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Putnam on Mind and Meaning

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1. To begin with in "The Meaning of 'Meaning'," [1] and in a number of writings since then, Hilary Putnam has argued trenchantly, and I think convincingly, that in the case of at least certain sorts of words, the environment of those who use them enters into determining their extension. We cannot understand what constitutes the fact that a natural-kind word like "water," as used by ordinarily competent speakers of English, has the extension it does without appealing to the actual scientifically discoverable nature of a stuff that figures in their lives in a way that has an appropriate connection to the correct use of the word, and to facts of a broadly sociological kind about relations within the community of English speakers. Now it seems plausible that the extension of a word as a speaker uses it should be a function of its meaning; otherwise we lose some links that seem to be simply common sense—not part of some possibly contentious philosophical theory—between what words mean on speakers' lips, what those speakers say when they utter those words, and how things have to be for what they say to be true.[2] If we keep those links, Putnam's thesis about extension carries over to meaning: that a speaker means what she does by "water" must be constituted at least in part by her physical and social environment. As Putnam memorably puts it: "Cut the pie any way you like, 'meanings' just ain't in the *head*!"[3]

I have rehearsed this basic thesis of Putnam's in a deliberately unspecific

way. The question I want to raise in this paper does not require going into possibly disputable details about how the physical and social environments serve to determine extension, or how the roles of the physical and social environments might be related.[4] Nor do I need to go into the question of how far similar theses can be made out to apply beyond the original case of words for natural kinds.[5] I am going to take it for granted that, however such details are to be spelled out, Putnam is right in this basic thesis: at least some meanings are at least in part environmentally constituted. My question is at a more abstract level. I want to ask what significance the basic thesis has for how we ought to conceive the nature of the mind.

2. One might take it to be another simply intuitive idea, not a bit of possibly contentious philosophical theory, that command of a word's meaning is a mental capacity, and exercise of such command is a mental act—an act of the intellect and therefore, surely, of the mind. In that case the moral of Putnam's basic thought for the nature of the mental might be, to put it in his terms, that the mind—the locus of our manipulations of meanings—is not in the head either. Meanings are in the mind, but, as the argument establishes, they cannot be in the head; therefore, we ought to conclude, the mind is not in the head. Rather than arguing, as Putnam does, that the assumption that extension is determined by meaning will not cohere with the assumption that knowledge of meanings is wholly a matter of how things are in a subject's mind, we should insist on making the two assumptions cohere and conceive the mind in whatever way that requires.

I want to pursue this line, and urge a reading of the claim that the mind is not in the head that ought, I believe, to be congenial to Putnam, although as far as I can tell it goes missing from the space of possibilities as he considers things, which is organized by the idea that the two assumptions cannot be made out to be compatible.

3. Putnam's argument works against the theory that he sets up as its target, just because the theory is stipulated to include the claim that the mind is in the head. Another way of putting that claim is to say that states of mind, in some strict or proper sense, are what Putnam calls "psychological states in the narrow sense": that is, states whose attribution to a subject entails nothing about her environment.[6] The idea of "psychological states in the narrow sense" contrasts with the idea of "psychological states in the wide sense": these are attributed by intuitively psychological attributions that involve the attributor in commitments about the attributee's environment, as for instance "*x* is jealous of *y*" commits the attributor to the existence of *y*. The conception of meaning that Putnam attacks embodies the claim that knowledge of a meaning is exhausted by a certain psychological state, with "psychological state" stipulated to mean "psychological state in the narrow sense."

Now if we try to preserve the thought that knowledge of a meaning is a psychological state, consistently with Putnam's basic thesis that meanings are environmentally constituted, we have to suppose that knowledge of a meaning (at least of the kind that Putnam's thesis applies to) is a "psychological state in the wide sense." And if we try to make sense of that while maintaining the idea that the mental in a strict or proper sense is characterized by "narrow" psychological attributions, we have to suppose that knowledge of a meaning (of the relevant kind), *qua* mental, is, in itself, a "narrow" psychological state, which, however, can be characterized *as* knowledge of that meaning only by dint of taking into account the subject's placement in a physical and social environment. On this picture, knowledge of a meaning is, in itself, in the head; the moral of Putnam's basic thought is that we need to be looking at relations between what is in the head and what is not, if it is to be available to us that *knowledge of a meaning* (at least if it is a meaning of the relevant kind) is what some state, in itself in the head, is.

According to this picture, then, there is a sense in which the mind is in the head: that is where the relevant states and occurrences are. But this picture does yield a sense in which we might say that the mind is (at least partly) not in the head: the characterizations that display the relevant states and occurrences as ("wide") content-involving states and occurrences are characterizations in terms of meanings of sorts to which Putnam's argument applies, and hence characterizations that get a grip on the states and occurrences only on the basis of relations between the subject and the environment. At least some distinctively mental truths cannot come into view except in an inquiry that takes account of how the mind in question is related to its environment.

The conclusion of this line of thought is that the concept of command of a meaning (at least of the kind that Putnam's argument applies to) is constitutively "duplex," as Colin McGinn puts it: it is the concept of something that is, in itself, in the head, but conceived in terms of its relations to what is outside the head. And this line of thought obviously extends from knowledge of the meaning of "water" (and whatever other meanings Putnam's argument, or something of similar effect, applies to) to, say, beliefs or occurrent thoughts about water (and similarly for whatever other meanings are relevant). It is widely supposed that Putnam's considerations compel a "duplex" conception of at least large tracts of our thought and talk about the mental. The idea is that part of the complete truth about the mind is the truth about something wholly in the head; another part of the complete truth about the mind is the truth about how the subject matter of the first part is related to things outside the head.[7]

4. This reading of the idea that the mind is not in the head is not what I meant when I suggested that the idea ought to be congenial to Putnam.

This reading preserves a role for what is in the head, in the constitution of knowledge of meanings, or more generally in the constitution of psychological states and occurrences such as beliefs or thoughts about water, to which Putnam's claim of environmental determination clearly extends. What is the attraction of this? I think the answer is that, on this "duplex" conception, at least one component of the constitutive truth about the psychological in the "wide" sense looks like an unquestionably suitable topic for a straightforwardly natural science, a science that would investigate how states and occurrences in the head are responsive to impacts from the environment, interact with one another, and figure in the generation of behavior. In *Representation and Reality*[8] and elsewhere, Putnam argues that the role played by interpretation, in a proper account of the import of psychological characterizations in terms of ("wide") content, ensures that psychology *in general* cannot be within the scope of natural science. But, however convinced we might be by such arguments, there would still be some comfort for a scientistic orientation to the mental in the idea that, all the same, science can in principle be done, and indeed is already being done, about the intrinsic natures of the states and occurrences—in themselves in the head—that those "wide" characterizations get a grip on, in ways that, according to such arguments, are not amenable to scientific treatment.

On this account, what makes the "duplex" reading of the thesis that the mind is not in the head attractive is that, by leaving part of the truth about the mind wholly in the head, it offers comfort to a possibly residual scientism about how our understanding of the mental works.[9] But at least since his conversion from scientific realism, Putnam's explicit attitude towards scientism has been one of staunch opposition. When I suggested that the thesis could be read in a way that ought to be congenial to Putnam, I had in mind a reading that would not make even this residual concession to scientism. I had in mind a reading that would place our talk about knowledge of meanings, thoughts about water, and so forth entirely out of the reach of a scientistic conception of the role played by our mental lives in our understanding of ourselves and others.

5. It will be helpful to distinguish a second possible reading of the thesis that the mind is not in the head from the one I mean.

This reading is like the one I mean in that it focuses on the literal meaning of "in the head." We might begin explaining the point of denying that the mind is in the head by saying that the mind is not spatially located at all, except perhaps unspecifically, where its owner is. The mind is not somewhere in particular in the literal, spatial, interior of its owner; it is not to be equated with a materially constituted and space-occupying organ, such as the brain.

But on the conception I am considering now, the mind is still conceived as an organ: it is just that it is not the brain but an immaterial organ. (A well-

placed embarrassment might induce one to add "so to speak.") What I mean by saying that the mind is conceived as an organ is that states of affairs and occurrences in a mind are, on this view no less than on the view that the mind is literally in the head, taken to have an intrinsic nature that is independent of how the mind's possessor is placed in the environment. It is just that this intrinsic nature is not conceived as capturable in the terms of any science that deals with matter, for instance, neurophysiological terms.

This reading of the thesis that the mind is not in the head clearly cannot serve my purpose, because it is obvious that this conception of the mind, as an immaterial organ of psychological activity, does not open up a possibility of evading Putnam's argument, so that we could after all locate knowledge of meanings wholly in the mind. Characterizations of the mind, as it is in itself, are no less "narrow" on this picture than they are if conceived as characterizations of what is literally in the head. And Putnam's point is obviously not just that what is literally in the head cannot amount to knowledge of meanings, to the extent to which knowledge of meanings is environmentally constituted. *Nothing* "narrow," whether material or (supposing we believed in such things) immaterial, can amount to something that is environmentally constituted. We can put the point by saying that the phrase "in the head," in Putnam's formulation of his basic thesis, is already not restricted to a literal, spatial reading. When Putnam says that meanings are not in the head, that is a vivid way of saying that no "narrow" psychological attribution can amount to knowledge of a meaning of the relevant sort, whether it is a material or an immaterial organ of thought in virtue of whose internal arrangements such attributions are conceived as true.

6. I can now sketch the interpretation I mean for the thesis that the mind is not in the head. On this interpretation, the point of the thesis is not just to reject a more specific spatial location for someone's mind than that it is where its possessor is. It is to reject the whole idea that the mind can appropriately be conceived as an organ: if not a materially constituted organ, then an immaterially constituted organ. As I said, the cash value of this talk of organs is the idea that states and occurrences "in" the mind have an intrinsic nature that is independent of how the mind's possessor is placed in the environment. So the point of the different interpretation is to reject that idea altogether. Talk of minds is talk of subjects of mental life, insofar as they are subjects of mental life; and, on the interpretation I mean, it is only a prejudice, which we should discard, that mental life must be conceived as taking place in an organ, so that its states and occurrences are intrinsically independent of relations to what is outside the organism.

Of course there is an organ, the brain, whose proper functioning is necessary to mental life. But that is not to say that the proper functioning of that organ is what mental life, in itself, is. And if we deny that, we need not be

suggesting instead that mental life is, in itself, the functioning of a mysteriously immaterial para-organ (an organ "so to speak"). Mental life is an aspect of *our* lives, and the idea that it takes place in the mind can, and should, be detached from the idea that there is a part of us, whether material or (supposing this made sense) immaterial, in which it takes place. Where mental life takes place need not be pinpointed any more precisely than by saying that it takes place where our lives take place. And then its states and occurrences can be no less intrinsically related to our environment than our lives are.

7. Putnam himself expresses skepticism about whether there is any point in reconstructing the intuitive or pre-theoretical conception of the mental, which counts "wide" states like jealousy as psychological, in the way that is prescribed by "methodological solipsism": that is, the thesis that psychological states in a strict and proper sense are "narrow."[10] That skepticism seems to recommend pushing his reflections about terms like "water" in the direction that I am suggesting. What is to be learned from those reflections is not, as Putnam himself argues, that it cannot be true both that "knowing the meaning of a term is just a matter of being in a certain psychological state" and that "the meaning of a term determines its extension"; so that if we retain the second of these assumptions, we must renounce the first. This presupposes that anyone who embraces the first assumption must be restricting psychological states to "narrow" states. Rather, the moral of Putnam's considerations is that the idea of a psychological state, as it figures in the first assumption, cannot be the idea of a "narrow" state. That is: we should not leave in place an idea of the mind that is shaped by the tenets of "methodological solipsism," and conclude that meanings are not in the mind, since they are not in the head. Rather, we should read the two assumptions in such a way that they *can* be true together and exploit such a reading to force us into explicit consideration of a different conception of the mind.

At one point in "The Meaning of 'Meaning'," Putnam concedes that "it may be trivially true that, say, *knowing the meaning of the word 'water'* is a 'psychological state'."[11] The idea that this concession is trivial points to an accommodation of the basic thesis on the lines of the "duplex" conception of the mental. The concession is trivial, on this account, because it does not undermine the view that the two assumptions cannot be true together; given that psychological states in the strict and proper sense are "narrow," knowing a meaning (of the appropriate sort) would not be "*just* a matter of being in a certain psychological state," any more than, on that view, any "wide" psychological state would be. What Putnam never seems to consider is the possibility of a position that holds that command of a meaning is wholly a matter of how it is with someone's mind (the first assumption), and combines that with the determination of extension by meaning so as to force a radically

non-solipsistic conception of the mind to come to explicit expression. Instead, he assumes that anyone who wants to conceive knowledge of a meaning as wholly a matter of how it is with someone's mind must be already committed to a theoretical conception of the mind—a conception of the mind as in the head—which, in conjunction with Putnam's reflections about meaning, guarantees that the wish cannot be fulfilled.[12]

There may be some temptation to deny that the idea that the mind is in the head is a bit of theory, on the ground of evidently untheoretical usages like "I did the calculation in my head, not on paper." But that idiom does not mesh with the sense that "in the head" bears in Putnam's argument. One might equally take in one's stride, say, "It came into my head that I wanted a drink of water"; here the meaning of "water" is "in the head" in the sense of the idiom, and the possibility of talking like this obviously poses no threat to what Putnam means by saying that meanings are not in the head.[13]

The radically non-solipsistic conception of the mental that I am urging would dictate a way of talking about Twin-Earth cases that contrasts with Putnam's. In one of Putnam's cases, the correct extensions of "beech" and "elm" are reversed on Twin Earth, where Putnam has a *Doppelgänger* who is as unable to tell the two kinds of tree apart as Putnam blushingly confesses he is. The words are nevertheless secured their different extensions, on the lips of Putnam and his *Doppelgänger*, by the fact that each defers to a different set of experts.[14] Putnam says, about himself and his *Doppelgänger* when each is in a psychological state, that he would express using one of those terms: "It is absurd to think *his* psychological state is one bit different from mine." On the conception I am urging, this is not absurd at all. Putnam's psychological state involves his mind's being directed towards, say, beeches (if beeches constitute the extension of the word that he is disposed to use in order to give expression to his psychological state); his *Doppelgänger*'s psychological state involves his mind's being directed towards elms. The psychological state of each as it were expands in accordance with the determination of the extensions of their terms, in a way that is compelled if we are to maintain both of the two assumptions.

The possibility of talking like this would be merely trivial, in a sense like the one involved in Putnam's concession that we can count knowing a meaning as a psychological state, if the divergent psychological attributions ("thinking of elms" and "thinking of beeches") had to be seen as applying in virtue of some shared underlying psychological state, with the divergence resulting from different ways in which that shared underlying state is embedded in its environment. That is how the "duplex" conception would see things; on this view, Putnam and his *Doppelgänger* do not differ in fundamental psychological properties. But we need not see things this way. It is certainly true that Putnam and his *Doppelgänger*, in the case described, have something psychological in common. (We can make this vivid by noting that if

Putnam were transported to Twin Earth without knowing it, he would not be able to tell the difference.) But it is perfectly possible to hold that the psychological common property holds of each in virtue of his "wide" psychological state, rather than that the "wide" state is constituted by the common property, together with facts about how each is embedded in his environment. The common property need not be fundamental.

Compare the psychological feature that is unsurprisingly shared between someone who sees that such-and-such is the case and someone to whom it merely looks as if such-and-such is the case. (Again, if one were switched without knowing it between possible worlds that differ in that way, one would not be able to tell the difference.) It is not compulsory to conceive seeing that such-and-such is the case as constituted by this common feature together with favorable facts about embedding in the environment. We can understand things the other way round: the common feature—its being to all intents as if one sees that such-and-such is the case—intelligibly supervenes on each of the divergent "wide" states. And it is better to understand things this way round. It is very common for philosophers to suppose that Twin-Earth comparisons compel the idea that "wide" attributions bear on states that are in themselves "narrow," with the "wide" attributions coming out differently by virtue of the different ways in which those supposedly fundamental psychological states are embedded in extra-psychological reality. But this idea is closely parallel to the Argument from Illusion, and that by itself should be enough to make us suspicious of it.[15]

8. Putnam does not seem to consider the possibility that his reflections about meaning might be brought to bear against the idea that the mind is the organ of psychological activity. In fact much of his own thinking seems to presuppose just such a conception of the mind.

In *Representation and Reality* (7), he describes Jerry Fodor's "mentalism" as "just the latest form taken by a more general tendency in the history of thought, the tendency to think of concepts as scientifically describable ('psychologically real') entities in the mind or brain." There is an equivalence implied here between "psychologically real" and "scientifically describable," which cries out to be questioned: it looks like simply an expression of scientism about what it might be for something to be psychologically real. (We do not need to surrender the term "psychological" to *scientific* psychology.) But as far as I can see Putnam leaves the equivalence unchallenged, even though a great deal of his point in that book is to attack the effects of scientism on how philosophers conceive the mental. The term "mentalism" has a perfectly good interpretation as a label for the view that the mental is a genuine range of reality. (We do not need to accept that the nature of reality is *scientifically* determined.) But Putnam, without demur, lets "mentalism" be commandeered for the view that the topic of mental dis-

course can appropriately be specified as "the mind/brain." Talk of the mind/brain embodies the assumption that the mind is appropriately conceived as an organ, together, of course, with the idea—which is in itself perfectly sensible—that *if* the mind is an organ, the brain is the only organ it can sensibly be supposed to be. The assumption that the mind is an organ is one that Putnam does not challenge.[16]

An assumption to the same effect seems to underlie Putnam's argument, in *Reason, Truth and History*,[17] that one cannot suppose that mental states or occurrences are intrinsically referential—intrinsically directed at the world—without falling into a magical conception of reference. Putnam's governing assumption here is that a mental state or occurrence that is representational, say an occurrence in which one is struck by the thought that one hears the sound of water dripping, must in itself consist in the presence in the mind of an item with an intrinsic nature characterizable independently of considering what it represents. (Such a state of affairs would be what an internal arrangement in an organ of thought would have to amount to.) It clearly follows, from such a conception of that which is strictly speaking present in the mind, that such items cannot be intrinsically endowed with referential properties; to suppose that they might be would be to appeal to magic, just as Putnam argues. What never comes into view is this possibility: that being, say, struck by a thought is not, in itself, the presence in the mind of an item with a non-representational intrinsic nature. The argument is controlled by the assumption that occurrences in the mind are, in themselves, "narrow."

Am I suggesting that being struck by a thought might not involve mental representation? It seems truistic that a thought that such-and-such is the case is a representation that such-and-such is the case. But this is not the notion of mental representation as it figures in Putnam's argument.

In Putnam's argument, mental representations are representations in the sense in which, say, drawings or sentences are representations. A representation is an item whose intrinsic nature is characterizable independently of its representational properties: a symbol. The nerve of Putnam's argument is that symbols are not intrinsically endowed with their representational properties, and that claim seems beyond question. But from the fact that thinking, say, that one hears the sound of water dripping is representing that one hears the sound of water dripping, it does not follow that thinking that one hears the sound of water dripping must in itself consist in the presence in the mind of a symbol: something into which the significance that one hears the sound of water dripping can be read, as it can be read into the sign-design "I hear the sound of water dripping," although in both cases the symbol's bearing that significance is extraneous to its intrinsic nature. Putnam's solid point cannot dislodge the possibility that thinking that one hears the sound of water dripping is a mental representation, in the sense of a mental representing, that intrinsically represents what it represents.

What this means is that being struck by that thought, say, would not be the mental occurrence that it is if it were not *that* that one found oneself thinking. What the mental occurrence is in itself already involves that referential directedness at the world. The firm point in Putnam's argument is that this could not be so, except by magic, if the intrinsic nature of the mental occurrence were constituted by the presence in the mind of a representation, in Putnam's sense. So the possibility that goes missing in Putnam's argument could be described as the possibility of mental representing without representations.

Putnam would dispute something I have been suggesting, that it is just an assumption on his part that the contents of the mind when we think are representations in his sense. His claim is that this thesis is established by introspection. "Stop the stream of thought when or where we will, what we catch are words, images, sensations, feelings."[18] (This is meant to be a list of kinds of items that are not intrinsically representational.) But to me it seems wildly inaccurate to suggest that when I am struck by the thought that I hear the sound of water dripping, the fact that my thought is, say, about *water* is not part of what I find in my stream of consciousness, but has to be read into what I find there. Putnam's phenomenological claim is not an unprejudiced introspective report. It is theory-driven; he tells us not what he finds in his stream of consciousness but what *must* be there, given the pre-conceived theory that the contents of representing consciousness are representations in his sense. I think an unprejudiced phenomenology would find it more accurate to say that the contents of consciousness, when we have occurrent thoughts, are thoughts themselves, on something like Frege's usage for "thought" (or "*Gedanke*"): senses potentially expressed by assertoric sentences, not vehicles for such senses. Similarly with imagery: if I close my eyes and visualize, say, my wife's face, it seems wildly wrong to suggest that the fact that what I am visualizing is my wife's face—a fact that relates my mental state to the extra-psychological environment—is extraneous to the contents of my consciousness, extraneous to what I find when I "stop the stream of thought." So far from supporting the apparatus of his argument, Putnam's phenomenological claim here is unconvincing enough to give us reason to raise questions about the theory that underlies the argument.[19]

9. Putnam has often expressed suspicion of the idea that there is good philosophy to be done by grappling with questions like "How does language hook on to the world?"[20] It ought to be similar with questions like "How does thinking hook on to the world?" Such a question looks like a pressing one if we saddle ourselves with a conception of what thinking is, considered in itself, that deprives thinking of its characteristic bearing on the world—its being about this or that object in the world, and its being to the effect that this or that state of affairs obtains in the world. If we start from a

conception of thinking as in itself without referential bearing on the world, we shall seem to be confronted with a genuine and urgent task, that of reinstating into our picture the way thinking is directed at the world. But if we do not accept the assumption that what thinking is, considered in itself, is a mental manipulation of representations in Putnam's sense, no such task confronts us. The need to construct a theoretical "hook" to link thinking to the world does not arise, because if it is thinking that we have in view at all—say being struck by the thought that one hears the sound of water dripping—then what we have in view is *already* hooked on to the world; it is already in view as possessing referential directedness at reality.[21]

It would be a mistake to suppose that what I am doing here is what Putnam describes as "just postulating mysterious powers of mind"; as Putnam says, surely rightly, that "solves nothing."[22] The proper target of that accusation is a way of thinking in which we try to combine conceiving the mind as an organ of thought, so that what an episode of thinking is in itself is a mental manipulation of a representation, with supposing that an episode of thinking has its determinate referential bearing on the world intrinsically. Putnam's cogent point is that this combination pushes us into a magical picture of the reference of the supposed mental symbols, and hence into a magical picture of the powers of the mind. But the conception I am urging needs no appeal to a magical theory of reference, precisely because it rejects the supposed mental symbols. My aim is not to postulate mysterious powers of mind; rather, my aim is to restore us to a conception of thinking as the exercise of powers possessed, not mysteriously by some part of a thinking being, a part whose internal arrangements are characterizable independently of how the thinking being is placed in its environment, but unmysteriously by a thinking being itself, an animal that lives its life in cognitive and practical relations to the world. "Just postulating mysterious powers of mind" would be an appropriate description for a misguided attempt to respond to a supposed problem that I aim to join Putnam in rejecting.

It would equally be a mistake to suppose that what I have said about the phenomenology of thinking is merely a version of what Putnam calls "the attempt to understand thought by what is called 'phenomenological' investigation."[23] Putnam's objection to this is that any such attempt must miss the point that understanding, or more generally the possession of a concept, is an ability rather than an occurrence. "The attempt to understand thought" is the attempt to respond to a philosophical puzzlement about how thought "hooks on to the world." But my aim is to bring out a way of conceiving thought in which there is no need to try to embark on such a project at all.

It is true that understanding, or more generally the possession of a concept, is an ability rather than an occurrence. But it does not follow that there cannot be occurrences that are intrinsically directed at reality in the way that I have suggested is characteristic of occurrent thought. If the concept of

water is an ability that is exercised in thinking about water, we can conceive its exercises as, precisely, occurrences that are intrinsically episodes of thinking about water.[24]

10. What is the attraction for Putnam of the idea that "the stream of thought" is populated by representations in his sense, rather than representings? Any answer must be speculative; an answer that seems to me to have some plausibility is that Putnam is himself swayed by the residual influence of a scientism like the one I mentioned in connection with the "duplex" conception of "wide" psychological attributions. Without the idea of intrinsic structurings in some inner medium, it is hard to see how we could picture a mapping of our psychological talk into a subject matter susceptible of scientific treatment. In particular, mental representings occupy a position in the causal order; and if we want to be able to integrate that fact into a natural-scientific conception of the causal order, it is very tempting to suppose that representings must owe their causal character to the causal character of structures in a medium that is ultimately susceptible of physical description.[25] Putnam's phenomenological claim reflects a plausible conception of the most that could be available to introspection, if we understand introspection as a capacity to scan or monitor such inner structures.[26]

What goes missing here is the thought that mentalistic talk can be intellectually respectable without any such mapping being needed. I do not suggest that this is an easy thought for us to get our minds around, subject as we are to intelligible pressures to scientize our conception of the causal order. But we ought to ensure that we are fully conscious of the effects of such pressures on our thinking, and we ought to be alive to the possibility that it is not compulsory to succumb to them.

The suggestion that Putnam's thinking is partly shaped by a residual scientism will surely provoke from some people the response "So what? What's so bad about scientism?" In another context, I should feel obliged to say something in answer to that. Here, though, I shall not even begin to do so, since I am confident that that response will not be Putnam's own.

Putnam ends "The Meaning of 'Meaning'" with this remark: "Traditional philosophy of language, like much traditional philosophy, leaves out other people and the world; a better philosophy and a better science of language must encompass both."[27] I am not sure how "traditional" the approach to language that Putnam attacks really is, but I do not want to make anything of that here. My point in this paper is that the "isolationist" conception of language that Putnam objects to is all of a piece with a similarly "isolationist" conception of the mind—at least of the mind as it is in itself. And Putnam's attack on the "isolationist" conception of language leaves the counterpart conception of the mind unquestioned. Taking on the whole package would

have yielded a deeper understanding of what underlies the "isolationist" conception of language. I think this broader project would have been better suited than Putnam's partial move is to his admirable aim of showing us what "a better philosophy" would be like. A general attack on "isolationism" promises a satisfyingly cohesive and radical reorientation, very much in the spirit of Putnam's own best thinking, of philosophy's approach to the relations between the individual subject and the world.

NOTES

1. Reprinted in *Mind, Language and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 215–71.
2. That the extension of a term is determined by its meaning is one of the two assumptions that Putnam plays off against each other in "The Meaning of 'Meaning'." (The other is that "knowing the meaning of a term is just a matter of being in a certain psychological state" [*Mind, Language and Reality,* 219].) What Putnam argues in the first instance is that the assumptions cannot be true together, and he registers the possibility that one might respond by discarding the assumption that meaning determines extension (e.g., at 266). But his own thinking (much more attractively) leaves that assumption in place. So he directs the argument against the other assumption.
3. *Mind, Language and Reality,* 227.
4. For some discussion of such details, see the Introduction to Philip Pettit and John McDowell, eds., *Subject, Thought, and Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 1–15.
5. Putnam considers this at *Mind, Language and Reality,* 242–45.
6. *Mind, Language and Reality,* 220. I have slightly altered Putnam's gloss on "the narrow sense" in line with some remarks of Jerry A. Fodor in "Methodological Solipsism Considered as a Research Strategy in Cognitive Psychology," reprinted in his *Representations* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1981), 225–53. I think the alteration captures what Putnam intended.
7. See McGinn's "The Structure of Content," in Andrew Woodfield, ed. *Thought and Object* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 207–58. Other considerations are thought to conspire with Putnam's to necessitate this picture, but in this paper I am restricting myself to the significance of Putnam's basic thesis.
8. Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1988.
9. I say "possibly residual" because of the attraction that this conception has for someone of a fundamentally scientistic cast of mind who accepts, perhaps on the basis of an argument like Putnam's about interpretation, that ("wide") content is not available to a scientific psychology. Of course there are people who have a less defensive scientism than that, because they are not persuaded by such arguments, or ignore them.
10. *Mind, Language and Reality,* 220–21.
11. *Mind, Language and Reality,* 220.
12. Given a Principle of Charity, this raises a question (which is made all the more pressing by Putnam's own lack of sympathy with "methodological solipsism") whether Putnam may have misinterpreted at least some of the philosophers against whom he directs his basic thesis. I am particularly doubtful about the case of Frege. But I do not want to go into questions about Putnam's reading of his targets here.
13. On the ordinary idiomatic use of "in the head," compare Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), §427.

14. *Mind, Language and Reality,* 226–27.
15. There is some discussion of issues in this vicinity in my "Singular Thought and the Extent of Inner Space," in Pettit and McDowell, eds., op. cit., 137–68.
16. It is only in connection with mentalism on this interpretation that Putnam considers Gareth Evans's views in *The Varieties of Reference* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); see *Reality and Representation,* 129n. 4. Evans's thinking actually opens up the possibility of a satisfactory understanding of thought (a mental phenomenon, surely) and meaning as environmentally constituted: an understanding that ought to be welcome to Putnam. But Putnam restricts himself to finding it puzzling how Evans could conceive his thinking as a kind of mentalism, since Evans obviously does not equate thoughts with "representations *inside* the mind/brain."
17. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
18. *Reason, Truth and History,* 17; see also 27 for a parallel appeal to introspective evidence.
19. For a "cry of disbelief" (69) against similar phenomenological falsifications, forced on philosophers by the theory that "an occurrent conscious thought bears its 'intention' or content in the same way as a bit of language bears its significance" (86), see M. R. Ayers, "Some Thoughts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* n. s. lxxiii (1972–73): 69–96. One of Ayers's targets is Wittgenstein; I suggest a rather different reading of Wittgenstein (although I would not dispute that there are passages that fit Ayers's reading) in "Intentionality and Interiority in Wittgenstein," in Klaus Puhl, ed., *Meaning Scepticism* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1991), 148–69.
20. His suspicions are expressed in several of the essays in his *Realism with a Human Face* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).
21. And the world that it is already hooked on to is not The World as contemplated by the metaphysical realism that Putnam has attacked. My thought that I hear the sound of water dripping has its point of contact with reality in the fact that I hear the sound of water dripping, or perhaps in the fact that I do not hear the sound of water dripping. I use my conceptual capacities (I just did) in pinpointing which possible facts these are; the world (which is all the facts, as Wittgenstein said in the *Tractatus*) is not here pictured as beyond the reach of concepts.
22. *Reason, Truth and History,* 2.
23. *Reason, Truth and History,* 20.
24. These remarks are directed against the close of chapter 1 of *Reason, Truth and History,* where Putnam suggests that the perfectly correct point that concepts are not mental occurrences, combined with the phenomenological claim about which I have already expressed doubts, demolishes the very idea that there can be mental episodes with an intrinsic referential bearing on the world. By claiming that concepts are "signs used in a certain way" (18), Putnam makes it look as if exercises of concepts would have to be occurrences (tokenings) of signs. He thereby forces on us a "narrow" conception of what exercises of concepts must be in themselves. This obliterates a perfectly workable conception according to which exercises of concepts are, for instance, acts of judgment, intrinsically possessed of referential bearing on the world.
25. See John Haugeland's suggestive discussion of "the paradox of mechanical reason," in *Artifical Intelligence: The Very Idea* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1985), 36–41.
26. For an unusually explicit expression of such a view of introspection, see McGinn, "The Structure of Content," 253–54.
27. *Mind, Language and Reality,* 271.