first person, who answered "Five", would understand the second person's answer when we explain to him that in this person's conceptualization things that stand in touch in space constitute one single object. Upon this explanation, a realist would also accept the proposition "There are two objects in this room" as true. Alston asks, "Why deny there is a composite entity consisting of my computer, the Taj Mahal and the number 16?"[41] From the fact that what counts as object changes with respect to the conceptual schemes we apply to the reality, we cannot infer that there is no structured mind-independent reality. Here,

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[40] Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*, p.49.  Italics are in the original.
[41] Alston, p.171.

I do not want to trivialize the questions of mereology. They are important philosophical questions, yet in the context of a truth discussion, such questions do not seem to play an important role. There may be more than "one true and complete description of the way the world is." However, there is only one way the world is. The point I want to make is that how we divide the world into objects does not alter the way the world is. Therefore, it has no essential effect on the truth value of our propositions. It may only lead to some "surface incompatibilities".

Another example Putnam gives is from Newtonian physics. In Newtonian physics, there are two ways to explain some physical event. One explanation is in terms of particles acting at a distance and the other is in terms of particles acting on fields. These two different explanations presuppose different ontologies; one accepts the existence of fields and the other does not. Putnam states these two theories as intertranslatable. However, since they postulate different ontologies, they are incompatible. Here we have two correspondence relations; however, there is no way to determine which one is the true one. As in the example above, I do not think that this is a good objection to the correspondence theory of truth. The problem here stems from Putnam's definition of metaphysical realism which I found unusual and broad. As I stated before, for Putnam, one's commitment to the claim that the world is made up of a fixed totality of mind-independent objects brings her commitment to the claim that there is exactly one true and complete description of the way the world is. I have already stated in the last part of my second chapter that I do not commit myself to this second claim, although I accept the first one. In this example, we have two different explanations of the same phenomenon. They postulate different ontologies to explain this phenomenon. The fact that there are two correspondences here does not create a problem for the correspondence theory of truth, because these

two correspondence relations take place in two different conceptualizations of the same phenomenon. A physicist who uses one of these conceptualizations would understand the other conceptualization and accept that the same phenomenon can be explained with (or without) invoking the existence of fields.

The way we conceptualize reality may differ, for example, or we may utter quite different propositions concerning the same aspect of reality. However, there is one reality which can answer these different conceptualizations. Therefore, there are objective answers to the truth value of our propositions, no matter how various the types of conceptualization they are formed in are.

With all these discussions, I aimed to show that I do not see a cogent reason for Putnam to give up non-epistemic conception of truth and hold onto epistemic conception instead. Alston emphasizes Putnam's insistence on taking ontological relativity and an epistemic conception of truth as interconnected. Alston attributes this connection to the effect of the Kantian views on Putnam. Since there is no other way to apprehend reality except through our conceptual activity, we have to give up the idea that truth is some correspondence between our propositions and a mind-independent reality. Nevertheless, there is no reason for Putnam, for not accepting the role of our conceptual activity in our cognizing of the mind-independent world and committing himself to some correspondence relation between our thoughts and the reality as it is conceptualized by us. This is a genuine option for him and I claim that the revised version of the correspondence theory proposed by Goldman would fit Putnam's pluralistic ontology. I will discuss this issue after having explained Goldman's views.

For Putnam, rejecting objectivity does not lead us to hopeless subjectivity. There is still objectivity for us. What he seems to miss is setting the criterion of

attaining truth in a higher level as in the correspondence theory. By doing so, he claims to make truth more "human". The criterion he offers is that a proposition is true if it can be justified under epistemically ideal conditions. The concept of "ideal epistemic situation" Putnam offers for his epistemic conception of truth seems to make Putnam's position closer to the conception of non-epistemic truth. First of all, our epistemic access to such an ideal situation is never guaranteed. Besides, it is not easy to see how we can claim to be in an epistemically ideal situation. These considerations make us question the alleged advantages of the epistemic notion of truth in terms of getting truth closer to us. If that is the case, then the superiority of epistemic theories of truth over non-epistemic theories in terms of making truth more accessible for human beings seems quite objectionable. This objection was already anticipated by Putnam when he stated that "we cannot really attain epistemically ideal conditions"[42] However, Putnam does not see the situation to be hopeless because he believes we can approximate these epistemically ideal conditions although we can never attain them, just as we can approximate a frictionless plane.[43]

I do not think that Putnam's account is successful in overcoming the objections brought to his version of epistemic notion of truth. I will argue for the implausibility of his position and against the position of epistemic theories of truth in general in the last chapter of my thesis. Now, I continue with two revised versions of the correspondence theory of truth, which espouse a non-epistemic conception of truth developed by Goldman and Alston.

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[42] Ibid, p.55.
[43] Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

REVISED VERSIONS OF THE CORRESPONDENCE THEORY

The wide range of discussion on the correspondence theory of truth, especially on the problem of our access to reality, required some revisions on the theory. The subjective elements in our access to reality cannot be ignored. Therefore, a corresponding relation in a mirroring or isomorphism sense as it is claimed by the old versions of the correspondence theory is hard to explain and defend. However, this does not justify the dismissal of the theory. The epistemic theories of truth, which take support from IRA are open to more serious criticisms than the correspondence theory of truth. Taking support from Alston and Goldman, in the following chapter, I will discuss how the correspondence theory can be revised so that IRA would no longer be considered a strong argument against it. First, I will explain Alston's and Goldman's versions of the correspondence theory of truth and then discuss how their versions overcome the difficulties brought by IRA.

Alston's Alethic Realism

Among the recent versions of the correspondence theory of truth, now I will analyze William Alston's version, which he calls *alethic realism*.[44] Alston names his conception of truth realist, because "the truth value of the statement depends on how it is with the world beyond the statement rather than on some feature of the statement itself."[45] He explicitly states that truth value of a statement cannot be attained by looking at its epistemic status; hence, he rejects epistemic theories of truth. What he

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[44] The Greek word 'alethia' means 'truth', and *alethic realism* hence can be translated as realism about truth.

[45] Alston, "A Realist Conception of Truth", p.41.

defends in his theory is propositional truth and he gives an adequate explanation of why he takes propositions as truth bearers. He begins his explanation by giving reasons why sentences are not good candidates of truth bearers. Distinguishing among sentence types and tokens, he states that the same sentence type may be uttered many different times and according to the conditions it was uttered, it may have a different truth value at different situations. Consider the sentence 'It is cold'. If I take this sentence as a sentence type, not only is there a serious problem of 'underdetermination of reference', but also the problem of having an unsteady truth value. These two problems present quite good reasons for not taking sentence types as truth bearers. However, as a solution to these problems, Alston offers that we may assign truth values to sentence types "relative to certain other factors" such as the utterer of the sentence and the time of utterance.[46] Considering these factors in our analysis implies that we want to reach something beyond the sentence, namely what the sentence states under these 'certain other factors'. In Alston's words, "we pick factors that will affect what statement would be made by a particular utterance of the sentence."[47] Hence, we inevitably end up with statements as truth bearers through such an analysis. Another solution he offers is that instead of attributing truth values to sentence types, we may attribute them to sentence tokens. However, the same objection will also apply to sentence tokens in that there is some statement the sentence token expresses. Another candidate of a truth bearer is belief. Belief and statement are good candidates of a truth bearer, yet they present some ambiguity. He mentions two senses of statement and belief that may come to mind. For a statement, these senses are "the *act* of stating, and *what is stated*, the *content* of the statement", and for a belief, they are "the *psychological state* of believing something, and *what is*

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[46] Ibid, p.44.
[47] Ibid.

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*believed*, the *content* of the belief."[48] In order to overcome this ambiguity, Alston presents propositions as the 'most fundamental bearers of truth values' in that they are the contents of statements and beliefs. Therefore, it is better to give up sentences, statements and beliefs as truth bearers and hold onto propositions instead.

Alston explains his realist conception of truth by appealing to a T-schema. The schema he offers is as follows:

(1) The proposition that *p* is true iff *p*.

He develops this T-schema and states that:

(2) It is a necessary, conceptual, analytic truth that with (*p*) the proposition that *p* is true iff *p*.

(3) Any substitution instance of (1) is a necessary, conceptual, analytic truth.

When we grasp what (2) and (3) want to say, we immediately understand the realist conception of truth according to Alston. He makes a distinction between the concept of something and the property of something. Although we may have an adequate understanding of the concept of something, we may fail to specify what property it has. He applies this distinction to truth and claims that his T-schema represents to us what the concept of truth is, yet remains silent about whether his account is sufficient in spelling out the property of truth. Upon further investigation, he claims, some "additional features of what truth is, what the property is whose possession makes a proposition true"[49] may change. Although he accepts the fact that what it takes for a proposition to be true in a realist theory of truth, or in his words,

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[48] Ibid, p.44.
[49] Ibid, p.50.

"finding the right kind of match", is possible with an ongoing inquiry, in explaining the property of truth in his account, he commits himself to a correspondence relation with a fact. Reading the proposition *snow is white iff snow is white* as implying that this proposition is rendered true by the *fact* that snow is white is quite commonsensical and reasonable. He calls this version of the theory as "a minimalist form of a correspondence theory" and formulates it in his T-schema as follows:[50]

(4) (*p*) the proposition that *p* is true if it is a fact that *p*.

Alston admits that his T-schema is not able to explain how the correspondence relation between a proposition and a fact takes place. Hence, he calls it an inchoate form of correspondence theory. When we somehow come to the conclusion that a fact obtains, we can claim that there is a correspondence relation between the proposition and the fact it talks about. This is the only condition he offers, and it is not a strict one, because he does not specify definite ways through which we come to know if a fact obtains.

The main objection to the non-epistemic conception of truth as I mentioned before is that it makes truth something transcendent of human beings. Alston puts this objection as "what it takes to tell whether a given proposition is true" is impossible on a realist conception of truth.[51] Among many different versions of this objection, the most widely used one is that it is an impossible task to compare a proposition with a fact. Alston quotes Hempel, Davidson and Williams to present some versions of this objection.[52] All these objections are based on the idea that we cannot compare a proposition and a fact. Alston's rejoinder to this objection comes

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[50] Ibid, p.51.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid, p.52.

with a distinction between *direct* and *indirect* awareness of facts. By *direct* awareness, he means our unmediated access to external reality, a position which was strongly criticized by Richard Rorty. In *direct* awareness, there is the presupposition that we are conscious of facts and their relations to propositions. In Rorty's words, this position presupposes the idea that our mind mirrors nature. In order to deal with this objection, Alston offers that we do not have to assume *direct* awareness of facts. *Indirect* awareness of facts, on the other hand, does not require our mind to mirror nature. We may somehow *indirectly* come to the conclusion that a fact is obtained. In response to this objection, Alston appeals to a discussion developed by Schlick and Blanshard.[53]  Schlick argues that we can compare a proposition with a fact on the basis of our perceptual verification. Blanshard opposes this claim by arguing that there is no "solid fact" to compare with our propositions, or judgments.  What is taken as fact here, according to him is another judgment or set of judgments. The main argument grounding his claim is that perceptual awareness of objects is conceptually structured and it involves judgment. In response to Blanshard, Alston states that even if all perceptual awareness is conceptually structured and it involves judgment, it does not mean that "there is nothing to the perceptual awareness of" but a judgment.[54] There is something in the external world that the judgment is about whether we have *direct* or *indirect* awareness of it. The point Alston wants to make here is that what is important for us is to come up with whether the fact in question is obtained or not. If that is our main concern, we should not be worried about how we come to know if it is obtained or not. We may come to know this by direct or indirect perception. Why should we commit ourselves to a *direct* awareness of fact in explaining the correspondence relation takes place between a proposition and a fact?

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[53] Ibid, p.54.
[54] Ibid.

Alston states infallibility and indubitability as two characteristics attributed to direct awareness. Nevertheless, he claims that we can think of other options such as fallible and dubitable direct awareness of facts or indirect awareness of facts. To illustrate how we can have knowledge of facts by indirect awareness, he mentions two methods; inductive derivation and inference to the best explanation. If we come to the conclusion that a fact is obtained by such methods, this would be enough to assert that our proposition corresponds to reality. This would save the theory from such objections brought to indirect awareness of facts, while allowing us to retain our realist notion of truth.

## Goldman's Version of Correspondence Theory

Alvin Goldman's position on truth is very similar to that of Alston. Truth for Goldman is not only a condition of knowing but also "a critical element in two dimensions of epistemic appraisal, namely, 'justification' and 'intelligence'."[55] First of all, the notion of truth he endorses is a realistic one. Goldman develops his discussion of truth and realism on Dummett's formulation of realism:

> The very minimum that realism can be held to involve is that statements in the given class relate to some reality that exists independently of our knowledge of it, in such a way that reality renders each statement in the class determinately true or false, again independently of whether we know, or are even able to discover, its truth-value.[56]

An important aspect of this formulation according to Goldman is the principle of verification-transcendent truth. Verification-transcendence of truth means that a proposition's truth or falsity is not dependent on our means of verifying it. We can

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[55] Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, p.142.
[56] Ibid, p.142-143.

make sense of the existence of some propositions which are true even though we are not able to verify them. When we approach the issue from this perspective, it becomes clear that there is a strong distinction between a proposition being true and its being verified. This is tantamount to saying that truth is not an epistemic concept.

According to Goldman, epistemology is "a discipline that evaluates intellectual practices along truth-linked (veritistic) dimensions".[57] Goldman discusses the differences between the correspondence and deflationary theories of truths and takes the side of the correspondence theory of truth. He labels his theory as a descriptive success theory, because according to him "calling a belief true is very much like saying that a goal is fulfilled or that a plan is executed."[58] He states the condition of truth in his descriptive success (DS) theory- as follows:

> (DS) An item X (a proposition, a sentence, a belief, etc.) is true if and only if X is descriptively successful, that is, X purports to describe reality and its content fits reality.[59]

In Goldman's conception of the correspondence theory of truth, truth obtains when a truth bearer stands in an appropriate correspondence relation to a truth maker. An adequate theory of truth must be addressing truth makers within the world. Truth makers for him are "worldly entities of some sort that make propositions or other truth bearers true" and they do not need to be "a unique category of objects."[60] More precisely, truth makers can be facts or relations among abstract entities. He defines the term 'fact' in a broad sense as some real state of affairs in the world, a way the world actually is. The only criterion he demands is that what makes a proposition true must be part of reality.

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[57] Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World,* p.69.
[58] Ibid, p.60.
[59] Ibid, p.59.
[60] Ibid, p.61-62.

The truth of a proposition has nothing to do with our capability of determining that it is true. Although we are able to tell whether a proposition is true or false by appealing to evidence, justification and warrant, it is reality that makes a proposition true or false. If we have the proposition snow is white, then, if the snow is actually white, the correspondence relation holds between the proposition and snow being white.

Goldman favors his version of the correspondence theory against deflationary theories of truth. Michael Lynch, in the 'Introduction' of *The Nature of Truth*, classifies truth theories in two branches, one is robust theories and the other is deflationary theories. According to this classification, robust theories take truth to have a nature, while deflationary theories do not. Among the robust theories of truth, correspondence theories take truth as a relation between the mind and the world.[61] He states that contrary to deflationary theories, his theory is able to give an account of the role of reality in determining truth. He explains this case as follows:

> Deflationalism is deliberately silent about reality-based truth-makers. It is precisely intended to give the meaning of 'true' without invoking any sort of relation to a truth maker. This conflicts with the meaning that (DS) attaches to 'true'.[62]

Goldman's version of the correspondence theory differs from the *Tractarian* version according to which "the world comes prefabricated in terms of categories or kinds."[63] According to the *Tractarian* version of the theory, as I explained before, the world is composed of facts and the truth of a proposition is determined by its correspondence

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[61] Lynch, *The Nature of Truth*, p.4.
[62] Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World*, p.64.
[63] Alvin Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), p.151.

to some fact in the world. This version is the one that was objected to by Putnam and Goodman on the grounds that these categories or kinds that are said to prefabricate the world are already products of an intellectual activity. It is crucial to emphasize the Kantian elements in this objection. The departure point of this objection is the Kantian idea that we do not have direct access to the world or objects in it. In other words, it is our mind that categorizes the objects of the world; hence we do have access to these objects within the scope of our categorization. In Goldman's words, "it is the mind's noetic activity, or the establishment of linguistic convention, that produces categories and categorical systems."[64] This is the rejection of the version of the correspondence theory of truth that puts correspondence relation as "thought or language mirroring the world."[65] Goldman gives credit to this objection and detaches his position from this version of correspondence. Instead, he develops a new version of the correspondence theory according to which the correspondence relation between the world and our propositions takes place in a relation of *fittingness*.[66] This version is superior to the previous one because although it keeps the "basic realist intuition that what makes a proposition or statement true is the way the world is"[67], it at the same time includes the cognitive and linguistic tools and limits of the epistemic agent in the picture.

This fitting relation is explained by Goldman through a sartorial analogy. There are many different clothes which fit different parts of one's body, and the fittingness condition is strongly dependent on the person's body and its parts. According to this formulation of the theory:

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[64] Ibid, p.152.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

> which truth conditions must be satisfied is not determined by the world. Conditions of truth are laid down not by the world, but only by thinkers or speakers. This is the sense in which the world is not precategorized, and in which truth does not consist in mirroring of a pre-categorized world.[68]

According to this analogy, just as we can talk about many different clothes or things for some part of the human body, in the same way, we can think of "indefinitely many categories, principles of classification, and propositional forms that might be used to describe the world."[69] From these words of Goldman, we understand that the version of the correspondence theory he offers does not totally rely on an unclassified, or *in itself* reality. The correspondence relationship according to this version of the theory "begins with the unconceptualized world but terminates in a conceptualization"[70] of the cognizer. It is this view of Goldman that differentiates his position from that of the defenders of the classical version of the correspondence theory such as Wittgenstein and Russsell.

When we think of the human body, we see that it has many different parts with different shapes. In accordance with the variously shaped parts, we human beings invented a variety of clothes. However, the fact that human body has definitely shaped distinct parts does not necessitate that each part be covered by a unique type of garment. We can certainly talk about many different garments that fit a specific part of a body. For instance, there are various types of footwear such as shoes, slippers and sandals. There are also many different specific tokens of any of these garment types. We try and choose among them by checking whether they fit our feet or not. The foot shape of a specific person is the most important factor that will determine the fittingness. In this analogy, the specific tokens of some garment type are analogous to our truth-bearers such as beliefs, propositions or statements.

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[68] Ibid, p.153.
[69] Ibid, p.152.
[70] Ibid, p.154.

The specific parts of the human body, on the other hand, are analogous to the actual world which has its own shape independent of human conceptualization. How we think and talk about the world depends on human creativity, intelligence and many other factors just as inventing new types of garments do. Our language, cognitive capacities and many other contingent factors play a role in determining what kind of propositions we utter. Whether a specific token of some garment type fits some bodily part depends on the peculiarities of that person's bodily part. In the same vein, although we create the propositions we utter, whether a proposition fits reality depends on the external reality. Now we can clearly see the point Goldman wants to make with his sartorial analogy. There is a wearer independent of the clothes –that is the reality- "clothes don't make the world."[71]

Goldman argues that his version of the correspondence theory does not espouse the copy idea of reality and it does not claim that "true thoughts must resemble the world."[72] Therefore, he continues, the activity of assigning truth values to propositions does not involve comparison. What Goldman wants to emphasize here is that his version neutralizes one of the most prominent objections made to classical correspondence theories, which is the impossibility of comparison between a truth bearer and truth maker. In other words, his version of fittingness cannot be objected because of the problem of comparing something conceptual with something unconceptual. Therefore, by removing this condition of comparison from his account of correspondence theory, Goldman overcomes an important difficulty of classical correspondence theories. However, how we check whether our propositions fit reality or not is an immediate question that comes to one's mind. Goldman envisages such an objection, and he asks "If the realist's world is unconceptualized, how can it

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[71] Ibid, p.154.
[72] Ibid.

be grasped or encountered in a manner to determine fittingness?"[73] In his rejoinder to this objection, he does accept that we have some grasp of the unconceptualized reality. Our perceptual activities are the best proof showing that we have an encounter with the unconceptualized world. When we take the relation of correspondence between a proposition and a fact in a fittingness sense, we check whether a proposition fits reality or not without necessarily getting in touch with the "naked" mind-independent reality. Considering the analogy Goldman suggests, in order to determine whether the garment in question fits one's body or not, we try this garment on that bodily part. Nevertheless, we do not need to encounter that bodily part in its naked state. More precisely, when we check whether some garment fits the body part in question, we, in some sense, get in touch with the mind-independent reality, albeit in a dressed (not naked) form. This discussion reminds us of Alston's distinction between *direct* and *indirect* awareness of facts. I think Goldman and Alston are making the same point to overcome the difficulty created by the claim of classical correspondence theories; that is, comparison of propositions with mind-independent reality. They both try to show the fact that we do not have direct access to the mind-independent reality in its naked state does not render impossible to check our propositions against this reality. Considering the issue in Goldman's sartorial analogy, we do not have to have a direct awareness of the body parts in order to tell whether our garments fit them or not.

There seems to be a tension in Goldman's views concerning the ontological status of external reality. We can see this tension in the analogy he suggests as well. What is confusing in his analogy is whether he takes the body as analogous to mind-independent reality or mind-dependent reality. From some parts of his writings, it is

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[73] Ibid, p.154.

possible to conclude that the body is analogous to the mind-dependent world. He explicitly states that the world he talks about is not a "noumenal object." [74] However, sometimes, as I explained above, he claims that what we come across in our perceptual activities is the unconceptualized world. This makes us think that in his analogy, body is analogous to the mind-independent reality. Goldman does not seem clear at this point. He seems to fluctuate between these two options. If he takes the body to be analogous to the mind-dependent reality, then he would come close to an anti-realist position. As a realist, this is certainly not the position Goldman wants to hold. If he takes the body to be analogous to the mind-independent world, then his position would no longer be different from classical correspondence theories. Remember, I previously stated that Goldman is not happy with these old versions of the correspondence theory and this is the prime motivation that drives him to construct a revised version of the correspondence theory. Goldman merits his theory based on a metaphor on the grounds that this metaphor includes an analogy to "the categorizing and statement creating activity of the cognizer-speaker."[75] Here he is talking about garments which are analogous to truth-bearers. Truth-bearers are created as a result of human noetic activity. This first merit of his theory shows us how important it is for Goldman to include the role of this noetic activity in truth making. This emphasis of him refers to the aspect of his theory that differentiates it from the classical versions of the correspondence theory. The second merit of his theory is that it presents a realist stance, because in his theory, a proposition is rendered true by "the way the world is."[76] I think what Goldman refers to by the words "the way the world is" is a mind-independent reality. Such a position would also be consistent with his claim that we do have an encounter with the

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[74] Ibid, p.154.
[75] Ibid, p.152.
[76] Ibid, p.152.

unconceptualized world. I think while holding onto a mind-independent reality in his fittingness version, Goldman would still distance his position from classical correspondence theories. Contrary to classical correspondence theories, in Goldman's version, as a result of our encounter with the unconceptualized world, we end up with a conceptualized world, not with a copy of the mind-independent world.[77] What Goldman refers to when he is talking about the body is mind-independent reality, and it has an intelligible structure. However, there are many ways through which we can make sense of or have access to this mind-independent reality depending on our conceptualization. This mind-independent reality admits more than one true description or theory. There are no determinate facts to which our propositions correspond in the mind-independent reality. We can talk about different facts about the same object or event depending on the theory through which we have access to the mind-independent world. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we create facts. Considering Goldman's analogy, let us take two differently designed gloves. These two different gloves are analogous to two different ways of conceptualizating reality or two different theories. Suppose one of these gloves covers the hand as a whole and ends at the beginning of the wrist. The other glove, on the other hand, leaves half of the fingers open and ends at the elbow. Here these two different gloves fit the same hand. There are two facts of the same object which these two different gloves refer to. Likewise, two different theories can emphasize or shape different facts about the same object. This is the difference of Goldman's position from classical correspondence theories.

I believe that Goldman's theory is promising when interpreted in this manner. In my opinion, there is one reality and it is mind-independent in the sense that in

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[77] Ibid, p.154.

absence of all minds, it would still stand as it is. However, when human beings get into the picture, I see it unavoidable to accept that our relation to such a reality involves some sort of conceptualization. It is human beings who create language, concepts and so on. Through these constructions, we utter sentences, propositions and acquire beliefs. If there were no human beings, then there would not be propositions, beliefs, or truth values to be questioned. This constitutes the role of the human cognizer within a correspondence relation. Human beings form truth bearers within the scope of their cognitive, conceptual and linguistic capacities. However, the truth value of these truth bearers depends totally on mind-independent reality.

Holding onto a non-epistemic notion of truth does not make Goldman underestimate the role of justification in our epistemic practices. In his account, the truth of a proposition or a belief is evaluated by the reliability of the process in which it is formed. In Goldman's version of the correspondence theory, reliability is defined as truth-conduciveness. A process is reliable if it is more likely to lead true beliefs rather than false ones. The reliable historical causal chain that leads us to form a belief stands for justification of that belief as well. In other words, the same process also accounts for the justification of that proposition or belief. Hence, it seems that there is a strong connection between the truth of a belief and justification of it. To make more explicit the close relation between truth and justification within Goldman's theory, I will present the issue from another perspective. In his theory of justified belief, whether a belief is justified or not is determined by its being formed through a reliable process. A belief is justified if it is formed through a process which produces true beliefs more than false ones. From this analysis, it can be concluded that although justification does play a crucial role in Goldman's truth theory, its value and role stems from its truth-conducivity.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS OF EPISTEMIC AND NON-EPISTEMIC TRUTH

Taking support from these theories of Goldman and Alston, I argue for a non-epistemic notion of truth that consists in correspondence between a proposition and reality. A thesis that defends the non-epistemic notion of truth has to refute the rival options to the non-epistemic truth. Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, I discuss the general objections given to the epistemic notion of truth in detail so that I can show the implausible position it leaves us with. The second and last part of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of all the issues in the thesis from my point of view.

Objections to the Epistemic Conception of Truth

The debate between epistemic and non-epistemic theories of truth makes one point clear, that is the link between justification and truth. Most philosophers would agree on the claim that the reason why justification is valuable for epistemology is that justification reasonably is considered to be a clue for the truth of a proposition.[78] As Alston puts it, a belief's being formed in a 'truth conducive way' is a necessary condition of a person's being justified in believing some proposition.[79] However, there is more to truth than justification. I claim that although being justified increases our chance to get to know whether a proposition is true or false, it never assures us about the truth of a proposition. The gist of my objection to the epistemic conception

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[78] There are some epistemologists who offer detaching the concept of justification from its truth conducivity. Instead, some develop a deontological concept of justificaiton and some others offer an epistemic rationality principle. For a more detailed discussion of this subject, see Alston, 1996.
[79] William Alston, "The Deontological Conception of Epistemic Justification", *Epistemic Justification*, (1989), pp.115-152, p.143.

of truth stems from this claim. I do understand and share these philosophers' concerns to some extent in that making truth accessible to human beings seems to be a plausible project to pursue for philosophy. However, I do not agree with these philosophers in that this can be done by holding onto an epistemic notion of truth and defining truth through justification, assertability or the like concepts. As I stated before, I argue that justification acquires its value through the degree it leads us to true belief. An epistemic agent is interested in justifying her beliefs because she knows that the stronger justification she has for her belief, the more likely it is that her belief is true. There are some cases in which we do have really strong justification in believing a proposition, yet after a while we come to know that the proposition in question is false. I cannot think of any reasonable epistemic agent who insists in believing a truth (or falsity) of a proposition even though she has learned that it was false (or true), because of the strong justification she previously had. Another way to put it, the justification she had is now lost. When a proposition coheres with my set of beliefs and if I have good evidence to believe that proposition, this would be a good indicator that this proposition corresponds to reality. Justification is valuable in our epistemic practices, because it increases our probability of getting at truth of a proposition. However, it never guarantees its truth.

In constructing an epistemic theory of truth, a philosopher needs to be careful about the implausible conclusions her theory may lead to. This problem that justification can be lost is a serious one that may considerably diminish the plausibility of epistemic theories of truth. Nevertheless, my aim is not to discard the role of justification or consensus reached upon through justificational practices in claiming for truth. Not only in social and political philosophy, but also in

epistemology, these concepts do play an important role. However, they do not provide us with a plausible ground to construct a theory of truth.

Because of this problem (some proposition may turn out to have a different truth value after acquiring further evidence), in equating truth with justification, most philosophers do not consider the current justificational practices in constructing their epistemic theories of truth. They take justificational practices in a wider sense. One philosopher who endorsed such a conception of justification is Hilary Putnam. Putnam states the implausibility of identifying truth with rational acceptability, because truth of a statement cannot change in time, whereas justification can.[80] Because of these reasons, Putnam states the condition for a statement being true as being justifiable under "epistemically ideal conditions."[81] Another example is Charles Peirce who advocated the view that if the research is carried long enough, the members of a scientific community would all agree upon the truth of the statement in question.[82] In his words, "The opinion which is *fated* to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by truth."[83] I have some difficulty in interpreting these claims. The question is how to understand the phrases "ideal epistemic conditions" and "sufficiency of the longevity of the research". They seem to refer to some possible situation that may or may not be attained by human beings. For Peirce's formulation of truth, Goldman argues that even if all the intelligent beings investigate some phenomena and agree upon some belief about it as true, yet still they may be mistaken.[84] Then we can think of situations where the alleged mission of epistemic theories of truth, making truth more accessible, is not achieved. Suppose there is a planet in the universe which is quite similar to our planet and in

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[80] Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*, p.55.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World*, p.12.
[83] Ibid, italics are mine.
[84] Ibid.

which human beings live. Suppose we will never have the necessary technological equipment to discover the existence of this planet. In Peirce's terms, indeed we are fated to agree on the existence of this planet, if we had lived in a more developed or perfectly developed scientific community, yet we may never reach that level and we may have no access to this piece of knowledge.

I would like to appeal to an example Goldman presents in order to make clear the implausibility of an epistemic conception of truth. Goldman asks us to think of ourselves as being accused of a horrible crime which in fact was committed by someone else. However, no one else knows this and all the available evidence points to you as the criminal. To show the seriousness of the situation, Goldman develops the example further, and adds that the real criminal has died and you have a slight motive the commit this crime. Under these circumstances, it seems nearly impossible for you to make someone believe that you did not commit this crime. When we commit ourselves to an epistemic notion of truth, we bind the truth to evidence and as the example above explicitly states, this is a very dangerous mistake. I argue that the epistemic notion of truth is contrary to our commonsensical understanding of truth as well. We have all heard many juridical cases in which there was quite good evidence for the guiltiness of an innocent person who had been jailed, yet after many years, it was discovered that she was in fact innocent. As Goldman puts it, "any innocent person accused of a crime surely wants the *real* truth to emerge; and the real truth is all that is normally meant by 'true'."[85] Putnam would strongly react to such an example to refute that truth cannot be an epistemic concept. He would say that in the scope of his epistemic conception of truth, she would not be considered guilty, because under "idealized" conditions, no one would believe that she was guilty. Here

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[85] Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, p.18.

again the problem about Putnam's "idealized" conditions becomes apparent. How are we going to attain the "idealized" conditions to reach the truth? What epistemological advantage will this epistemic conception of truth bring us in terms of reaching the truth, if there is no way to answer the previous question?

This example also supports Goldman's rejection of the consensus theory of truth. I would like to develop the example further to show how it does so. Suppose that the person who is accused of this crime somehow comes to believe that she in fact committed the crime and accepts the accusation. Now everyone, including the innocent person, reasonably believes that she committed the crime. However, as it can be seen in this example, even if all members of a community agree on the truth of a proposition and they do have conclusive evidence, the proposition in fact may be false. As Goldman states "not only does the truth of a proposition not require total consensus, it does not require anybody at all to believe it."[86] Although in forming our beliefs we do take into consideration the consensus of others, the real goal is true belief rather than agreement, especially when the goals are purely intellectual.[87] I totally agree with Goldman that under normal circumstances, agreement can be taken as a sign of plausible epistemic practice or even truth. Yet, agreement is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition of them; it never guarantees truth. We come to believe a proposition, because we believe that it is true, but we may well be mistaken about our belief.

This brings us to another important discussion about truth, namely the problem of unknowable facts. Russell makes this point by asking "what can be meant

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[86] Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World*, p.12.
[87] Ibid, p.71.

by truth when the verifying fact is experienced by no one."[88] Russell thinks that it is intelligible to talk about some facts that we cannot imagine at the time being.

> I mean by a fact something which is there, whether anybody thinks so, or not. (…) Most facts are independent of our volitions; that is why they are called 'hard', 'stubborn', or 'ineluctable.' Physical facts, for the most part, are independent, not only of our volitions but even of our existence.[89]

There may be some species of animals which live in some part of the world, yet we may have never seen and will never see them. In such a case, can we talk about the truth of a proposition which asserts the existence of such animals? Obviously we can. Although there is no one who had or will have access to the truth of this proposition, as soon as someone utters it, it will have a truth value. This proves that even if there is no single person believing in some proposition, we can imagine the hypothetical situation that if it were believed, it would be true or false.

Alston formulates some objections to epistemic conceptions of truth in his article "A Realist Conception of Truth." One argument he develops seems to be directed at the Putnamian version of epistemic truth. It is based on the idea that we cannot equate truth with ideal justifiability in that these terms are not coextensive. We may well think of propositions which are true but not ideally justifiable, and in the same way, we can think of some propositions which are ideally justifiable but not true. In supporting his argument Alston explains the reasons why we are not able to have access to all facts of the world. First of all, our cognitive capacities are limited and it is highly likely that "there are facts that will forever lie beyond us just because of these limitations."[90] Another reason that creates an obstacle to our access to some facts of the world is our "particularity". The departure point of this claim is that our cognitive design would have been quite different from how it is now. Following this

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[88] Russell, "Truth and Falsehood", p.152.
[89] Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1948), p.143.
[90] Alston, "A Realist Conception of Truth", p.58.

line of reasoning, we may conclude that there may be or could be cognitive subjects with drastically different perceptual capabilities and cognitive structures. It is quite reasonable to think that these subjects would have access to different facts that we are not aware of. As Alston puts it, "all these strongly suggest that there are facts accessible to cognizers with radically different hardware and software but totally inaccessible to us."[91]

Remember my discussion above where I suggested different readings of concepts such as ideal justifiability, being fated to agree on the truth value of some proposition, etc. Alston also makes a similar point in formulating a possible reply to this objection. He offers taking the ideal justifiability condition to generally include cognitive subjects, that is to say, both actual and possible cognitive subjects we can think of. Although widening the scope of the ideal justifiability condition would eliminate the objection, it would, at the same time, "take much of the sting out of the ideal justifiability condition."[92] Remembering the motives for holding onto an epistemic notion of truth are in fact "anthropocentric", it would not make much sense to remove this anthropocentric dimension and make truth transcendent, because the aim of these theories was already to make truth more accessible to mere human beings. As I argued in my previous discussion, such an understanding of ideal justifiability condition would bring the allegedly epistemic theory of truth closer to a non-epistemic theory of truth. Therefore, for the sake of being loyal to the main desiderata of the epistemic theories of truth centered on the "finite cognitive subject", it seems that a proponent of epistemic conception of truth cannot take the notion of a cognitive subject to range over both actual and possible subjects. This would be

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[91] Ibid, p.59.
[92] Ibid.

similar to bringing "an omniscient being" into the picture, and such a position "would lack the antirealist bite it is designed to have."[93] It seems that there is no way of escaping such objections for defenders of the epistemic truth except getting closer to a realist notion of non-epistemic truth. The question that must be posed to an advocate of epistemic notion of truth would be as follows: What extra benefit or improvement would such an epistemic account of truth bring to our project, if we are not able to detect whether we reached or ever be able to reach the epistemically ideal conditions? It does not seem to me that the opponent of epistemic truth has much to say in response to such a question.

As the discussion above makes it clear, how to understand the epistemic component involved in the epistemic account of truth is a crucial point in evaluating these theories. Although we combine all epistemic theories of truth under one heading, they represent divergences among each other. Goldman refers to these divergences on the grounds of the degree of epistemic component required. For example, C. S. Peirce's pragmatist approach presents an example of a weak epistemic component. According to his account, truth is the opinion which is ultimately going to be agreed "by all who investigate."[94]  As a strong epistemic component, he formulates the following condition: "All of us have conclusive evidence for p." This is clearly a very strong condition that can hardly be met by any proposition. Consider the example he gives that "it could certainly be true that Julius Caesar had a mole on the nape of his neck although it is false that all of us now have conclusive evidence for this."[95] When we take the strong epistemic component, it seems that we can never attain such knowledge. From this discussion, we may

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[93] Ibid, p.59.
[94] Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, p.145.
[95] Ibid, p.146.

conclude that an epistemic theory of truth with a weak epistemic component becomes a weak epistemic theory in that it does not meet the basic requirement of an epistemic theory anymore, which is making truth more accessible to human beings.

Another objection Alston directs at equating truth with ideal justifiability is that the concept of ideal justifiability involves the concept of truth. For most epistemologists, if some epistemic agent is justified in believing some proposition, her justification is expected to "make the belief likely to be true."[96] Laurence Bonjour's explication of the situation is very clear:

> If our standards of epistemic justification are appropriately chosen, bringing it about that our beliefs are epistemically justified will also tend to bring it about (…) that they are true. If epistemic justification were not conducive to truth in this way, if finding epistemically justified beliefs did not substantially increase the likelihood of finding true ones, then epistemic justification would be irrelevant to our main cognitive goal and of dubious worth.[97]

When we examine the difference between being epistemically justified under ideal conditions and under normal conditions, we can better grasp the point Bonjour wants to make. As Alston puts it, the difference lies on the truth conductivity of these two situations. We expect justification under ideal conditions to be more likely to produce truth than under normal circumstances. This involves some circularity, because the notion of justification already includes the notion of truth. Goldman also mentions the problem of circularity concerning the definition of epistemically ideal conditions and asks if there is an alternative way of making this definition without presupposing a non-epistemic notion of truth.[98] Previously, I argued for a strong relation between justification and truth. The relation I advocated is implicit in

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[96] Alston, "A Realist Conception of Truth", p.60.
[97] Laurence Bonjour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), p.7-8.
[98] Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, p.147.

Goldman's circularity objection to the epistemic notion of truth. Following the same line of reasoning with Goldman, I argue that justification is epistemically valuable in that we believe that it directs us toward truth. Being justified under ideal conditions implies for a proposition to be more likely to be true than being justified under normal conditions.

The last objection both Goldman and Alston directs at the epistemic notion of truth is about our access to evidence that makes us justified in believing some proposition. Alston argues that possession of evidence implies the idea of possession of facts. To be in possession of facts means to have knowledge of these facts; and to have knowledge of facts involves the concept of truth. That is why, defining truth in terms of justification leads to circularity.

## In Defense of Non-Epistemic Truth

The pragmatist endeavor to "humanize" truth by equating it with epistemic notions such as ideal justifiability, or warranted assertability does not improve our epistemological project of giving an account of truth. I accept the problems of the transcendental character of traditional conception of truth, which is "radically non-epistemic", however, I do not agree with pragmatist philosophers such as Putnam that we should abandon the notion of non-epistemic truth. Instead, what is needed is to develop a revised version of the correspondence theory that can deal with the inaccessibility problem by taking into account our cognitive and perceptual limitations while retaining to the mind-independent reality. The non-epistemic account of truth given by Alston and Goldman seems to be promising in establishing such a project. The claim that we could never know whether our beliefs are true or

not when we hold onto a non-epistemic notion of truth seems to me as an extreme and implausible objection. When we are in relation with the mind-independent world within the limits of our cognitive and linguistic tools, truth does not become transcendent of us anymore. More precisely, I argue that we do have access to the facts of the world within the limits of our conceptualization of the world. However, I should emphasize that there are external facts which are the subjects of our conceptualization. That is why, I claim that we may get the truth value of a proposition by comparing it to some fact in the external world. And this will open up the possibility of objective truth.

I previously explained that Goldman rejects the traditional conception of the correspondence theory, and proposes a different theory that comes with a relation of fittingness. Putnam's objections to the correspondence theory in an isomorphism sense and the alternative he offers have similarities to Goldman's version. As I have emphasized, there are Kantian elements in Goldman's version of the correspondence theory, and the same Kantian elements can be seen in Putnam as well. From this perspective, we can claim that their approaches are similar even though one advocates epistemic truth and the other advocates non-epistemic truth.

Putnam ascribes his internal realist view to Kant and offers an alternative reading of Kant by appealing to Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. According to this distinction, primary qualities refer to the properties of objects that do not depend on us such as occupying space, being in motion or at rest; secondary qualities, on the other hand, are the ones that are dependent on the relation between our perceptual capacities and the primary qualities of the object such as

color and smell.[99] Putnam suggests ranging over what Locke says for secondary qualities to primary qualities as well. From this suggestion, it follows that there is no way for us to describe an object as it is *in itself*. We are left with no option but describing objects as they appear to us. Another conclusion that follows is that it is impossible to postulate any similarity between our idea of an object and the mind-independent reality.[100] Expressing the situation in Kantian terms, we are never in a position to have direct access to *noumena*. From all these considerations, Putnam concludes that we cannot claim for a traditional conception of the correspondence theory of truth, in the sense of isomorphism, in Kantian philosophy. And he tries to formulate an answer to the question of what truth is "if it is not correspondence to the way things are in themselves."[101]  The answer is that it is *ultimate goodness of fit*."[102] Both Goldman and Putnam emphasize the role of subjective elements in our access to, and perception of the external world and they both establish their theories of truth upon this precept. However, for Putnam, the fact that we cannot claim that truth is correspondence with theory independent reality shows that we are left with the sole alternative of epistemic account of truth. As Alston points out, it is hard to agree with Putnam on that point because we may accept the fact that our access to reality is theory dependent and still hold onto a non-epistemic conception of truth. I interpret Putnam's conceptual relativity to mean that conceptual schemes and theories are human creations and hence they are not necessary but contingent. We can have multiple numbers of theories or systems to represent the same reality. Nevertheless, there is only one reality which exists independently of our

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[99] Uzgalis, William. 2 September 2001. "John Locke" *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Available [online]: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke/ [18 June 2007].
[100] Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*, p.61.
[101] Ibid, p.64.
[102] Ibid.

representations of it that renders these theories or systems true or false. Holding onto a conceptual relativist position, Putnam may still maintain the idea that truth consists in some sort of correspondence between our propositions, and the reality which is represented by our conceptual schemes. In that respect again, I find Putnam's position reconcilable with Goldman's position.

The argument that we do not have direct access to mind-independent reality does not provide us with a good ground to refute the correspondence theory of truth. Although we were never in a position to compare our propositions to the mind-independent reality, still that would not be a plausible explanation to refute the correspondence theory of truth. The fact that we cannot check our propositions by comparing them to such a reality does not undermine the validity of the claim that truth consists in some correspondence between propositions and reality. It is important to remember that the most common argument that is given in favor of the epistemic notion of truth is that it saves truth from being remote and inaccessible to us. Following from this line of reasoning, I find the very basic intuition that draws philosophers into a search of epistemic truth misleading. More precisely, I argue that just because we are not in a position to detect whether our propositions corresponds to reality or not, we do not have to give up the correspondence theory of truth. An immediate objection to my position would come as follows. If we are not in a position to check whether our propositions correspond to reality or not, then this may lead us to total skepticism. We can define skepticism as the view that knowledge is impossible, because we can never be certain of whether our propositions correspond to reality or not. I have two replies to this objection. First, the non-epistemic account of truth does not entail anything about our knowledge. In other words, it just tells that truth consists in something independent of the cognizer. Even if skepticism follows

from the non-epistemic account of truth - I do not believe that it does- still, this does not undermine the validity of the non-epistemic conception of truth. Skepticism is usually considered quite an implausible position that must be avoided. If a theory leads to skepticism, this is considered a good reason for not holding onto this theory. As an argument against truth as correspondence, IRA also seems to argue against truth as correspondence on the grounds that it will lead us to skepticism. IRA does not claim that truth does not consist in correspondence of some proposition to reality. It claims that we cannot check whether our propositions correspond to reality or not. In my thesis, I also advocated the view that the non-epistemic account of truth does not lead us to skepticism, since we are able to check our propositions against reality. However, one may well hold onto non-epistemic truth and accept that it leads to skepticism. This would not show anything implausible for the nature of the non-epistemic conception of truth.

As a second rejoinder to such an objection, I would say that skepticism does not necessarily follow from my position. I claim that most of the time, we are able to check whether our propositions correspond to reality or not by the help of our perceptual interaction with the world. However, about propositions where no such interaction is possible, such as propositions about the past factual cases, epistemic tools such as evidence, or coherence are helpful in determining whether this correspondence relation holds or not. Another reason why I claim that skepticism does not follow from my account is that I propose to hold onto epistemic fallibilism, which claims that knowledge without certainty is possible and we can be fallible about our knowledge claims. We may be mistaken about the truth value of our beliefs, statements, or propositions.  More precisely, we may hold our justified beliefs which we consider true as knowledge, yet we may at the same time accept the

possibility that they may turn out to be false. In such a position, we can avoid ending up as a skeptic and we can hold onto the correspondence theory of truth.

One of the main presuppositions of the IRA as Irzık and Nola formulate is that we cannot have any primitive experience which does not contain any judgment or belief. Let us call this claim-1. From this claim, the impossibility of having a direct presentation of external facts is derived, and this is claim-2. Finally, with a last move, it is concluded that we are never able to get some non-judgmental reality to which we can compare our judgments, and this, we call claim-3. Claim-3 directly expresses IRA. In order to falsify IRA then, we need to show that claim-3 is untenable. As I mentioned before, there are many good attempts to show the implausibility of claim-3. Here I want to dwell on Alston's objection to this claim. Alston argues that we do have visual presentations that do not involve any conceptualization. From this, it follows that we can talk about perception that is independent of concepts or beliefs. And this makes possible for us to have "a bit of non-conceptualized reality in front of us in order to compare it with our beliefs about it."[103]

The point Alston makes is that seeing an object and judging that this object is there are quite different things. He constructs his rejoinder upon this difference. Before I explain how Alston refutes claim-3, I need to back up his claim that seeing is different from judging against the possible objection that might come from philosophers who think that seeing is judging. Suppose looking out from my window, I see a bird. I immediately judge it to be a bird. My judgment is as follows: "I see that there is a bird outside." Now, think of an extraterrestrial being who has not seen any birds before, hence who does not have any idea of a bird. When this

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[103] Irzık & Nola, p.26.

person comes to our world and sees a bird, she will certainly not be able to make any judgments of the sort we make. However, this person will definitely see the bird as an object –granted that she has the more or less same visual capacities as we do- in Alston's words, she will have some sort of "visual presentation."[104] As in this example, seeing is not accompanied by judging all the time. One may argue that what the extraterrestrial sees cannot be the bird since she does not have our concepts. This seems to be a plausible objection; however, I do not claim that what she sees is "the bird". What she sees is the object to which the concept of bird corresponds in our conceptual scheme. In other words, what she sees is the object we call bird. Nevertheless, as long as we have the same visual capacities, we have more or less the same "visual presentation". What is problematic about claiming that we more or less have the same "visual presentation" is that it is an easy task to think of the visual presentation of the object independent of our conceptualization of the object. In that respect, one may argue that in such a case our visual presentation would differ from hers in the sense that ours will be loaded with many properties that are related to the concept of 'bird'. Nevertheless, using Alston's words, if we were able to remove all these conceptual appendages, there would still be something left and this constitutes the common point of our visual presentation with hers.

The difference between seeing and judging proves that there is something in the perception except judgment. In other words, when we remove all judgments, there is still something left which all these judgments are about. Therefore, even if perception has a "pervasively propositional structure", there is still the possibility that we do have a non-conceptual visual presentation of an external fact.

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[104] Alston, *A Realist Conception of Truth*, p.93.

I want to go back to Goldman's sartorial analogy and discuss it together with Baç's rejoinder against the cookie-cutter view. Remember Goldman's insistence on the existence of a wearer body parts of who have their specific characteristics. This wearer stands for the mind-independent external reality. This analogy also makes the point that the external reality is not a shapeless dough as it is suggested by the cookie-cutter view. We cannot shape the world with our conceptualization as we like, because it already has a shape, it is not amorphous. Now, remember Baç's rejoinder to the cookie-cutter view of reality. He asked if reality is amorphous and if it is human beings' conceptual activity that shapes it, followed by how we can explain the non-homogeneity of experience in our daily life. When I am walking, if I do not notice the barrier in front of me, I trip. Similarly, considering the sartorial analogy Goldman makes, when I try to wear a glove on my foot, it simply does not fit. Just as the barrier makes me stop or fall down, the specific shape of my foot prevents the glove from fitting it. All these discussions support my claim that we are in touch with the external reality which is independent of our conceptualization.

Some philosophers disregard the fact that we are in relation with an unconceptualized reality and carry constructivism too far. Irzık and Nola's critique of the IRA also emphasizes the implausible outcomes of carrying constructivism that far. Goldman discusses Putnam as one of these philosophers. For Putnam, in checking the truth of our propositions or theories by an appeal to our perceptual experience does not mean that we compare them to an unconceptualized reality, because our perceptual access to the world is always mediated through some conceptualization and structuring of our brain. If that is the case, we compare our propositions or theories not to an unconceptualized reality, but to some other propositions or theories. This kind of an objection would be a good one for the old

versions of the correspondence theory such as the ones defended by Wittgenstein and Russell. However, Goldman's version is immune to such criticism, because his version does not require a comparison of our propositions to an unconceptualized world. First of all, he does accept the fact that our perceptual access to the external reality involves some conceptualization. At the same time, he emphasizes that the reality we are in touch with in determining whether our propositions fit it or not is at the beginning an unconceptualized one. Yet, our relation with it occurs with conceptualization. To support his position, Goldman appeals to an argument from perception as Alston does. Goldman defines perception as "a causal transaction from the world to the perceiver."[105] And this shows us that perception involves an encounter with the world. It is important to note that what we get at the end of this transaction is different from the event at the beginning. This difference stems from our conceptual and cognitive contribution to the transaction. However, "still the transaction as a whole does constitute an encounter with something unconceptualized."[106] Like Nola and Irzık, I do accept that our beliefs are controlled by our experiences to some extent. According to IRA, the experience which has such a controlling effect cannot be a raw or uncooked experience and since it is conceptualized, then it cannot be "a copy, a model, or even a reflection of any external reality."[107] This does not seem to be a valid transition. I believe that the fact that our experience cannot be unconceptualized does not necessarily lead us to the conclusion that it cannot be "a copy, a model, or even a reflection of any external reality." As I argued through my thesis, our experience results from our interaction with an unconceptualized reality. This seems to be a cogent support for the claim that our experience at least reflects external reality to some extent.

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[105] Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, p.154.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Irzık& Nola, p.16.

Conclusion

The main idea I defended in my thesis is that truth is a property of propositions which consists in an interaction of our cognitive, conceptual and linguistic activities with an objective, mind-independent world. Therefore, discussing truth in the absence of such activities of human cognizers is not philosophically intelligible. The way we encounter reality necessarily involves some kind of conceptualization. In other words, we may not have a direct access to the world as it is. Nevertheless, this is not tantamount to saying that reality is inaccessible, and hence we can never know whether our propositions correspond to reality or not. It neither entails any sort of subjectivism or relativism that will prevent us from claiming for objective truth. The fact that most of our perceptual activities involve some sort of conceptualization does not render the reality a noumenal object.

My aim in writing this thesis was to contribute to the position that supports a revised version of the correspondence theory of truth preserving both the role of the conceptualization of the role of the cognizer and the mind-independent reality in the relation of truth-making. As I explained in my thesis, the idea of a straightforward correspondence as it is defended by the classical versions of the correspondence theory of truth is open to serious criticisms. The revised version of the correspondence theory of truth I defended in my thesis seems to successfully overcome these criticisms. In order to show how it does so, in my second chapter, I first briefly exposed two classical versions of the theory developed by Wittgenstein and Russell. I proceeded with the presentation of the Inaccessibility of Reality Argument, which is one of the most influential arguments brought to the

correspondence theory of truth. Another motivation of my project was to show the illegitimacy of the move toward the epistemic notion of truth because of the inaccessibility objections. Therefore, in the last part of my second chapter, I explained Putnam's account of epistemic truth and I argued that it does not provide us with a ground that makes truth more accessible. In the third chapter of my thesis, I focused on two revised versions of the correspondence theory of truth developed by Goldman and Alston in the spirit of neutralizing IRA type arguments. In the last chapter of my thesis, I first discussed various objections to the epistemic notion of truth, and I argued that epistemic notion of truth does not enhance our epistemic opportunities in terms of making truth more accessible in comparison to the non-epistemic notion of truth. Hence, I concluded that philosophers who hold onto epistemic truth because of this reason are not justified in doing so. In the last part of my last chapter, I defended my account of non-epistemic conception of truth by discussing many arguments in support of the non-epistemic truth. Especially, the argument from perception as I formulated by discussing all these philosophers namely, Goldman, Alston, Irzık, Nola and Baç is quite strong and cogent in refuting IRA and showing that taking truth as a realist and non-epistemic concept does not make it inaccessible. Furthermore, I believe that I showed epistemic theories of truth do not contribute to making truth more accessible to mere human beings in any way. The revisions made by Goldman on the correspondence theory also make it easier to deal with the questions concerning the status of our conceptual, linguistic and noetic activities in our access to the external world. Taking the argument from perception and Goldman's revised version of the correspondence theory together, we see the possibility of getting in touch with an unconceptualized reality and checking whether our propositions fit this reality or not. This seems to be a good reply to the

philosophers who claim that truth as a non-epistemic notion is remote from human beings.

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