

RICHARD RORTY'S METAPHILOSOPHICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO
PHILOSOPHY WITH REFERENCE TO THE NOTION OF TRUTH

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HANDAN HACER KORKUT

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submitted by **HANDAN HACER KORKUT** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KİRAZCI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Halil TURAN
Head of Department
Department of Philosophy

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İNAM
Supervisor
Department of Philosophy

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Ertuğrul R. TURAN (Head of the Examining Committee)
Ankara University
Department of Philosophy

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İNAM (Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Department of Philosophy

Prof. Dr. Murat BAÇ
Middle East Technical University
Department of Philosophy

Prof. Dr. Erdal CENGİZ
Ankara University
Department of Philosophy

Prof. Dr. David GRÜNBERG
Middle East Technical University
Department of Philosophy

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Handan Hacer KORKUT

Signature:

ABSTRACT

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KORKUT, Handan Hacer
Ph.D., The Department of Philosophy
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ahmet İNAM

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Richard Rorty defines his purpose in philosophy as finding out assumptions behind philosophical problems and assessing their significance in terms of making difference to practice. He argues that a problem which assumes the existence of objective reality independent from us and truth as its representation is a pseudo problem because it relies on a metaphysical orientation. He identifies this assumption in a depiction of thinking habit that puts what lies beyond our experience as a goal of inquiry, which is mostly concentrated on the notion of truth. He develops his philosophy on the axis of this ontological picture, from which his realist opponents cannot manage to escape.

Keywords: Rorty, Truth, Reality, Contingency, Pragmatism

ÖZ

RICHARD RORTY’NİN HAKİKAT KAVRAMINA ATFEN FELSEFEYE

METAFELSEFİ KATKILARI

KORKUT, Handan Hacer

Doktora, Felsefe Bölümü

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Richard Rorty felsefedeki amacını, felsefi problemlerin arkasındaki varsayımları ortaya çıkarma ve bunların pratikte bir fark yaratıp yaratmadıklarına bakarak önemli olup olmadıklarını değerlendirme olarak tarif eder. Bizden bağımsız objektif bir gerçekliğin var olduğu ve hakikatin de bu gerçekliğin bir temsili olduğunu varsayan bir problemin sözde bir problem olduğunu, çünkü bunun metafizik bir yönelim anlamına geldiğini ileri sürer. Bu varsayımı, deneyimlerimizin ötesinde olanı bir amaç olarak ortaya koyan ve hakikat kavramında yoğunlaşan bir düşünce alışkanlığının tasvirinde ortaya çıkarır. Bu, Rorty’nin eleştiri ve argümanlarının eksenini oluşturan ve realist karşıtlarının kaçamadığı bir ontolojik resimdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rorty, Hakikat, Gerçeklik, Olumsuzluk, Pragmatizm

To Perran AYBAŞ

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CIS* *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*
- CP* *Consequences of Pragmatism: Essays 1972-1980*
- EHO* *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 2*
- LT* *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method with Two Retrospective Essays*
- MLM* *Mind, Language, and Metaphilosophy*
- ORT* *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 1*
- PAA* *Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism*
- PCP* *Philosophy as Cultural Politics: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 4*
- PMN* *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*
- PSH* *Philosophy and Social Hope*
- TP* *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 3*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*If a man is of a world in which the spirits of Heidegger and Wittgenstein are bound in the fetters of Dewey, how shall he find readers?¹
"Habe Mut, dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen."²*

In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*³, Richard Rorty defines his purpose in philosophy as “isolating more of the assumptions behind the problematic of modern philosophy.” This is the task he adopted following the moral he drew from the history of philosophy, a history that he viewed to be of new “assumptions and vocabularies,” since the very beginning of his studies. Sellars and Quine, in this respect, are especially significant for Rorty by inspiring him with their questioning “the language-fact distinction” and “the given” in “traditional empiricism.” Namely, they “render[ed] doubtful the assumptions behind most of modern philosophy,” which led him to “generalize and extend” their criticism. Rorty thus points out an

¹ This is a pastiche of a pastiche. In his “Introduction” to Wilfrid Sellars’s “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind” (Sellars, 1997, p. 10), Rorty recounts a moment when he asked Sellars: “If a man chooses to bind the spirit of Hegel in the fetters of Carnap, how shall he find readers?”, which is a pastiche of William George Pogson-Smith’s, editor of Hobbes’s *Leviathan*, interpretation of Spinoza: “If I were asked to name the highest and purest philosopher of the seventeenth century I should single out Spinoza without a moment’s hesitation. But Spinoza was not of the world; and if a man will be perverse enough to bind the Spirit of Christ in the fetters of Euclid, how shall he find readers?” (Hobbes, 1651, p. vii). “Sellars was not amused” by the question, says Rorty, but he would possibly give a smile in answer to this question.

² “Have courage to use your own understanding!” Kant, “An Answer to the Question: ‘What is Enlightenment?’”

³ Hereafter *PMN*.

enfolding assumption also behind the “the given” and “the two dogmas”: a notion of truth out there. This idea of truth that he traces as a deeper assumption behind a line of arguments in traditional Anglo-American philosophy disturbs a larger frame of thought than the one Sellars and Quine exposed and Rorty draws correlating intense reactions with this view.

In this thesis I will argue the following:

1. Rorty’s writings span a wide range of topics but there seems to be a matter that makes the axle around which other themes revolve. It is a habitual intellectual attitude of envisioning ourselves moving in a domain surrounded by an upper order of domain of constancy. The problem with this picture is making judgments about what lies beyond the span of our experience. It suggests a paradoxical viewpoint assuming the existence of an edge between what I can and cannot know and drawing conclusions from the one about the other. We may be constrained by an objective reality, an illusion, or something we cannot imagine now, but we cannot legitimately decide on what. For that reason, discussions around this area will not be meaningful activity. This depiction is most concentrated in his criticism of the notion of truth as the expression of objective reality. Truth is in this respect the centerpiece topic of Rorty corpus, but it concerns him in so far as it indicates a metaphysical sphere as reference and thus he describes it as a “Platonic quest for that special sort of certainty associated with visual perception” (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 181).

2. Considering the depiction of the picture in *I.* as the reference point in evaluating Rorty's criticisms or assertions will keep us on track of arguments and help see "how things hang together" in Rorty. He frequently refers to this central point by different descriptions such as "permanent neutral matrix," (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 179) "hypostatization" of the "nonphysical," (ibid.) or "neutral ground" (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 181) in his discussions on different subjects e.g., democracy, mind, irony, or philosophy. He thus objects to arguments for notions such as unconditionality, rationality, reason, universality, intrinsic nature, neutral principles, or any others for the same reason that they signify the same ontological commitment.

3. Objections on realist terms need to challenge the plausibility of this depiction of metaphysical commitment since they will be required to overcome an unreconcilable ontological chasm between "our beliefs and language" and objective facts. That amounts to the plausibility of a possibility of making a judgment about ontological status. The perspective given by *I.* will help assess the criticisms levelled against Rorty in terms of their relevance or likelihood of rebuttal and they do not seem to be able to challenge the plausibility of Rorty's picture.

4. Rorty might be straining Platonic overtones and downplaying the role of such conceptions as in above. To decide whether he is forcing a pattern or identifying a genuine issue does not depend on the crucial role of these notions in building the literature of a philosophical tradition nor do Rorty's claims of ontological commitment outweigh their significance. Many of the objections assume such a denigration in Rorty's philosophy.

5. Rorty's arguments operate on an instinctual-intuitive level of viewing ourselves and the world, which suggests that terms and conditions might be different for his claims and objections. What he called an assumption might be passing for a default setting for a critic. Agreement and disagreement with Rorty could thus already be preset in discussions. However, if we can put this alleged Rortian redescription template, which bypasses any truth-orienting notion on other occasions, we can see Rorty's suggestions work.

One of Rorty's most plausible and "grounding premise of [his] argument" against the belief in "universal desire for truth" is "that you cannot aim at something, cannot work to get it, unless you can recognize it once you've got it" (Rorty R. , 2021, p. 48). What yields truth "unrecognizable" and justification "recognizable" in this sense is that the former resides on the other side of the chasm, which resembles the outside of Plato's cave. Rorty sees a meta-level problem with a line of similar problems in a particular tradition in modern philosophy in adopting the assumption of this unattended and covert form of the notion of truth that draws on an ontological import of an entity existing out there and given to our experience as a fact. Arguing that justification can be all what we can expect to accomplish by being within our reach and what we mean by a universal desire for truth in this sense is a desire to be justified, he places conceptions according to their human and non-human abilities. Truth is backed up by its other metaphysical thus out-of-human reach components of unconditionality, uncontextuality, or atemporality. In this respect we can interpret the desire for truth as an expression of a wish: we wish to lean on a solid wall just one

can wish there is a God to take care of all beyond our reach. The wish can be so strongly felt that otherwise may seem just unthinkable but still we are not in a position to affirm it.

The idea of truth in this sense presents a kind of gravity in Rorty's philosophy in a way that we can follow it as a force directing the trajectory of his broad-spectrum criticism toward not only mind and knowledge but philosophy itself and beyond, a socio-political worldview without a break. The problem with taking truth as a problematic means an attempt to find another name for the same hypothetical domain. It appears that the same place was once attributed God but scientific thinking reserved it for objective reality. According to Rorty, questions about this assumption proved its use in history but not much for now because it seems to have run out of its resources for novelty. The reason why it could yield no more, in Rortian terms, is that the new vocabulary, metaphors, or assumptions taken then are not new now; they have been worn out because that new frame of mind, which accomplished to create the Scientific or French Revolutions, for instance, has long declared its victory by being assumed by almost all, including prime religious authority, of its rivals. The way Rorty seems to get over the barrens in this sense, is through novelty, that we can go out of its framework and what makes novelty does not seem to look like arithmetical operations, and that is why imagination is a rare asset in his philosophy. In his philosophical digging of the idea of truth, this attitude toward truth turns into an anti-authoritarian weapon in Rorty's hands to convince us to be able to get out of our chalk circle.

Truth, in the sense of an unavoidable hard reality, has a central position for Rorty to such a degree that he defines his pragmatism in accordance with the attitude he adopts toward it. He reads the history of philosophy with this same attitude, which also makes Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Dewey his three major inspirations and Nietzsche, Freud, and Darwin, groundbreakers. This attitude may be regarded as the mutual enforcement of what he learned from and applying it back to the philosophers and doctrines that he likes to adopt such as naturalism, historicism, or nominalism.

It makes no sense to dwell on a question of what truth is for Rorty because that would give results of “a metaphysical article of faith”. The problem of Rorty with such reliance on truth is the same confidence on the existence of “identity,” with which one looks for an answer whether Theseus’ ship remains the same at the end of the journey if it had each of its pieces replaced one by one on the way. In this respect holding onto truth will remain as a pretension, which is like the state expressed in the Munchausen situation. Rorty points out all three courses of the trilemma, dogmatic, regressive, and circular problems, in his criticism of epistemological foundationalism. His very typical view is that there is not much to say about truth other than, e.g., “a rhetorical pat on the back,” “warranted assertibility,” or any other similar phrase that would not convey a transcendent significance. Although Rorty says his philosophy is largely a negative one, characterized by what should not be taken as a basis or what philosophy cannot do, after the *PMN*, he tends toward a different strategy in *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*⁴. He presents his views in more positive terms by emphasizing conceptions such as, time, chance, and change

⁴ Hereafter *CIS*.

wherever foundation, basis, or theory is sought for. He thus defends contingency as an aspect to be recognized in the human phenomena of language, self, and community.

Now that truth occupies a frame of mind where it is strongly associated with goodness and positive values such as order, peace, guarantee, or security; promoting chance, change, or contingency might be expected to be judged calling for accident, chaos, risk, or haphazardness. If you attack truth, you may be taken attacking everything valuable about it. Rorty portrays the kind of intellectual as a liberal ironist who has the view of truth as his. He says that this ironist intellectual would probably be surrounded by a vast majority of other intellectuals who are committed to the faith in fundamental truth, and to them she would likely “seem... intrinsically hostile not only to democracy but to human solidarity - to solidarity with the mass of mankind, all those people who are convinced that such an order must exist. But it is not. Hostility to a particular historically conditioned and possibly transient form of solidarity is not hostility to solidarity as such” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. xvi).

What we remain legitimately to be able to talk about is justification and our beliefs cannot go beyond it. He, expectedly, encourages charges of relativism by such claims. However, he does not claim that anything can count as justification. Even though he is accused to the point of intellectual irresponsibility, his characterization of the viability of a belief in terms of justificatory conditions is no less serious than being able to call it a truth. He says, “if you can succeed in justifying your belief to all comers past present and future in an ideally free communicative situation with

maximum availability of evidence, then you don't have to worry about whether your belief corresponds to reality." (Rorty, Putnam, & Conant, 2002). To be able to say this, for Rorty, is actually "the most important element in Pragmatism" (ibid.). It is a way of not surrendering skepticism while holding antifoundationalism and getting out of the representationalist frame.

Its senses of changelessness, self-subsistence, or unconditionality appear to give the notion of truth its absolute reliability that makes it worthy of being the goal of inquiry. In the same way conceptions like essence, nature, or intrinsic property are by their non-contingency are other more apparently reified references to truth as such. The idea appears in Platonist distinctions, in which one of the terms owes the other, such as appearance and reality, matter and mind, or knowledge and opinion. Rorty traces such a suggestion of an unconscious recourse to Platonist metaphysics for instance, in considering natural sciences, and physics especially, to be of a higher value than other components of culture believing that they get us closer to reality than others. We believe that if we work on appearance enough, we can meet reality. We would like to assume a distance between appearance and reality to be done like the one going inward for increasingly elemental particles of an atom or outward for a larger picture of a universe. Any recourse to an idea of truth as such, whether explicitly or implicitly, is going inside a representationalist paradigm for Rorty. He follows it in a tradition in which philosophy becomes increasingly epistemologically based, from Descartes, Locke, Kant, and through Russell and analytic philosophy of mind. In this respect, he argues that neither empiricism, Dewey's pragmatism, nor the Linguistic Turn could get out of this paradigm failing to "replace a

representationalist picture of knowledge with a non-representationalist one (Rorty R., 1992, p. 373), but they only proposed experience and then language the media of representation.

Identifying the assumption of an objective truth behind a philosophical tradition is halfway through Rorty's criticism. Treating such an assumption as an optional means in shaping beliefs, he can proceed toward a whole different plane of concepts in which justice, democracy, science, or language, for instance, can be re-defined. Rorty's discussions orbits this pragmatic treatment of truth with an effect to disillusion us about its fundamental status. The next phase is showing that we do not have to carry this assumption and arguing for theological overtones would not be sufficient. The way to be able to achieve such a large-scale claim for Rorty is not forming an alternative theory of truth, not even a pragmatist one, against, i.e., the metaphysical project of realist or correspondence theories. He defends a pragmatic view but since he does not posit anything affirmative about truth, he does not have a constructive effort to wrap up the conception in a theoretical form. That is what makes him differ from other pragmatist thinkers. The same doubts hinder him from forming any foundational intentions for other values or concepts. In consequence he rejects the view that philosophy can lay the foundations of knowledge or any other concepts and therefore the tribunal of philosophy "adjudicating claims to knowledge" and judging contributions to culture is null.

Identifying a presupposition is a claim to see the frame of arguments based on it and accordingly he does not take it as a problem to be solved within the same frame. That

seems to be a move based on what he learned from the history of philosophy at the very beginning of his philosophical studies about a philosophical problem: that it is a “product of the unconscious adoption of assumptions built into the vocabulary in which the problem was stated” (Rorty R. , 1979, p. xiii). It might not then be wrong to consider Rorty’s issue as a meta-problem, i.e., a problem of the problem of truth. It is an act of dissolving a philosophical problem, for Rorty, rather than solving it. In other words, by denying the assumptions of a question he approaches it from outside of its frame. This kind of a treatment is his therapeutic approach that gives precedence over a constructive one. A therapeutic solution in this sense is dissolution. A similar kind of pseudo-problem dissolution would be that of the Ship of Theseus. The answer sought for the thought experiment is supposed to shed some light on the problem of identity, e.g., whether it is essentially material, qualitative, or functional. The Rortian problem with this problem is that it assumes the existence of a governing principle, or a nature that yields something that remains constant in a thing. However, if any answer makes no difference to practice, the problems must be with the question that makes us chase our own shadows.

There appears to be three different manners and phases in Rorty’s philosophy, in which he justifies his rebuttal of the problem of truth. Viewing these phases might also help to discard a misunderstanding about his philosophy according to which there was supposed to be an early and later Rorty who gave up his analytic line of the philosophy of mind for more continental concerns. What changes in these phases seems more like an illustration, not the perspective. The first one may be his earlier works in his discussions concerning mind and knowledge. Some traces of his

attribute against the representationalist view of truth could be observed in his early papers on mind, knowledge, and metaphilosophy, in the “Introduction” and the two “Afterword”s in *The Linguistic Turn*⁵ and most significantly in the *PMN*. In this phase his criticism is basically negative in character as a rejection of a problem whose answer makes no difference in practice. In his first influential monograph, the *PMN*, he identifies the assumption of the idea of a self-subsistent truth in the history of modern philosophy and discusses it in the language of the analytic philosophy of mind, the field in which he was first became known to the world. As a respected philosopher in the area, he maps an intricate relation of assumptions behind mind and knowledge, according to which, he says, to discover something about the one is to discover something about the other and those discoveries are thought to give us a hint about the uniqueness of human beings. Philosophy can thus assume the role of a “foundational discipline [that] adjudicates claims to knowledge, underwriting or debunking them” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 73). According to this construal, knowledge is formed by mental processes as activity of representation and endows the human with the singularity as a “knower,” mind with the role of being its medium, and philosophy with the specialty of understanding its nature.

The act of “representation” itself is the source of suppositions that makes Rorty doubt the most deal, since it is a picture of a relation not just between two elements but of a hierarchy as well. What is represented is the outside and the original entity expected to be transmitted inside in a form as good as possible. Mind is a mediator,

⁵ Hereafter *LT*.

let us say like a painter. Its product is thought in a way like the naming of artistic styles, the way a realist painting is the closest to the original while other schools being just interpretations of nature, in the sense of a distortion driven by the intention of the artist. If mind can be depicted as a medium like a painter, we assume an element of the original, like a model to be represented by the painter to viewer, but in the case of mind's representation we do not see or have any other experience about this original model as truth. Rorty outlines this bizarre situation of representing something of which we do not have any idea when he says that it is like claiming to represent a thing that you could not identify even if you really saw it. It is like believing in the Second Coming, in this sense, without knowing how to recognize him if he were to come if he had not come already. His pragmatist critique of the epistemological search for truth and proposing the possibility of leaving it aside amounts to what we can or cannot say about truth and that leads to questions about the definition of knowledge and the function of philosophy. He does not find much that is worth philosophically interesting to say. He argues that aiming at anything beyond justification as the goal of inquiry is null.

The second phase may be taken to include his works in which he instantiates his view of truth, without analytical terms in the *PMN*. He tries to show "how things look" without an assumption of a reality residing on the other side of an ontological chasm. It is epitomized in his *CIS*, 1989, ten years after the *PMN*. He puts forward different conceptions as preferable candidates to be of more value than those cherished by traditional truth-seeking perspective, such as contingency to essence, freedom to truth, solidarity to objectivity, or imagination to inquiry. As Rorty

changed his analytic language in this phase, criticisms change from skepticism to post-modernism in a pejorative sense and as much as to intellectual frivolity. As it is a radical change of speech from the point of his analytic colleagues, he is also thought to be dealing with an airy post-modern literary fashion. Davidson, one of Rorty's most sympathetic critics, points out the fact that it is a common practice, in the 1990s, that he sees in literary magazines to "dumpster" anything about truth (Donald Davidson and Richard Rorty in *Conversation*, 1997). What Rorty dumpsters in that sense, we must be aware of, not anything, but, again, a particular element of nonhuman constraint in it. He feels the need to explain himself in terms of autobiographical facts against frivolity accusations to show how things have changed for the worse or better since the forties.

Rorty stresses his point that getting closer to reality is different from getting us to a more advantageous position in predicting and controlling our environment. What we mostly call truth in this sense, according to him, is a "rhetorical pat on the back." He points out James's characterization of truth as the "expediency in the way of belief" and Dewey's "warranted assertibility." What seems to make most difference for Rorty, in this phase, about the question whether to define truth as the correspondence to reality or justified belief for a certain audience is its social repercussions. Such is a tendency to rank cultural elements according to their supposed closeness to reality and assuming authority over humanity accordingly. This stance regarding truth moves Rorty from discussions concerning mind and knowledge to an anti-authoritarian political position. It is a salient feature of Rorty's philosophy, which we can see in one of the most efficient essays on him as he appreciates it, by Ramberg.

The paper starts as an evaluation of Rorty's construal of Davidsonian semantics and in the concluding paragraphs he comes to a point about the Rortian idea of "the priority of democracy to philosophy." Rorty goes more sociological and political as a way of demonstrating, without recourse to truth as the expression of an objective reality, the possibility of non-hierarchically incorporating all attempts that make a new thread in weaving novel and better beliefs.

A third phase might be his construal of pragmatism as a political attitude, which he calls "anti-authoritarianism." Robert Brandom sees it as a change of strategy in Rorty's philosophy, "for delegitimizing the representational semantic model" (Brandom R. , 2022). Brandom finds out the reason in Rorty's realization of the fact "that it is a matter of sociological fact those who took representational model of semantics for granted were for the most part blithely unconcerned with the supposedly life and death struggle between skepticism and foundationalism" (ibid.). Happening roughly at the last decade of his life, according to Brandom, "This more overtly political line both drew on and in important sense brought to a logical conclusion the evolution of his thought" (ibid.). This is where Rorty put forward his construal of pragmatism, in terms of his attitude toward truth, as a completion of the Enlightenment ideal. It is an ideal of humanity toward maturity, in the literal sense of becoming a grown-up race to be able to make their own decisions about what is right and wrong without recourse to the permission of a non-human authority. Brandom thinks Rorty proposes extending the first Enlightenment achievement of the "emancipation from nonhuman authority in practical matters ... by applying this

basic lesson to our emancipation from nonhuman authority in theoretical cognitive matters” (ibid.).

Rorty’s antifoundationalist position as antiauthoritarianism is an answer for relativist claims about his philosophy as well. Putting this position into use for specific moral, ideological, or social purposes shows that he does not take the belief that there is no convincing reason for any theoretical foundation to mean that there is no reason to defend any purposes or values. For that would be the very self-inconsistency of relativism by assuming no foundation as a foundation. Rorty and relativist thought share this antifoundationalist conviction, but they differ in what they made of it.

Rorty splits from relativism where he treated the lack of foundation with pragmatist care. He clearly expresses his strategy for “escaping from self-referential difficulties into which ‘the relativist’ keeps getting himself is to move everything over from epistemology and metaphysics to cultural politics, from claims to knowledge and appeals to self-evidence to suggestions about what we should try.” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 57). He relied on a “historical awareness” in drawing morals for his suggestions, instead of pushing justifications for our beliefs to a metaphysical neverland.

Rorty’s own experiences give some references to Rorty’s social concerns and why solidarity is a more important goal than foundations of justice. As early as he when he was a “precocious” boy in the school yard who were constantly afraid of being beaten, in his own words, the political “religion” he was raised gave him hope for how things will be made right, including the bullies, once the revolution comes. He mentions the committee which clears Trotsky of the accusation of being a German

spy, but he says, even if it had been him instead of Stalin, the next leader of the communist Russia, the result would not have been much different. Then there is “The Gospel Movement,” a Protestant organization of which his grandfather Walter Rauschenbusch was one the leaders, which actively acts for building social justice to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth. Rorty calls him a “socialist of the previous generation” of his parents who “continued his socialism” (Rorty R. , 1995, p. 66). Rortian vision of theoretical foundations and the criterion of making difference to practice makes an émigré German Baptist minister the socialist revolutionary and the Marxist Soviet revolutionary leader a bigot. Even if Rauschenbusch had acted in the name of God and truth, what renders the movement justified is not them, but the value added to the benefit of the world and just as acting in the name of social justice cannot justify cruelty. For the same reasons we do not have the means to prove Nazi-like ideologies are foundationally wrong, but that does not justify them, either. Atrocities, notwithstanding, are already committed more easily in the name truth than relying on a relativist worldview anyway.

Rorty expresses his metaphilosophical doubts by his much-quoted question that he sought for forty years what philosophy, if anything, is good for. He also says that the contribution of the philosophers that he “most admires”, is “suggesting new ways of making things hang together” and in his own writings he also “suggested ways in which some of these suggestions hang together one another” (Auxier & Hahn, 2010, p. 4). In a period in which philosophy faces complaints about over-professionalization and inefficiency in making a difference for social change Rorty finds a pulse in philosophy by re-mapping our conceptual plane.

In this thesis Part 1 is a general sketch of Rorty's philosophy and an intellectual biography of him. Part 2 is about his earlier phase and includes Rorty's discussions on matters on mind, language, knowledge and representation, and philosophy. In this part I intend to show, in his earlier papers on the philosophy of mind, traces of Rorty's concerns about the frame of thought that he later questioned explicitly. I also claim that his realist opponents, Michael Devitt, and William Alston fail to address the assumption of ontological commitment that Rorty accentuated. I want to take notice that where Devitt and Alston failed, Bjørn Ramberg caught Rorty in a shortcoming of dealing with the concept of truth. Part 3 is on the concept of truth and its general cognition in terms of metaphysical, scientific, common sense, meaning, Plato's role, and its etymology. In this section I intend to show that by frequent analogies to religious temperament, Rorty suggests a kind of dogmatic character attributable to the Notion of truth. I provide examples of the use and meaning of truth: how it is taken in absolute sense in religious contexts. how scientific truth differs from it and how it is taken in common sense. I also believe that we can have some insight derived from Its meaning depending on its different senses and associations with other Notions and hoping to relate how we are used to a way of thinking in terms of picturing concepts. Then I want to relate these uses in Plato: the association of truth with seeing. I present some notions in the etymology of truth to relate them to some criticisms against Rorty in terms of how strongly associated values can give rise to misunderstandings of losing e.g., being in touch with reality, truthfulness, integrity, or seriousness. Part 4 is about Rorty's post-analytic concerns. It is a follow-up practice of his initial diagnosis of philosophical thinking that he

suggests leaving aside. In this part I want to show that Rorty's treatment of irony, redescribing justice in terms of loyalty, Searle and western Rationalistic Tradition, argumentation, philosophical foundations, the role of philosophy in Western Rationalistic Tradition, and maturation of humanity are presentation of a change of a thinking as new attitude toward world and it is leaving out metaphysical worries about the "real", how to connect to the other side of an ontological chasm, or search for a "neutral matrix". In the same vein I intend to show that various objections against his views including his political views and construal of other philosophers based on rational and realist concerns, his reception including frivolity accusations are also an expression of a fear of giving up on a belief in a higher ontological order of an outside guiding us. Part 5 is about the function of philosophy concerning truth. I will try to show how Rorty "deconstructed a captivating picture of philosophy supplemented by historical awareness" considering his initial exposition of the of "truth is out there" picture guiding intellectual habits.

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The controversy about Rorty comes for the most part from his critical account of the idea of truth that he maintains to have been assumed to exist independently from conditionality as the paramount aim of scientific or philosophical investigation, out there to be discovered. He discredits this tenet, which consolidates epistemological tradition by feeding an understanding of philosophy as a foundational discipline grounding knowledge claims and he further questions the place of some basic dialectical tools like argument and theory. He rejects that it is a relativist attitude and defends his position without recourse to it. His claims to reach a meaningful philosophical treatment through the philosophers he drew on such as Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Dewey, and Davidson, were reacted with suspicion due to accusations of misappropriating them. His pragmatism was denied by some pragmatist thinkers and even charged with heralding the end of philosophy. While he was a renowned analytical thinker, he was deemed to have “changed sides” for more continental or literary reasons.

The dispute escalated when he put forward alternative conceptions usually deemed literary rather than philosophical and approached to philosophical, political, and even scientific issues through them, such as metaphor, vocabulary, conversation, audience, narrative, and redescription. De-emphasizing some concepts and suggesting a re-

emphasis on some others is part of what Rorty calls playing new vocabulary off against old ones for what might be deemed as “progress” in his philosophy. When “objectivity” is dropped from its services, truth loses its mojo, and “irony” steps in as a stance resonant with twists of contingency in Rorty. We had better not express our agreement and disagreement with other opinions by their “truth” or “conformity to the things as they are,” but according to the value they create, e.g., whether or not they contribute to social hope, re-describe things in a creative way, or serve to diminish cruelty. In *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, he sets up to move without arguments and instead puts narration as a better way of achieving his ends.

The “liberal ironist” that Rorty portrays corresponds to an embodiment of his philosophical and political convictions, public and the private separated from but not dominating each other, and in fact, himself. Nevertheless, an alleged discrepancy between his philosophical and political convictions was also raised as an inconsistency. When the manner he evaluates modern philosophy was taken as post-modern, and politically adopted cold war liberalism, he was not found proportionally leftist like e.g., Foucault, Baudrillard, or Lyotard.

Different from other ironist philosophers, e.g., Kierkegaard, or Socrates, he emphasizes the persona rather than the concept of irony. It is actually the ironist rather than irony, which he points out. It appears that for a therapeutic approach and for the sake of edification instead of the construction of a system, you need to adopt an ironic position. An ironic stance as such would be to reverse distance toward another position to which we actually have: far enough to be able to see it in its

context if it is near and something can be missed due to blind spots; or close enough to be able to see what we could not from afar. That requires a different attitude than we are used to have and staying vigilant upon our assumptions.

Truth has penetrated deep into *sensus communis* and consequently to suggest dropping it off is considered against common sense. Rorty has a starting point in an attitude against dogma, but he does not, as it might be expected and sometimes argued, swing towards a relativist end of a philosophical pendulum. His critique is the moral that he gathers from the history of philosophy. He does not produce counterarguments against the notion of “truth-as-reality-in-itself,” for the sake of an alternative truth theory but rather aims to enlighten assumptions behind the “contemporary” idea of truth in philosophy and show that the idea of truth has become a dogma. Such is the notion that should be capitalized: “Truth,” with a capital T, which Rorty aims to dethrone. Objective truth as the aim of inquiry has stopped contributing to, if not damaged, as he believes, the Enlightenment ideal of progress.

The notion of truth has long had its own gravitation in the history of ideas so much so that it is both the foundation and the aim of a range of human inquiry from religions, humanities to sciences. Philosophy as the search for truth is a safe way of putting its aim except for the fact that it is too wide a description since no area of inquiry seeks untruth. However, to set the cause above renown, manifold theories and views of truth fall into its sphere. Rorty’s consideration of truth is extended throughout his works, not only his two monographs *PMN* and *CIS*, but other books

of his collected papers. We do not see an evaluation of the concept of truth in the traditional analytic fashion or in the form of developing a theory of truth. Although he comes close to “pragmatic” theory of truth, it would not be an appropriate attitude to understand his way of philosophizing since he would not be developing any kind of *theoria* in its technical sense at all. So, this is also a matter of finding an appropriate approach to Rorty, sometimes quite in a Rortian sense. Rorty’s conviction in this sense is that a phase marked by its adherence to a representationalist idea of knowledge does not prove to be useful anymore. Attempts to build a foundation to certain values just cannot be managed referring to what is “true” in a self-sustaining reality. We are thus only left with justification for a certain community, implying that as contingent facts change in time, there may be some possible future requirements to change our justificatory reasons. This is not denying causality, though, which could be accounted for in reference to historicism. Once Rorty claims to expose a basic presupposition of contemporary philosophy, he finds a legitimate justification in a criterion of usefulness. The exposition of this presupposition brings with it a disillusionment which is resulted in a Rortian core conviction: to drop out of representationalism. Richard Rorty could help us see a picture of truth presupposed by such inquiry has been jamming our hopes for a better future of human culture and persuade us drop it off for the sake of “singing a new song.” What Rorty suggests in this sense is to change a point of emphasis in inquiry. The matter of dispute between Rorty and his critics is also the emphasis that should be given to the concept of truth.

One should also bear in mind the fact that Rorty as a “historicist” thinker, does not judge the whole history of the development of this idea which has slowly taken the place and privilege once attributed to God. The idea of truth existing as “objective reality” has done its course. The criterion of “true” is justification and it is relative to the audience addressed. Whether a series of “practices of justification lead to “truth” in the end is not a meaningful question as it is unanswerable and unpragmatic because “there is no way to privilege our current purposes and interests and it would make no difference to our practice” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 4). The conceptions of appearance and reality also point the way “progress” in cultural, scientific, or moral domains in setting a goal to reach or come close to the things as they really are. Giving separate accounts of progress in science and in morals is a new intellectual dimension that Rortian antirepresentationalism offers. Moral progress as such, is to increase moral responsibility to other beings, which is not possible without recognizing different “realities” for them. The idea of an objective truth poses a hindrance before new “gestalt switches,” but, he says, “the history of philosophy is the history of Gestalt-switches, not of the painstaking carrying out of research programs” (Rorty R., 1998, p. 11). The task of philosophy for progress is for the most part “to glimpse a possibility that had not previously been grasped” (ibid., 8) by being able to see obsolete attitudes of thought, “to throw away the indispensable ladders up which our culture has climbed in the past,” and thus “solve new problems” (ibid., 6).

Rorty does not believe in constructing an alternative theory on perennial questions about knowledge or truth, but he does seem to have, what might be called a coherent

program in mind, which operates on a metaphilosophical level. Considering Rorty's questions and critique in a metaphilosophical framework and responding to a certain self-image of philosophy and suggesting another perspective might dissolve some of his views that seem incompatible and see them as his contribution to conception of philosophy. He concerns himself over the current situation of philosophy with questions like "What does philosophy do?," "What should a philosopher do?" with his idiosyncratic "historicist" attitude. What seems to be the case, as he describes it, "philosophy is not one thing" and different schools or programs under the name of philosophy can vary. There is a time of expiration indicating they should be discarded as "tools" when they finish responding to desired ends. It appears that, truth is a close offshoot of embracing the significance of "contingency" for Rorty. He suggests that it is time we got rid of the idea of a non-human truth independent from our perspective. How the world is possible without a quest of "objective" truth and the necessity of eliminating it from intellectual inquiry is what he sets forth from various aspects, such as philosophy, politics, and culture in general.

Rorty has a non-glorifying attitude toward philosophy as one of the "highest" achievements of human culture in finding out "truth." He views more possibilities in literature and other artistic fields to transform the society, which is another factor that sketches an image of a philosopher highly "disillusioned" with metaphysical hopes (Habermas, 2000, p. 32). He was presented as if he wanted to dispense with rational intellectual standards and promote "subjectivist madness"⁶. Calling such pillars of thought in question is part of Rorty's metaphilosophical diagnosis due to his

⁶ Russell on William James' pragmatism (Russell, 2004, pp. 723-737).

engagement with the history of modern philosophy, which he views as different questions' attaining and losing high profile.

Pragmatism is one of the building blocks of Rorty's mature philosophy. Inheriting mostly from Dewey, and James to a lesser degree, he interprets it in a distinct way of his own so much so that his version led to another diversification within the tradition often called Neo-pragmatism. Considering the place of the notion of truth in Rorty's philosophy might make it appreciate the significance of Pragmatism in his thought when we reflect on Russell's diagnosis that pragmatism, "as it appears in James, is definition of truth" (Russell, 2004, p. 724). Taking the pragmatist conception of truth as weighing the truth of a proposition according to its practical effects, Rorty, in his *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 1982, interprets it as an attitude according to which "truth" should not be expected to yield any "philosophically interesting" work anymore and compares it to the use of "good". The word "interesting" here bears the significance, suggesting novelty, new descriptions, new metaphors and a new vocabulary as one can find in works of authors with "poetic gifts," rather than "airtight arguments", platitudes, or *theoria*. More concretely it is the "interesting" caliber he used in the sense that:

Interesting philosophy is rarely an examination of the pros and cons of a thesis. Usually it is, implicitly or explicitly, a contest between an entrenched vocabulary which has become a nuisance and a half-formed new vocabulary which vaguely promises great things. (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 9)

His exposition and appropriation of pragmatism in his philosophy have not always been well-received and even denied the title."⁷ The peak of negative criticism might

⁷ Quine, Putnam, and Davidson are attributed with Neopragmatism besides Rorty, but they do not claim the title. Difference between Pragmatism and Neo-pragmatism is a matter of debate. For more

be in Susan Haack's interpretations of Rorty. For her, Rorty's version is not simply neo-pragmatism but Rortyism, which she equals to "vulgar pragmatism" (Haack, 1997, p. 67).

In his philosophy, Rorty incorporates elements that are not very directly pragmatic at first sight; like his construal of Heidegger, most strikingly, who deems American philosophy "sub-standard" and Dewey "not a philosopher in the sense of great tradition of philosophy" (Joas, 1993, p. 106). In his *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, he aims to see how far Heidegger can tolerate a pragmatist reading (Rorty R. , 1991, p. 27). The "pragmatist" here must be taken with caution regarding the peculiarity of Rorty's pragmatism and it is not only a Rortian way of pragmatism but a Rortian reading of Heidegger in general and he makes the connection through an emphasis on the historicist character of the world that he claims to be shared by them. Rorty likes to consider himself as an eclectic thinker; he has a distinctive interpretation of diverse philosophers and philosophical programs to incorporate in a fashion of his own.

His way of describing these ideas and philosophers, such as Heidegger, pragmatism, or historicism, was reacted with charges of misconstruction. Kuhn and Davidson explicitly reject some ideas Rorty attributes to them. Pragmatism being a basic conviction and John Dewey a key figure in it, he interprets Heidegger and

detailed discussion see (Koopman, 2007), (Hildebrand, 2016), (Wilshire, 1997), and (Philosophy, 2000).

Wittgenstein in a way to create a harmony among them. To bring them into a Rortian accord his interpretation occurs according to evaluative factors like pragmatism, Darwinian evolution, anti-essentialism, anti-representationalism, antifoundationalism, nominalism, or historicism, which also make up his general philosophical approach.

It appears that Rorty in a way polarized the intelligentsia: while he was, and still is, criticized with having betrayed serious philosophical analysis, he is also recognized as a prolific thinker who retooled philosophy for a new world. These pro- and anti-Rortian camps might nevertheless unite on the authenticity of his concerns over the state of the world and his own poetic stance in it. Just as his views are felt to be influential beyond the departments of philosophy, his expectation from philosophy exceeds dealing with problems inbred within themselves⁸. He looks to philosophy play more than a stagnant academic role for the good of humanity and inspiration to self-fulfillment. He might be considered as being “perverse enough” to bind irreconcilable spirits but the course of his thought is not composed of abrupt changes or harsh jumps as it is sometimes claimed. It must in the first place be noted that one should not find an epiphanic breakthrough that made him embark on a new way of thinking. In another respect, Rorty is committed to his own poetics of stance; his “poetic” achievements in the sense he uses the term to describe the world in a creative and novel fashion. Through the “ironist” he describes on separate occasions, the kind of philosopher as opposed to the “metaphysician”, for instance, he also

⁸ cf. (Popper, 2002).

describes his own position: different traditions are not a matter of classification of genres for him, as an ironist he

take[s] the writings of all the people with poetic gifts, all the original minds who had a talent for redescription—Pythagoras, Plato, Milton, Newton, Goethe, Kant, Kierkegaard, Baudelaire, Darwin, Freud—as grist to be put in the same dialectical mill.” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 76)

Philosophy is not “an attempt to know about certain thing—quite general and important things”, “as defined by reference to the canonical Plato–Kant sequence” but “the attempt to apply and develop a particular antecedently chosen final vocabulary—one which revolves around the appearance–reality distinction” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 76). For Rorty, sentences like “‘All men by nature desire to know’ or ‘Truth is independent of the human mind’ are simply platitudes used to inculcate the local final vocabulary, the common sense of the West.” Her

description of what ... [she] is doing when ... [she] looks for a better final vocabulary than the one ... [she] is currently using is dominated by metaphors of making rather than finding, of diversification and novelty rather than convergence to the antecedently present. ... [She] thinks of final vocabularies as poetic achievements rather than as fruits of diligent inquiry according to antecedently formulated criteria. (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 76)

The pursuit of a vision that can enable Rorty’s “reality” that he summarized with “wild orchids” and his social mindedness to reconcile grows out of his earliest intellectual issues and makes it a search for an existential stance as well. The reference to the phrase “holds reality and justice in a single vision” is by the poet W. B. Yeats who felt a similar need for a “vision⁹” or a “system¹⁰.” Yeats turns to an

⁹ Yeats’s *A Vision* covers this idea of merging and his other views on philosophical, literary, or poetic matters with an esoteric whiff.

¹⁰ “The System” is what Yeats calls the interplay of ideas in total in his *A Vision*.

occult order. When he was asked whether he actually believed “in the actual existence of [his] circuits of sun and moon” in his *A Vision*, he says that “they have helped [him] to hold in a single thought reality and justice” (Yeats, 1978, pp. 24-25). What he was looking for in the order, he believes, was rather “practical”; he “wished for a system of thought that would leave [his] imagination free to create as it chose and yet make all that it created, or could create, part of the one history, and that the soul’s” (Yeats, 1978, p. xi). An object like this may indicate a desire to unite one’s idiosyncrasies into an institution as if the poet in question pursues a kind of validation from a higher order.

Rorty seeks a kind of justification from an early age for his “private, weird, snobbish, incommunicable interests,” or “esotericism”, wondering how grown-ups could manage to hold both worlds together. What gives him this sentiment is the socialist faith that he was raised with; he was “afraid that Trotsky would not have approved of” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 7) such “petit bourgeois” habits. Going into religion seems like the first choice as a way to resolve this dilemma but he gives up the idea upon failing to commit himself what T.S. Eliot, who was apparently one of the literary heroes when Rorty was a college student, recommended: becoming a devout Christian could save one from “unhealthy preoccupation with ... private obsessions” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 9). The closest candidate remains to be “absolutist philosophy.” He finds a similar transcendence in “moral and philosophical absolutes” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 8) with his “beloved orchids”, which are liable to be presented to an elite.

If “virtue is knowledge,” Rorty expected at first, moral character would be justified by his intellectual gifts and reality and justice would merge. He would then, he says, both be as good a Christian as Alyosha Karamazov and as learned as his teacher Strauss at Chicago (Rorty R., 1999, p. 9). This goal suggests Rorty’s pursuit that he set out is rather of wisdom in so far as it concerns the question of how to live. It is a quest that resembles Aristotle’s *phronesis* in that what he seeks requires some deeper knowledge that could be “derived from experience”, which he cannot yet have (Nicomachean Ethics, p. 1142a) and Nozick’s definition of wisdom (Nozick, 1989, pp. 267-278) in its essential relation with actual living. Even if he could not get what he expected as an answer from Platonism this quest for merging visions at the onset of his philosophical career, the question “what, if anything, philosophy is good for” is instilled in Rorty’s philosophy and he “spends 40 years looking for a coherent and convincing way of formulating [his] worries” (Rorty R, 1999, p. 11) about it.

“What philosophy is good for” is not much different from what philosophy is for Rorty. Being it is what it is for twenty-six hundred years; the question becomes an issue for Rorty with a series of “disillusionments” with different philosophical promises. His “initial disillusion” was with Platonism where he could not find a frame wide enough to reconcile Trotsky and wild orchids, an expectation that had led him to major in philosophy (Rorty R., 1999, pp. 7-10). In Platonism he perceives two intentions that do not seem to be consistent; achieving rational upper hand skills by which one gains “argumentative power over others” and the kind of beatific vision in which no argumentation is needed anymore beyond the divided line (*ibid.*, 9-10).

The problem of unified vision is dissolved for Rorty after thirty years when he

decides that the question itself was “wrong” when he turned out to be an anti-Platonist and found such uniformity in attitude toward individual and moral conduct rather a religious symptom (ibid., p. 12). Even if he dissociates philosophy from a mission of regulating stance, the possibility of “noncircular justification” poses another challenge for philosophical truth.

As it may have become a “cottage industry”, producing more articles, books, companions or anthologies about his philosophy, many works as such start with a similar emphasis: that he is one of the most influential philosophers of the last century, his effect has not been confined to philosophy departments or even academics¹¹, and he had a broad repertoire of writings. Richard Posner, judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, who “considers [him]self a legal pragmatist” maintains that Rorty’s pragmatism had a “great impact on law” among other fields and he himself “owe[s] much to Rorty’s pioneering work”, which pictured a “concept of philosophy as a constructive engagement with social problems, rather than as a secular theology preoccupied with abstractions such as truth and meaning” (Metcalf, 2007). Different subjects on which essays were published in relation to his philosophy extend to international relations, feminism, education, psychiatry, poetry, philosophy of sport, ethics and animals, human rights, art and aesthetics, media, and theology¹².

¹¹ See (Williams, 2009, p. xiii), (Lewis-Kraus, 2003) (Robbins J. W., 2011, p. vii) (Guignon & Hiley, Introduction: Richard Rorty and Contemporary Philosophy, 2003, p. 1) (Nielsen, 1991, p. 3) (Malachowski, 2002, p. 1) (Malachowski, 2020, pp. 2-3)

¹² E.g. (Brassett, 2009), (Bacchi, 1992), (Beatham, 1991), (Benjamin, 1991), (Canovan, 1996), (Dixon, 2001), (Dombrowski, 1983), (Keita, 2001), (Yuval, 1991), (Sandbothe, 2000).

2.1. Intellectual Biography

Richard Rorty is not unknown. He has been widely read, translated, and discussed since the second half of the twentieth century. “Rorty” was the keyword of more than fifty articles in humanities published each year in the early 1990s, at the peak of his popularity. *PMN* appeared almost two thousand times in the Arts and Humanities Citation Index from its publication in 1979 until 2005 (Gross, 2008, p. 25). Richard Rumana’s bibliographical work of the secondary literature on Rorty in 2002 contains over twelve hundred citations (Rumana, 2002, p. xi). *PMN* has been translated into seventeen and *CIS* into twenty-two languages in his lifetime (MacIntyre, 2008, p. 183). Research interest in his views persists at the present time as well. There appeared at least nine more Rorty-companions,¹³ and from 2016 to 2022 five posthumous¹⁴ works have been published under his name. Indeed, In *The Rorty Reader*, 2010, Christopher J. Voparil says that the ever-growing secondary literature on Rorty crashed “the limits [that] ... a single human being [could] ... master” (Voparil & Bernstein, 2010, p. 2).

A professional factor throws some negative judgments into sharp relief. Rorty’s background career in the philosophy of mind, which was an eminent one, escalates opposition to his later stance in philosophy. He is considered to have developed a

¹³ (Malachowski, Richard Rorty, 2002), (Guignon & Hiley, Richard Rorty, 2003), (Voparil & Bernstein, 2010), (Auxier & Hahn, The Philosophy of Richard Rorty, 2010), (Tartaglia, 2010), (Gröschner, Koopman, & Sandbothe, 2013), (Malachowski, A Companion to Rorty, 2020), (Rondel, 2021).

¹⁴ (Mind, Language, and Metaphilosophy, 2014), (Philosophy as Poetry, 2016), (On Philosophy and Philosophers: Unpublished Papers, 2020), (Philosophy as Anti-Authoritarianism, 2021), (What can We Hope for? Essays on Politics, 2022).

standpoint at odds with the analytic tradition, leaning toward more “continental” issues on a rather literary path, which consequently gave rise to a tendency that reduced him to a thinker who “changed sides” or “softened”. It might be safe to say that Rorty would have caused fewer disputes only if he had not been in such an intellectual position. He even loses a valuable teacher and friend, Carl Hempel, to those views. Hempel was a leading logical positivist from Berlin School, who had to escape from the Nazi Germany to USA where he became a symbol of “social democratic, scientific, and truth-seeking world of Anglo-American philosophy” and “one of the best-loved figures in the profession and a model of moral character,” according to Rorty. After reading *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Hempel wrote a letter saying to the effect that Rorty betrayed all those values he stood for and distanced himself from Rorty afterwards (Rorty R., 2006, p. 1). Hempel takes *CIS* as a complete betrayal of “everything he stands for” (Mendieta, 2006, p. 1). After a commitment to philosophical principles like rigor, logical clarification, precision, conceptual analysis, and argumentation, he assumes a different stance toward philosophy in which he resorts to imagination, re-description, and narration. Rorty’s new attitude in philosophy is taken by some critics to such a degree to frivolousness and to charge him with contradicting others for the sake of contradiction. Such an accusation of sophistic insincerity is the one that Rorty considers the most unfair and he writes “Trotsky and Wild Orchids,” an autobiographical evaluation of how he got where he ended up in his philosophical position (Rorty R., 1999, p. 5).

Rorty, nonetheless, takes his first steps in philosophy with Platonic aims in mind; “to become one with the One, to fuse [him]self with Christ or God or the Platonic form

of the Good or something like that” (Rorty, Nystrom , & Puckett, 2002, p. 51). In the late fifties when he starts teaching at Wellesley Rorty realizes that he did not get to know enough about this field when he was in Yale and that he must educate himself in analytic philosophy. Behind this decision of this new engagement, a couple of reasons stand out. One is obviously the need to be up to date with a rising philosophical tendency in the academic world, especially for a young scholar like him. In other words, he sets out “to find out” what his colleagues were talking about”, “to get in on the discussions,” and “to sound like all the other guys” (Rorty, Nystrom , & Puckett, 2002, p. 53).

Such coping is required if he wants to survive in an academic atmosphere especially in a place like Princeton philosophy department, top-ranking in the analytical field and his next stop after Wellesley. Apparently, he does more than retooling himself for a new philosophical program and publishes valuable articles in the area. Among the most know are “Empiricism, Extensionalism, and Reductionism,” “Incorrigibility as the Mark of the Mental,” and “Indeterminacy of Translation and of Truth”—all of them addressing problems central to analytic philosophy, none of them differentiating Rorty sharply from his fellow analytic philosophers. And indeed, Rorty’s statement of the then-present condition of analytic philosophy in his introduction to the anthology that he edited, *The Linguistic Turn* (1967), was one that many analytic philosophers accepted and admired. But perhaps no one else could have written it at that time (MacIntyre, 2008, p. 185).

2.1.1 Out of the Analytic Field

The year 1979 is significant for him in that his name begins to be heard by a wider audience on two occasions; one is his highest, and last, attainment of office while he was still known as an analytic philosopher, the presidency of the Eastern Division of American Philosophical Association, where analytic philosophers were dominant, and on the other hand, later the same year *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is published; it his first book-length monograph, which spells a major break with the analytic tradition for him. However, the coincidence of time is less dramatic than it sounds: *PMN* was not available until 1980 and its reception was quite slow; it did not make an instantly grand debut (Rorty, Nystrom, & Puckett, 2002, p. 55). We should also note that although these two events may seem to go in reverse directions, some details show a deeper strand in his views.

What does not change with Rorty when he wrote *Trotsky and the Wild Orchids* in 1992 was still there in 1979, that is, he remains in a position outside opposing ideologies, whether left and right or analytic and non-analytic camps, attacked from both sides. During Rorty's presidency the APA had under long been dominance of the analytic wing. Although he is praised for performing this mission "admirably... act[ing] as an effective conciliator and peacemaker" by MacIntyre (MacIntyre, 2008, p. 187), and as a "mediator" by Berel Lang, (Lang, 1990, p. 123) between the ruling analytic group and the opposing allies against them, Rorty declines it. He describes his situation rather as not giving way to the "thuggish" attitude of a domineering

ideology¹⁵. His story is a “falling between two stools,” (Rorty R., 1999, p. 3); he has “never been forgiven by the analytic philosophers for that” and despite his decision to the advantage of the “Pluralists”, he has “also never been liked or trusted by the pluralists” (Rorty, Nystrom , & Puckett, 2002, p. 54) just as he was years later assailed by the political left and right as “relativistic, irrationalist, weakening the moral fiber of the young, cynical, nihilistic, elitist, complacent, and irresponsible” (Rorty R., 1999, pp. 3-4).

2.1.2. Transition: Princeton

Rorty’s alleged “transition” is a question though. His “exact contemporary” with whom he shared almost the same schools, teachers, and hopes for more than fifty years, Richard J. Bernstein finds it a “misleading legend” that Rorty went through such a sharp turn in his philosophical convictions (Bernstein R. J., 2008, p. 13). Richard Rumana, who composed a comprehensive annotated bibliography on Rorty, wrote his doctoral thesis comparing early and later Rorty before the publication of the autobiographical “Trotsky and Wild Orchids”. He finds no “radical break in his thought from traditional philosopher to critic of the tradition” from his PhD in 1956 to 2002 (Rumana, 2002, p. xiii). To begin with, Rorty’s first steps were not on analytic tract. It was not until 1961 when he started teaching at Princeton University, did Rorty feel the need to speak in analytic language, which is the prevalent form of philosophy there practiced by his new colleagues; some notable figures like Carl

¹⁵ During Rorty’s presidency of the Eastern Division of the APA, pluralists, academicians from all directions such as phenomenologists, Whiteheadians, pragmatists, and Thomists (Lang, 1990, p. 123), who come together against the dominancy of the analytic party, gain the majority for the presidency. Nevertheless, Rorty is called upon to cancel the elections by the analytic party on account of some membership issues, which he openly declines. See (Rorty, Nystrom , & Puckett, 2002, pp. 51, 54).

Hempel, Stuart Hampshire, Donald Davidson, David Lewis, Thomas Kuhn, and Saul Kripke, with whom he wants to catch up and compensate for what he missed at Chicago and Yale (Rorty R., 2010, pp. 10-11).

Rorty was hired by Gregory Vlastos, who noticed his doctoral thesis, to teach Ancient Greek philosophy at Princeton, Aristotle in particular, “leaving [Vlastos] himself free to concentrate on Plato” (Rorty R., 2010, p. 10). His dissertation was on Aristotle’s concept of potentiality and account of *dynamis* in the ninth book of his *Metaphysics*; Descartes’ dismissive treatment of the Aristotelian potency-act distinction; and Carnap’s and Goodman’s treatment of subjunctive conditionals and of nomologicality” (Rorty R., 2010, p. 8) under the supervision of Paul Weiss at Yale University. In this unpublished work Bernstein notices Rorty’s “early metaphysical interests” for he chooses the topic because it enables to perceive “the relation between the problems of logical empiricism and the problems of traditional metaphysics and epistemology” (Bernstein R. J., 2008, p. 14).

2.1.3. Wellesley, Yale

Before Princeton, between 1958 and 1961, he worked at Wellesley College where he taught “a bit of everything” among which there was a course on Heidegger, Husserl, and Sartre (Rorty R. , 2010, p. 9). In 1973 he edits *Exegesis and Argument: Essays in Greek Philosophy presented to Gregory Vlastos* with Edward Lee and Alexander Mourelatos, which he also contributed with an article of his own, “Genus as Matter: A Reading of *Metaphysics* A-Z”. The subject is continuous with his PhD dissertation “The Concept of Potentiality” and his non-analytic background in philosophy at Yale

and Chicago. He completed his BA and MA at the University of Chicago and PhD at Yale. Both universities were “at odds with national trends of logical positivism.”

The philosophy department at Chicago “maintained an eclectic orientation” (Gross, 2008, p. 106) and at Yale analytic philosophers such as Carl Hempel and Arthur Pap were marginalized as contrary to the situation at Harvard, where “nonanalytic philosophers were marginalized by Quine and his followers”, and Rorty’s initiation to analytic philosophy would have started sooner if Harvard had granted him scholarship instead of Yale in 1951 (Rorty R., 2010, p. 7). While he was at Yale for PhD between 1952 and 1956, he actually had noticed that analytic philosophy was on the rise and Carnap and Quine were the leading actors and “starts reading analytic philosophy when he was completing his dissertation,” (Bernstein R. J., 2008, p. 15) but he chose Sellars to study in the first place for a smooth start from his existing position as he was “less reductionist and less positivistic” (Rorty R., 2010, p. 8). Sellars had a metaphilosophically and historically favorable side in terms of “showing how the linguistic turn with its subtle analytic techniques could be used to clarify and further the discussion of many traditional philosophical issues” and in that both his friend Bernstein and Rorty while at Yale take Sellars to be “the best representative of the analytic tradition” (Bernstein R. J., 2008, p. 15). Sellars was going to become one of Rorty’s philosophical heroes to draw upon then on.

If analytic philosophy is the name of a tradition, which has such a wide scope of subject matter that it cannot possibly be subsumed under “a set of doctrines” and it could be defined on metaphysical grounds such as its adherence to “the way

philosophy is done” (Soames, 2003, p. xiii), Scott Soames puts it just the opposite of what Rorty proposes in his *CIS*. Analytic philosophy, all in all, according to Soames,

aims at truth and knowledge, as opposed to moral or spiritual improvement. There is very little in the way of practical or inspirational guides in the art of living to be found, and very much in the way of philosophical theories that purport to reveal the truth about a given domain of inquiry. In general, the goal in analytic philosophy is to discover what is true, not to provide a useful recipe for living one’s life. (Soames, 2003, p. xiv)

Rorty did not target analytic philosophy as anathema in the incident of APA elections but saw practices of certain individual philosophers who used their philosophical tendencies as an ideology to discriminate against other tendencies. Similarly in 1984, it is not a certain philosophy that is targeted to be shown to give way to dictatorial practices but how a certain philosophy could be used to implement totalitarian aims, be it realism or idealism.

2.1.4. Aristotle, Whitehead, Hegel

At this stage before Princeton, Rorty was taught in the climate of Aristotle, Hegel, and Whitehead. Especially *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Adventures of Ideas* were his source of “greatest impression” (Rorty R., 2010, pp. 5,6). After *Principia Mathematica* with Russell, Whitehead, a mathematician, follows his “metaphysical ambitions on a truly Hegelian scale” and

to some American philosophers in the 1950s, Whitehead had come to be regarded as a bastion of ‘speculative’ metaphysics against the incursion of positivistic versions of the earlier form of analysis introduced by Principia Mathematica brought to the United States by European logical positivists seeking refuge from the rise of Nazism.” (Redding, 2020, p. 256)

At Yale Rorty was particularly impressed by the rationalist and epistemological idealist Brand Blanshard and Paul Weiss, who was a student of Whitehead, and

whose concerns were metaphysical (Rorty R. , 2010, p. 7). Charles Hartshorne, one of Whitehead's students, who also studied under Husserl and Heidegger in the 1920s (Rorty R., 2014, p. 1 fn), was his "guru" at Chicago University.

The University of Chicago was where Rorty started his philosophical education at the age of fifteen until receiving his MA degree with a thesis on Whitehead's notion of "conceptual prehension" supervised by Hartshorne (Rorty R., 2010, pp. 5-7).

Before Robert Maynard Hutchins assumed presidency in 1929, the University of Chicago was largely run by the pragmatism of John Dewey. Dewey was one of the most eminent philosophers of the time and his philosophy was adapted by Rorty's parents and other New York intellectuals, the environment in which Rorty grew up. Yet, Hutchins, advised by anti-Deweyan, Aristotelian and Thomist Mortimer Adler, was to "transform the philosophy department there so as to lessen pragmatism's influence in the university" (Gross, 2008, p. 87). According to them pragmatism was "vulgar, relativistic, and self-refuting" (Rorty R., 1999, p. 8).

When Rorty started college in 1946, the university had almost been surrounded by a "neo-Aristotelian mystique" (Rorty R., 1999, p. 8). One of the main convictions at Chicago, which was then full of revered scholars, like Strauss, who had sought refuge there from Nazis, says Rorty, was the need for a stable truth, a weightier one than Dewey's principle "growth itself is the only moral end" which wouldn't deter one to believe that "Germany 'grew' under Hitler" (ibid., p. 8). This quest for an "absolute truth" feels like the kind of numen he finds in "orchids" and sounds like a convenient way of an "adolescent revolt" against his Deweyan environment of

upbringing when he starts college at the age of fifteen. Thus, he decides to choose absolutist philosophy and “scorn Dewey,” whom he will return some thirty years later. So, at Hutchins where young Rorty came with an enthusiasm and confusion caused by having read Plato and Nietzsche, his questions concerning the existence of “absolutes” were to be affirmed.

His rejection of any claim on “truth” that mostly offends critics from the right, as his cold war bourgeois liberalism offends the left and his version of pragmatism is repudiated by some other pragmatists. In autobiographical accounts he recounts how he acquired his position, and how he became involved in philosophy and

then found ... [himself] unable to use philosophy for the purpose ... [he] had originally had in mind” so as to be able to “make clear that, even if ... [his] views about the relation of philosophy and politics are odd, they were not adopted for frivolous reasons.” (Rorty R., 1999, p. 9)

Especially the point where he says how he could not find what he looked for in philosophy in the beginning sheds light on his metaphilosophical convictions.

Alasdair MacIntyre articulates a “tacit convention, in analytic philosophy at least,” about referring to a philosopher’s “themselves and their prephilosophical convictions,” which would suggest downgrading philosophical arguments to non-philosophical matters of fact. MacIntyre’s reason for breaching this “taboo” is “to fully understand Rorty’s philosophical development” in his obituary essay on Rorty (MacIntyre, 2008, p. 184).

One basic part of Rorty's own perspective of the world as a continuous struggle between one and its environment is another upshot of the rationale to have a look at his own social history¹⁶. A Rorty reader should want to have a clue about his own intellectual effects and causes that bear on his philosophy which seems necessary for a "sympathetic comprehension" of the philosopher, as Bertrand Russell puts in his history of philosophy. Russell considers the viewpoint of "philosophy as an integral part of the life of the community and not merely an affair of the schools, or of disputation between a handful of learned men" to be the "only merit" from which his *History of Western Philosophy* is derived. Philosophers, in this respect must be presented not as if they are "in a vacuum," but as "an outcome of their milieu" because thoughts and feelings, which in a vague and diffused form were common to the community of which they are a part, were crystallized and concentrated in them" (Russell, 2004, pp. ix-xi). This approach has an affinity to Rorty's frequent emphasis on the Hegelian idea of philosophy as "its time held in thought" (Rorty R., 2007, p. ix) and a similar fuzziness that Russell mentions seems to be made perceptible by Rorty.

2.1.5. Two Childhood Environments

Rorty could show that his philosophical stance is a product of some questions that he was not satisfied with answers provided before and the questions are intertwined with what he happened to go through in life. In his famous "Trotsky and the Wild Orchids," he reveals how his public intellectual side grew and how his private and

¹⁶ For a sociological explication of Rorty and his philosophy see Neil Gross's *Richard Rorty: The Making of an American Philosopher*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

public commitments set in. It will appear in Rorty's intellectual history that the question of philosophy, and not just certain projects or trends in it, mattered the most for him from the beginning. He conjures up childhood images that pertain to his mature political views. One noticeable fact is that he takes his exceedingly early years into consideration when addressing his philosophical outlook. He already starts university at the age of fifteen at Hutchins College¹⁷, a choice that he liked as a precocious teenager bullied at school (Rorty R., 1999, p. 7). He has a childhood devoted mostly to reading, in a vibrant intellectual and political environment that gave him vivid recollections of hard facts about pre-war, post-depression America, and the hustle and bustle of the 30s and 40s' New York socialist intelligentsia. He comes from what might be called a "privileged intellectual social position¹⁸," with a family of academics, writers, and artists (Gross, 2008, p. 13).

2.1.6 Rauschenbusch

In his family full of intellectuals, his maternal grandfather, Walter Rauschenbusch, stands out as a figure who actually fought for the social justice Rorty envisioned: "a classless, casteless, egalitarian society," within a Protestant domain, nonetheless.

Rauschenbusch's project of building the Kingdom of God on Earth, according to

¹⁷ As part of a special program that Robert Maynard Hutchins offered when he became the president of the University of Chicago. Rorty thus attended Hutchins College, which was for, what Hutchins describes as the "gifted students ... [who] were ready for college-level work earlier than the American education system allowed for" (Gross, 2008, p. 87). About the institution Rorty quotes A.J. Liebling, who depicts it as "the biggest collection of juvenile neurotics since the Children's Crusade" (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 7).

¹⁸ According to Randall Collins, that possibly "confers an advantage in intellectual life" (Gross, 2008, p. 12). Russell and Sartre had advantaged backgrounds in this respect: they were both raised in intellectual environments and went on in elite educational organizations. Their difference from Rorty was, of course, that they were also born well-off into an intellectual aristocracy (Baert, 2016, p. 169).

Rorty, is one of the culminations of “the most distinctive and praiseworthy human capacity, [that is] our ability to trust and to cooperate with other people”. In this sense it is on a par with other “political utopias such as Plato's ideal state or Marx's vision of the victory of the proletariat” (Rorty R., 1999, pp. xii-xiv). Rauschenbusch, who Rorty as a child was raised to think as “a sort of social hero” (Zabala, 2017) was one of the leaders of the Social Gospel Movement, significant in American history and Christian tradition, at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Jeffrey Stout, Rorty’s way was following Dewey in “secularizing the social gospel that Rauschenbusch had preached” (Sung, 2010). Among “projects of this sort,” as construed by Plato or Marx, according to Rorty, Dewey’s devotion to social democracy is “the most plausible” one when it comes to “our century” and together with James, they should be taken seriously when they advise us to “get rid of the old dualisms,” to enable this project to become “central to our intellectual lives as it is to our political lives” (Rorty R., 1999, p. xiv).

Rauschenbusch was a Baptist minister, a theologian and a historical figure being one of the leaders¹⁹ of the “Social Gospel Movement”, who is considered to formalize it (Hopkins, 1940, p. 215). The ideology is also an outgrowth of Christian Socialism²⁰

¹⁹ Along with Washington Gladden and Greenwood Peabody (Dorn, 1993, p. 83).

²⁰ Christian Socialism is a movement that dates back to eighteen fifties in Europe as a response to poverty, bigotry, and social injustice. It pointed out the emphasis of Christianity on social justice, promoting poverty as a way to moral superiority and its war against Mammon. F.D. Morris first used it to describe those who are not “unsocial Christians or unchristian socialists”. Henri de Saint-Simon is one of its founders in France, in the USA, Henry James Sr., the father of novelist Henry James and philosopher William James. Tolstoy is considered among its preachers. It is thought to be suggested in the philosophies of Fichte and Hegel. It was particularly developed in England, Germany, France, Belgium, and the USA (Bliss, 1897, pp. 251-260).

in Protestantism (Hopkins, 1940, pp. 3-24) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Rauschenbusch's most important work, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, was a source of significant inspiration for "tens of thousands of Christian ministers" and Social Gospel, as Rorty notes it, "was a force in political life" in the first half of the twentieth century US (Rorty R. , 2007). It was a time of rapid industrialization which brought economic depressions²¹, sweatshops, child labor, strikes, and protests along. People were suffering under miserable working conditions, long hours for low wages in inhumane environments (Zinn, 1980, p. 239). Rauschenbusch does not believe individual salvation in the Kingdom of God is possible without social justice on earth, which is a fight, he believes, against the servants of Mammon²² (Rauschenbusch, 2007, pp. 50-73). With seven generations of pastors behind him, starting his career in a small Second German Baptist Church in Hell's Kitchen of New York City shows him the other side of the Gilded Age and rouses him to his *Christianity and Social Crisis* in which he sought an answer to the ruthless conditions of his age (Rauschenbusch, 2007, p. 231). He would not "take refuge in an apolitical insouciance" (Sung, 2010) and circumvent cruelty in the temporal world on the way to the eternal, as a leading public theologian and intellectual. About a century later Rorty will similarly, in his own words, "hoe the same row" (Sung, 2010) with his grandfather.

²¹ E.g., Panic of 1873, Panic of 1893, and later the Great Depression in 1929.

²² "Who drain their fellow men for gain, . . . who have made us ashamed of our dear country by their defilements, . . . [and] who have cloaked their extortion with the gospel of Christ" (Rorty R., p. 59).

2.1.7. Red Diaper

Rorty's parents lived a life of active resistance to social injustice in "fervid and intense" (Howe, 2014, p. 87) years of a vibrant political environment. Rorty was born a red-diaper baby²³ in 1931, as the only child of Winifred and James Rorty, who were then members of the US Communist Party. His parents soon broke ties with the Party when Rorty was one year old. They were non-academic writers and activists. His father, James Rorty, was a man of letters who tried different jobs in his life from dry goods business to writing copy. Nevertheless, he "was at heart a poet," (Gross, 2008, p. 55) as his close friend and leading New York intellectual Sydney Hook recalls him, and as a poet who overturns his adolescent son's dreams of writing poetry, as Rorty recalls it. Upon leaving the Communist Party, they became part of the "New York Intellectuals," and Rorty was practically born into this socialist, anti-Stalinist, and Trotskyist haven. His parents did not object being labeled as "Trotskyites," by the Party newspaper, the Daily Worker (Rorty R., 1999, p. 6), which for the next three years printed cartoons of James Rorty "as a trained seal catching fish thrown by William Randolph Hearst²⁴" (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 59). Rorty then transfers to being a "red-diaper anticommunist baby" (ibid., p. 58).

²³ A description, in a narrow sense, used for "children of Communist Party members, children of former CP members, and children whose parents never became members of the CP but were involved in political, cultural or educational activities led or supported by the Party" (Kaplan & Shapiro, 1998, p. 2).

²⁴ Publisher whose newspaper chain dominated American journalism along with his rival Joseph Pulitzer. His use of sensationalism, colorful pages of magazine, articles on pseudoscientific topics and Yellow Kid cartoon competition with Pulitzer gave rise to the term yellow journalism (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia 2023).

While Rorty put it half in jest, the point in being a “red-diaper baby” is the way they grow up. Some of them were raised in a strict “party discipline” (Kaplan & Shapiro, 1998, p. 92) and some other not so much but in the end they were raised in a socialist moral environment at home and find themselves somewhat a rarity in the general public, among their classmates at school, for instance, who had regular Christian upbringing. Rorty remains a “red diaper,” in a broad sense, and has his share of the tradition. He says they had volumes of the reports of Dewey Commission Inquiry into the Moscow Trials, *The Case of Leon Trotsky*, and *Not Guilty* on the bookshelves at home where other children saw the Bible (Rorty R., 1999, p. 5). Their family bible was nonetheless not much to the interest of the twelve-year-old Rorty; he found books like Krafft-Ebing's *Psycopathia Sexualis*, more interesting, yet with a bit of guilt of conscience. “If he were a really good boy,” he thought to himself, “he should have read not only the Dewey Commission reports, but also Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*” (Rorty R., 1999, p. 5). In his young mind, despite the fact that he was off to university three years later, Russian Revolution and its betrayal by Stalin was synonymous with what the Incarnation and its betrayal by the Catholics meant for “precocious little Lutherans 400 hundred years before” (Rorty R., 1999, p. 5). This highly social-minded atmosphere at home makes him believe that good people were naturally socialists and “poor people would always be oppressed until capitalism was overcome” as his bullies at school would vanish, too, once the revolution comes (Rorty R., 1999, pp. 6-7).

2.1.8. Twelfth Winter

His “twelfth winter” that he spent in his parents' office, Worker's Defense League, working as an unpaid office boy bears permanent impressions on his later political stance, recognizing cruelty as the prime public enemy particularly. He would take drafts of press releases to the then Socialist Party's candidate for the president, Norman Thomas²⁵'s residency, and to A. Philip Randolph²⁶ at his office at the Brotherhood of Pullman Car Porters. Rorty dedicates his *Achieving Our Country*²⁷ to Randolph, (along with Irving Howe), for whom he has a lifelong admiration for his fight against injustice. On his way in the subway, he would read those papers and learn

what factory owners did to union organizers, plantation owners to sharecroppers, and the white locomotive engineers' union to the colored firemen (whose jobs white men wanted, now that diesel engines were replacing coal-fired stem engines) (Rorty R., 1999, p. 6)

and he was sowed with the idea that “the point of being human was to spend one's life fighting social injustice” (ibid). In this “privileged” family environment as such Rorty observes what “cruelty” looks like from an early age, which gives his “cold war liberalism” more than “frivolous” and concrete enough reasons to hold.

²⁵ 1884-1968. American socialist politician. He ran for governor of New York in 1924, for mayor of New York City twice in 1925 and 1929, and for president of the United States six successive times from 1928 to 1933. He was one of the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union. He started his career in 1911 as the pastor of East Harlem Church and the chairman of the American Parish, a settlement house in one of the poorest sections of New York City. (Britannica, 2022).

²⁶ 1889-1979. American Trade unionist and civil-rights activist, who fought for the rights of African American community. He was the founding president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters to defend black sleeping car workers against cruelly harsh working conditions, which was then deemed suitable only to the black and most of the workers employed were once enslaved house servants from the South (Chateauvert, 2016). He also strove against racist discrimination within American Union system (Britannica, 2023, April 11).

²⁷ Hereafter *AOC*.

According to Rorty's autobiographical testimonial, his conscience was formed in an environment where social responsibility was not assumed *ex gratia*, but it was actually fought for. As families conventionally pass on their religious beliefs to children, the faith at Rorty home was a secular socialist ideal of justice and he was borne by it. In this atmosphere he also developed a world of his own, outside sweatshops, union protests, press release drafts for Norman Thomas, factory owners, John Frank²⁸ hiding at his house, Carlo Tresca²⁹ gunned down on the streets of New York, sharecroppers or plantation owners. It was a world of Flatbrookville woods, coralroots and yellow lady slippers that makes Wordsworth audible, in which, he says he felt "touched by something numinous, something of ineffable importance" (Rorty R., 1999, pp. 7-8). That is the domain he named "reality" as distinguished from the realm of "justice" by which he means "the liberation of the weak from the strong" (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 8). As he finds himself between two spheres and did not "take refuge in an apolitical insouciance" in the former, he sought "some intellectual or aesthetic framework" that enables one to reconcile them, which, "wild orchids" and "Trotsky" would stand for. That is why his political stance is not a product of an "intellectual snob or nerdy recluse" but seriously thought-out contentions of "a friend of humanity or fighter for justice" (Rorty R., 1999, p. 8).

²⁸He was one of Trotsky's secretaries. For a couple of months, he hid from Stalin's State Political Directorate in Rorty residence under a pseudonym after Trotsky's assassination in 1940. Rorty, at the age of nine then, says he was warned not to mention their guest with his real name. "Though it is doubtful," he says, "that my schoolmates at Walpack Elementary would have been interested with my indiscretions" (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 6).

²⁹Italian Socialist labor leader immigrated to the USA. He was "ranked among the most important radicals and labor activists in the United States" and assassinated in 1943 (Pernicone, 2005).

CHAPTER 3

PHILOSOPHER OF MIND

Before *PMN* and *CIS* Rorty was known as a notable philosopher of mind. Among his notable articles that “address problems central to analytic philosophy” are “Empiricism, Extensionalism, and Reductionism”, “Incorrigibility as the Mark of the Mental,” and “Indeterminacy of Translation and of Truth” (MacIntyre, 2008, p. 185). Rorty excluded them all from his collection of *Philosophical Papers*, possibly because he thinks “they had passed their sell-by date,” according to the personal correspondence of Alan Malachowski (Rorty R., 2014, p. 2), unlike the editors of the collection, who gave it to his modesty about his intellectual self-estimation. They are thought to still bear importance for the current debates on mind and language.

According to Daniel Dennett, Rorty provides valuable insight into “property dualism, supervenience, mental causation, and their subsidiary issues” more than forty years ago, especially in “Mind-Body Identity, Privacy, and Categories,” “Incorrigibility as the Mark of the Mental,” “In Defense of Eliminative Materialism,” (1972), and “Functionalism, Machines and Incorrigibility” (1972) (Rorty R., 2014, p. vii). These essays were collected along with some other important papers of analytic concerns of the philosophy of mind from 1961 to 1972 in *Mind, Language, and Metaphilosophy*³⁰, and published posthumously in 2014.

³⁰ Hereafter *MLM*

The fact that Rorty's metaphilosophical papers appear as early as with the ones about mind and language has the significance of showing that his question about the use of philosophy was not just a background question mark in his thought but he actually articulated them. In "The Limits of Reductionism" in 1961, he sees the limit in question from a metaphilosophical view; "when it can no longer provide a metaphilosophical account of itself" (Rorty R., 2014, p. 6). This conclusion appears concerning the self-referential problem with the logical positivist claim that "all linguistic expressions are tautologies, empirical hypotheses, or nonsense," which does not include the claim itself and the "reductionist urge" is thus blocked (ibid.). Metaphilosophy comes in to open a way through this block by a meta-distinction. This is "the task of metaphilosophy, Rorty thinks, [which] is to determine the utility of such distinctions of level; philosophy requires metaphilosophy to make these distinctions and keep itself self-consistent." However, Rorty would later give up the value of this task because even if metaphilosophy checks on the utility of meta-level distinctions, the legitimacy of doing so remains obscure. It may become an easy and clever way of wriggling out of dialectical corners. In his autobiographical *Trotsky and the Wild Orchids*, he reminds St Thomas's advice: "When you meet a contradiction, make a distinction" and says that coherence as "the test of philosophical truth" loses its validity for him.

He was particularly appreciated in the analytic field for his primal role in the formation of eliminative materialism³¹ in his 1965 article “Mind-Body Identity, Privacy, and Categories”³². Although this particular materialist position is associated with Rorty, the term to designate a theory of mind is not coined until 1968 by James Cornman in his response to Rorty, “On the Elimination of ‘Sensations’ and Sensations” (Cornman, 1968, p. 16). Eliminative materialism is taken to mean that mental states or sensations do not actually denote a different domain of reality and this kind of folk psychological or common-sense mental phraseology should better be dropped in favor of physical-empirical terms. Before Rorty, Sellars, in his “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind” in 1956, Feyerabend in “Mental Events and the Brain”, 1963, and Quine, though less openly than the other two, in *Word and Object*, 1960, (Ramsay, 1959) endorsed similar views. Rorty’s “Mind-Brain Identity Privacy and Categories” becomes “the template for some further articles” (Rorty R., 2010, p. 12).

Rorty depicts the essay as “an application of Sellars's doctrine that ‘all awareness is a linguistic affair’ to the question of whether sensations are identical with brain-processes” (Rorty R., 2010, p. 11). Looking back to this depiction, considering his intellectual debt to Sellars it might make sense to think that a growing consideration of language is a factor in the question of what philosophy has accompanied him

³¹ In their critical article Lycan and Pappas make a distinction between “Strong” and “Weak” Eliminative Materialism and claim that Rorty’s thesis should belong to the latter (Lycan & Pappas, 1972, p. 150).

³² This article also appears in the posthumous collection of his early essays, *Richard Rorty: Mind, Language, and Metaphilosophy*, 2014, edited by Stephen Leach and James Tartaglia.

throughout his following works. “Two key ideas” in these papers, identified by Leach and Tartaglia, “the impossibility of transcending language and the need to avoid self-referential inconsistency” might point to a direction, which tends towards a conviction that words can take us to other words that may or may not prove to be useful for some ends, but not beyond. Our words are not emanated by reality itself for us to repeat. “Rorty’s well-known thought that ‘we cannot step outside our skins’”, according to Leach and Tartaglia, is also reflected upon in the conclusion of his first published paper, “Pragmatism, Categories, and Language” in 1961. He tries to show in this essay “that Peirce’s doctrine of the reality and irreducibility of ‘thirdness’ shows the way beyond the reductionism of logical positivism towards the more enlightened stance of the later Wittgenstein”, who recognizes that “language cannot be transcended” (Rorty R., 2014, p. 5). A similar emphasis on both metaphilosophy and language also appears in “Realism, Categories, and the ‘Linguistic Turn’”, in 1962. He claims that “the impossibility of transcending language and the need to avoid self-referential inconsistency” can justify adopting the linguistic turn ... without abandoning realism” by presenting “analytic philosophy’s preoccupation with language, while setting the distinction between ideal and ordinary language philosophy within a metaphilosophical framework” (ibid., 6).

“Pragmatism, Categories, and Language” is characterized in a sense as an attempt to reconcile pragmatism and analytic philosophy by a claim that “analytic philosophy can lead to pragmatist conclusions,” (ibid., 4). It is partly for the sake of seeing “[p]ragmatism is getting respectable again”, as he expressed in the opening of the

essay. He was disturbed by the logical positivist dominion on the image of philosophy by its hierarchical characterization of “logic and analysis” as the emblem of a ‘hard’ discipline, unlike “historical concern and social benefits”, which are “soft concerns” (ibid.). Quine’s holism was at the time already a supporting idea for pragmatism (ibid.). These conclusions about language and metaphilosophy might be regarded as the early signs of his introducing social elements into his criticism. His understanding of language will then move toward a more pragmatic line as presented in the fact that in the *PMN* what he defended as epistemological behaviorism will be renamed as pragmatism (ibid., 5, fn., 13). These signs might as well refer us to Rorty’s overriding metaphilosophical concern with a metaphysical notion of truth surviving in philosophical assumptions.

3.1. The Linguistic Turn

Another well-known piece in the analytic domain by Rorty is an anthology he edited, *The Linguistic Turn*³³, and his forty-page “Introduction” as an evaluation of this major trend in philosophy. The “turn” here is a revolt in the change of direction of philosophical worldview including a revolution against the traditional idea of philosophy itself. As Rorty puts it, as a revolution “against the practices of previous philosophers”, it is another “punctuation in the history of philosophy”, with an aim to “transform philosophy into a science—a discipline in which universally recognized decision procedures are available for testing philosophical theses,” such as Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Husserl proposed before (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 1), and linguistic

³³ The phrase was coined by Gustav Bergmann in his *Logic and Reality*, Rorty notes (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 9 fn).

philosophy is “the most recent” of the philosophical revolutions (ibid., p. 3) when he compiled the collection in 1967.

One significant distinction of linguistic philosophy is expressed by Friedrich Waismann, one of its pioneers, that it is “not a set of doctrines, but a critical technique...[whose] origins are to be found in reactions rather than in insights,” for instance,

G. E. Moore reacted against the absurdities of traditional metaphysics and its paradoxical conclusions like the denial of the reality of ordinary things; Wittgenstein against the formalism of Russell and his own early attachment to formal logic as an analytical tool; G. Ryle and J. L. Austin against both ancient and modern metaphysical myths, like the belief in mental substance and in sense data. (Waismann, 1965, p. xi)

Linguistic philosophy, in terms of its paradigm changing way, takes place among other subversive methods in the history of philosophy besides “the method of ‘clear and distinct ideas’ ... of Descartes, ... Kant’s ‘transcendental method,’ [and] Husserl’s ‘bracketing’ (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 1). Linguistic philosophers, on the other hand, develop a novel methodology:

Moore’s way of dealing with philosophy involved paying great attention to the exact way statements were expressed, and so bringing put verbal ambiguities and mistakes arising from the way theories were presented. Wittgenstein, once he had seen that the use of essentially mathematical models of discourse frequently put aside problems without solving them, devised the method of extensive description of the way words are used as a therapy for the equivocations which seemingly led to philosophical theories about such topics as the relation of mind and body and the true characterization of knowledge. Ryle and Austin seem to have arrived independently at the idea that close attention to the language in which philosophers have expressed themselves shows a haze of muddle and confusion, and, because of the much greater complexity of the language used to state the facts of, say, our mental life, by comparison with the language used by philosophers in theorizing about it, philosophers are particularly prone to verbal fallacies, varieties of equivocation. (Waismann, 1965, p. xi)

Another distinctive feature of linguistic philosophy is its approach to the problems of philosophy as problems of language and the claim that, in terms of the two main sub-schools, ideal and ordinary language methods, these problems can be solved, as Rorty summarizes it, "... or dissolved..., either by reforming language, or by understanding more about the language we presently use" bracketing' (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 3). Against the anti-philosophical Wittgensteinian approach toward philosophical questions as "pseudo-questions" as a result of a "bewitchment of language," Etienne Gilson recapitulates a common insight based on as part of his "experience" in the history of philosophy, that "[p]hilosophy always buries its undertakers" (Gilson, 1950, p. 306). The force of this statement comes from the fact that while denouncing the metaphysics of a previous philosophical doctrine, the critics who make their turns in the history of philosophy backflip theorizing on the nature of some aspect of the world. This end-of-philosophy attitude among linguistic philosophers, Rorty notes, remains short-lived being rather confined to an earlier period of the movement and later linguistic philosophers make their connection with the "Great Tradition" by keeping the pursuit of "the nature of X" only by "how we use X." Any method other than "investigating the uses of words," according to them, "misguides" us, as the doctrines of the Great tradition "were misguided" by, for instance, "postulating unfamiliar entities" (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 4) in their pursuit of the nature of any X, like the candidates for the "highest principle of the world, e.g. water, number, form, motion, life, the spirit, the idea, the unconscious, activity, the good, and so forth" (Carnap R. , 1959, p. 65).

Bradley maintains in a similar vein that holding that metaphysical thinking belongs to “the highest side of human nature,” (Bradley & Glasgow, 1897, p. 4) and it is not easy for its opponents not to fall into contradiction with themselves while objecting against its possibility. Rorty brings up Ayer’s attempt to defend the legitimacy of his anti-metaphysical revolt as a different kind from Kant’s, against Bradley’s contention that “the man who is ready to prove that metaphysics is impossible is a brother metaphysician with a rival theory of his own” (Rorty R., 1992, p. 5).

Bradley takes different objections against metaphysical knowledge into consideration and the first one is against the impossibility of it. The rejection of metaphysics on the grounds that claiming knowledge about “ultimate truth” is beyond possible experience is, for Bradley, a plain contradiction, which is another “claim to know reality” (Bradley & Glasgow, 1897, p. 2). This is to take “both sides of the limit” into account, which, according to Wittgenstein, in case of “drawing a limit to thinking,” is what should be done (Ayer, 1971, p. 15). Ayer accepts the legitimacy of the reply for Kantian philosophy as a matter of “overstepping the barrier he maintains to be impassable,” because Kant deduces the “fruitlessness of attempting to transcend the limits of possible sense-experience” from “a psychological hypothesis concerning the actual constitution of the human mind” (ibid.). Ayer relies on his diagnosis of Kant in making a distinction: Kant maintained that the mind is “devoid of the power of penetrating beyond the phenomenal world,” which is to take it as a “matter of fact” and this is different from maintaining that “our minds could not conceivably have had it,” putting it as a “matter of logic” (ibid.). It seems that Kant puts forward the impossibility of metaphysics on speculative grounds based on his alleged

structure of the mind telling what mind can do and what it cannot. This is Kant's mistake of "overstepping the barrier he maintains to be impassible" to show the futility of metaphysical inquiry.

Ayer believes his rejection of metaphysical inquiry avoids falling into this contradiction through an essentially different criterion, which, at the same time, makes a linguistic turn in philosophical debate: "the literal significance of language" (ibid.). This is setting a safe limit since maintaining that a certain set of sentences are devoid of "literal significance" is not itself devoid of "literal significance," according to Ayer. Once Ayer's hypothesis escapes self-contradiction the burden remains on the formulation of "the literal significance" and Ayer puts his effort to undertake it by defining a "rule which determines" it, what he calls the "criterion of verifiability." He examines the criterion and with fine tuning distinctions, enlarging verifiability to propositions that are not only "practically" verifiable but verifiable "in principle" as well (ibid., 17). The criterion in question later found failed by Ayer and Carnap, similarly gave up on this contention.

Nonetheless, it is important to see what makes made linguistic approach a turn in philosophy in order to make sense Rorty's own turn in his view of philosophy besides, as it is noted by Russell, "the utility" of linguistic analysis is important in terms of evaluating "traditional problems" (Russell, 2004, p. 740). Russell's theory of descriptions utilizes Carnap's existence is not predicate and overall confusion of the use of "existence." This enables him to allow his hypothesis enough space to render a proposition such as "there are mountains on the farther side of the moon"

(Ayer, 1971, p. 17) meaningful, but not let it go too far away to find a proposition, like that of Bradley's, "the absolute enters into, but is itself incapable of, evolution and progress" meaningful but makes it a pseudo-proposition. On the other hand, he adds, we should not confine verifiability in a "strong" sense, which can be granted only to those propositions whose "truth could be conclusively established in experience" (ibid., 18).

This is because, in the first place, it would be impossible to find any proposition of this standard because even for general scientific laws, it is not logically possible to cover an "infinite number of empirical cases" with a "finite set of observations." Secondly, to accept conclusive verifiability would be like to repeat a metaphysical attitude and nullify all linguistic effort initially taken to get rid of metaphysical nonsense. Ayer holds it a part "of the very nature of these propositions," not to "prove too much" in order to be considered "factually significant" because "no proposition, other than a tautology, can possibly be anything more than a probable hypothesis" (Ayer, 1971, p. 19). Ayer thus takes verifiability principle in a "weak" sense, according to which propositions are thought genuine "if it is possible for experience to render it probable" (ibid., 18). Accordingly, the truth or falsehood of an experiential proposition should not be sought to be made "logically certain" by empirical observations but we can say that a proposition is significant if an "observation... [is] relevant to the determination of its truth and falsehood" (ibid., 20). The criteria will then enable us to determine some metaphysical issues as devoid of sense such as the claim that "the world of sense experience ... [is]

altogether unreal,” or the dispute over the “substance of reality” as “one” or “plural,” (ibid., 21-22) since there is no relevant or possible observation to support them.

The leading question while he was compiling the anthology is, Rorty says, “What does it mean to claim that philosophy is, or should become, the analysis of language?” (Auxier & Hahn, 2010, p. 12), covering a thirty-seven-year timespan of the movement. The anthology is set to depict a metaphilosophical viewpoint of linguistic philosophy, further dealing with the problems of ideal and ordinary language schools and their differing points. Rorty traces linguistic philosophy based on two parameters:

(1) Are the statements of linguistic philosophers about the nature of philosophy and about philosophical methods actually presuppositionless, in the sense of being dependent upon no substantive philosophical theses for their truth?

(2) Do linguistic philosophers actually have criteria for philosophical success which are clear enough to permit rational agreement? (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 4)

For twenty-five centuries, says Gilson, who believes in the “necessity” of metaphysics. What gives hope to the followers of linguistic turn that the traditional philosophers lack but they can supply the reader was clarity. For Rorty it is this hope, which could bring an “eventual agreement among philosophers,” that also led “continental” European philosophy to phenomenology.

It is a general claim of paradigm changing philosophical theses, as Rorty holds it to be, that they are in fact based on firm grounds, but they nonetheless have not able to escape failing in their claim to be “presuppositionless,” and linguistic philosophy has

its share from the tradition. An initial disillusionment is with “philosophically neutral logic.” Understanding the alleged “logical syntax of language,” Ayer and Carnap thought, would enable us to differentiate between genuine and pseudo problems in philosophy. But Ayer and Carnap themselves, adds Rorty, would soon realize that the “logic” of their *Language, Truth and Logic* and *The Logical Syntax of Language* is not presuppositionless but heavily based on antecedently presupposing “the results of its application” and the truth definitions of terms such as “logic” and “significance” (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 6). Bergmann’s “Ideal Language” is an offer to reform this disillusion, according to Rorty (ibid.).

“Methodological nominalism,” Rorty agrees with Blanshard and many other critics of linguistic philosophy, is a substantive presupposition behind the movement, which he defines specifically as holding that all the questions which philosophers have asked about concepts, subsistent universals, or “natures” which (a) cannot be answered by empirical inquiry concerning the behavior or properties of particulars subsumed under such concepts, universals, or natures, and which (b) can be answered in *some* way, can be answered by answering questions about the use of linguistic expressions, and in no other way (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 6).

One significance of this base is that linguistic philosophers can easily put the burden of proof on the opposite side of an argument (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 11) concerning for instance, the traditional quest of philosophy to reach beyond language and their basic conviction that there is nothing to be found by “burrowing beneath the language” (ibid., 10). The second metaphilosophical factor, unambiguous criteria for

philosophical success, seems, for Rorty, only possible when the issue in question is specific enough. While the criteria for success is clear for instance, for the unfulfilled attempt of “extensional inductive logic,” which can be expressed only with “descriptive predicates” ... and the language of *Principia Mathematica*, i.e. to avoid “causal connection” as a primitive notion, the criteria for the “primary task of linguistic philosophy—dissolving philosophical problems” are not clear (ibid., 24-25).

3.2. Metaphilosophical Role of the Linguistic Turn

In his “Intellectual Autobiography” in 2007 he says that by the time the anthology is published, 1967, the force of the claim to a linguistic turn in philosophy was already waning (Auxier & Hahn, 2010, p. 12) and eventually for Part I of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) despite Rorty humorously describes it as “another attempt to break into that business” (ibid.) both *MPC* and the “Introduction” to *LT* have further significance for his philosophy beyond his career in analytic philosophy.

Rorty does not survey metaphilosophical implications of linguistic philosophy to debunk the movement as one of the others in the history of philosophy that fail to meet their claims to have neutral grounds. Even if “progress” in philosophy is open to question, he holds, these attempts are by no means futile; they enable both sides to have a chance to reconsider their own grounds and “repair their armor,” which in the long run would “amount to a complete change of clothes,” as today’s Platonists have little in common with Plato, or empiricists keep.

Bradley, there is change:

For whether there is progress or not, at all events there is change; and the changed minds of each generation will require a difference in what has to satisfy their intellect. Hence there seems as much reason for new philosophy as there is for new poetry. In each case the fresh production is usually much inferior to something already in existence; and yet it answers a purpose if it appeals more personally to the reader. What is really worse may serve better to promote, in certain respects and in a certain generation, the exercise of our best functions. And that is why, so long as we alter, we shall always want, and shall always have, new metaphysics (Bradley & Glasgow, 1897, p. 6)

Taking the history of philosophy as also the history of philosophers of a wide range of temperament as those of e.g., “Plato, Aristotle, Vico, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Descartes, Kant, and Frege”, Rorty does not think that the term “problems of philosophy” make a “natural kind” describing the problems discussed by all those philosophers (Rorty R., 1992, p. 371). What Rorty accepts as a genuine description is the problems of “representationalist theories of knowledge,” the kind of problems about the relation between “reality” and a medium of it such as “language” (ibid.). The “philosophy” whose problems are those of language as proposed by linguistic philosophy is then already associated with a question of relation as representation or mirroring between a representée and a representer. Philosophy of language, according to Rorty, should at best function as a catalyzer to undermine representationalist ideal (ibid., 373). This is to mean that language as a candidate source to solve philosophical problems and its decline as early as 1975 proved that linguistic philosophy could not fulfill its promise to be a “turn” in philosophy and remained “one more tempest in an academic teapot” (ibid., 371).

Instead, it showed that, for Rorty, it is the penultimate stop before a real turn we should take to leaving behind the truth-is-out-there assumption.

Rorty thinks, linguistic turn, despite he once cherished it as one of the biggest achievements in the history of philosophy (ibid.), was not able to change a paradigm of “pre-Kantian essences” and neither “Kantian concepts”, the latter being a kind of replacement of the former, and then “meaning” replaced “concept” but remained as a continuity in this chain (ibid., 363). The paradigm that Rorty sees is an attempt to “separate the necessary truths found by looking to essence, concept, or meaning, from the contingent truths that scientists found by looking to the contexts in which instantiations of these essences, concepts or meanings were embedded” (ibid.). Another point that Rorty brings up is how “the materials” of philosophy could change through time and this helps more in shaking the foundations that he targeted at the beginning and so he makes it a questionable issue whether concepts, if they can be replaced by language, “should ever have been especially important to philosophy” (ibid., 364).

In his review, Rorty states that Hacking observes “the materials as well as the tools of philosophy may change” (ibid.) but could not go as far as his work requires him to and he somehow leaves it untouched and “misses the moral of his own history” (ibid.). Another point that Rorty thinks Hacking passes close by appears in his evaluation of language in terms of Locke versus Frege. Rorty thinks, while Hacking identifies the Lockean theory of ideas as a theory of mental discourse and allots theory of public discourse to Frege, he observes that the former plays a role as an

“interface” between the “Cartesian ego and reality” and the latter “serves as the interface between the knowing subject and the world” (ibid.). Hacking’s point here is to show the seventeenth century philosophy does not really have a theory of meaning relevant to the issue of his title question “why does language matter to philosophy.” What Rorty highlights in Hacking’s evaluation and raises his doubts is the notion of “interface” and he then suggests it be dismissed: “given that we no longer take the ‘idea’ seriously, why need we assume that there is any ‘interface’ between the knowing subject and the world? (ibid., 365).

For Rorty the tendency for a representationalist epistemology starts with Descartes. Although he accepts Heidegger’s *claim* that “the Greeks paved the way for Descartes (ibid., 372)” “man’s turning into a *subiectum*,” which, again for Heidegger “a distinctive Cartesian accomplishment (ibid.),” is for the most part responsible for this representationalist ideal and after Kant this representationalist standpoint gains its “central” role in philosophy (ibid.). Rorty draws a genealogy of this representational attitude in philosophy and how “particular problems about representation” has become wrongly identified with “problems of philosophy.” While he accepts Heidegger’s claim that “the Greeks paved the way for Descartes,” he thinks that the focus on this representationalist ideal is for the most part Cartesian and main the reason for this is the “transformation of man into a *subiectum*”, which is, again with Heidegger’s words, “a distinctive Cartesian accomplishment” (ibid.). From a Rortian perspective, 20th century philosophers, Dewey, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, for Rorty, are the most prominent breakers of representationalist paradigm and Quine,

Sellars, and Davidson also pave the way for such a shift in the concept of truth (ibid., 373).

What Rorty accomplishes, on the other hand, is that he builds a viewpoint of seeing a picture of ideas in which a change from a “Ptolemaic-Aristotelian” cosmology to a “Copernican-Newtonian” one and similarly different veins in philosophy such as “Plato, Aristotle, Vico, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Descartes, Kant and Frege” (ibid., 371) without falling into relativism, this is at least what he claims it to be. His distinctive style of reading the history of philosophy neither refers to an outside reality nor idealist bids or relativism.

The claim that questions concerning the problems of philosophy are those of language is, for Rorty, either a “bad description” or a “pseudo problem” (ibid., 372). In accordance with his view of philosophy Rorty achieves his stand as an anti-*representationalist* not through reasoning or discussion; this is rather a conviction gained by, as he puts it in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, looking back to history. The emphasis on language with the philosophy of language, according to Rorty, is at best being a catalyzer to undermine representationalist ideal by putting “language” as the representer of reality instead of “experience” (ibid., 373).

Given Rorty’s observation that history of philosophy does not move in a continuum, his dissent with 19th century epistemology may be justified because it filled its time. Rorty’s conviction in this sense is that a phase marked by its adherence to a representationalist idea of knowledge does not prove to be useful. In a sense Rortian

idea of the history of philosophy has some affinities to Kuhn's depiction of the history of science. While there would be a Rortian account on the question how a new school of philosophy begins, it would not be answering the question why. The former case as a question of causality could be accounted in reference to historicism, but Rorty had long given up the hope for a solid philosophical grounding which explains the reason why pretending to be in touch with Truth. Once Rorty claims to expose a basic presupposition of contemporary philosophy, he finds a legible justification in a criterion of usefulness. Such a criterion of usefulness is in conformity with Rorty's idea of the history of philosophy.

If Rorty's point in shaking ground in contemporary philosophy can be interpreted as an exposition of a presupposition, then he may be said to do this as an exposition of a blind spot. Disillusionment from representationalism as the blind spot of philosophy is a Rortian reading of the history of philosophy and if Rorty's core conviction is to drop out of representationalism, how much he is proposing a straw man argument is a question against him. Rorty thinks, linguistic turn, despite he once cherished it as one of the biggest achievements in the history of philosophy (ibid., 371), was not able to change a paradigm of "pre-Kantian essences" and neither "Kantian concepts", the latter being a kind of replacement of the former, and then "meaning" replaced "concept" but remained as a continuity in this chain (ibid., 363). The paradigm that Rorty sees is an attempt to "separate the necessary truths found by looking to essence, concept, or meaning, from the contingent truths that scientists found by looking to the contexts in which instantiations of these essences, concepts or meanings were embedded" (ibid., 363). Another point that Rorty brings up is how

“the materials” of philosophy could change through time and this helps more in shaking the foundations that he targeted at the beginning and so he makes it a questionable issue whether concepts, if they can be replaced by language, “should ever have been especially important to philosophy” (ibid., 364).

Rorty relates popular criticisms against the philosophy of language and exposes that it has its own non-analyzable grounds saying that “the criteria for taking a notation as canonical are at least as obscure as the criteria for deciding issues in the philosophy of mind” (ibid., 362). While discussing the problems of linguistic turn Rorty points out the sense that it brings to philosophy. He agrees with Putnam “one reason for upgrading the importance of language in philosophy”, which is obviously, he adds, the fundamental conviction of those who are dedicated to the philosophy of language—that philosophy should not only be a matter of “concepts and ideas” and the medium they are put to use, language, should be more than being “merely a system of conventional signs” (ibid., 363). Putnam’s “discovery” to justify this reason is that “having a concept is being able to use signs in particular ways” is a reason to hold³⁴.

Rorty views Quine another route through his “semantic ascent” without resorting to “linguistic analysis” while, at the same time, maintaining “the Carnapian claim that philosophical questions were questions of language” (ibid., 362). Quine believes that

³⁴ “... only if (a) we agree that concepts and ideas *are* important to philosophy, and if (b) the importance attached to concepts can survive the realization that concepts are not things which stand behind the use of words but are reducible to those uses, and if (c) the constellation of metaphilosophical strategies that revolved around introspectionist psychology could be transferred more or less whole to a study of the use of signs.” (Rorty R., 1992, p. 363)

his strategy could lead to finding a common ground on which “two fundamentally disparate conceptual schemes” could agree via ascending from “talking in certain terms” to “talking about them” (ibid.). However, Rorty assumes what Quine has in mind about “semantic ascent” is “the discovery that we need not have intensional contexts in canonical notation” (ibid.), that is “the-believing-that-p” state of Sin “S believes that P” does not need further analysis; it is “ a single unanalyzable unit” (ibid.), Quine’s hope to find a way to “discuss the disparate foundations” is put in question by Davidson since he rejects such a “treatment of opacity” and, for Rorty, “shows that the criteria for taking a notation as canonical are at least being a criticism of the route of linguistic philosophy this point also hints at the incredibility of a canonical notation as a representation of natural language. The trust in a formal language which is to enlighten a deep logic underlying “disparate foundations” is shaken. Rorty reminds Quine’s rejection of distinction between “languages and theories” to see that “formal mode of speech” is not necessarily more immune to polemic than the “material mode” (ibid.). The point Rorty seems to warrant is that a word is “the use of the word x” and one should not be illusioned about the “the essence of x” or “the concept of x” existing beyond that (ibid.).

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Another point that Rorty thinks Hacking passes close by appears in his evaluation of language in terms of Locke versus Frege. Rorty thinks, while Hacking identifies the Lockean theory of ideas as a theory of mental discourse and allots theory of public discourse to Frege, he observes that the former plays a role as an “interface” between the “Cartesian ego and reality” and the latter “serves as the interface between the knowing subject and the world” (ibid.). Hacking’s point here is to show the seventeenth century philosophy does not really have a theory of meaning relevant to the issue of his title question “why does language matter to philosophy.” What Rorty highlights in Hacking’s evaluation and raises his doubts is the notion of “interface” and he then suggests it be dismissed: “given that we no longer take the ‘idea’ seriously, why need we assume that there is any ‘interface’ between the knowing subject and the world?” (ibid., 365). Nevertheless, Hacking goes on with, in the final paragraph of his book, that language matters to philosophy even if the notion

“knowing subject” were just a “fiction” and regards “discourse” as “autonomous” (ibid.). In this sense, for Hacking “sentences” would matter even more to philosophy than ideas did in the seventeenth century since they can go beyond serving as an interface between the knowing subject and the world but become the knowledge itself (ibid.).

3.3. Self-Referential Inconsistency

So, Rorty says, his aim is “making clear that [these assumptions] are optional,” however, there will be the other side claiming that they are not for other reasons and questioning Rorty’s own assumptions. Incoherence may appear from the point he sees the problem. What does seeing a framework suggest? Is there a problem of vision in terms of an omniscient view? If Rorty has a claim about a framework, then how can he see the framework, unless he is on the same level? Since it is not really possible to argue from singulars, one needs something general to say, which seems to require a way of looking at things from a large angle. Rorty, too, needs to step back and see as much as possible in one frame. Another factor in this issue is that even if one seals Rorty’s views coherently, that will not mean a solid criterion for Rorty regarding his views above in the CIS, that “wriggling out of dialectical corners” is a manageable rhetorical skill. However, what he suggests is an exceptionally large scope of claim spanning, for instance, from “incorrigibility is not necessarily a mark of the mental” to “an ironist liberal society is a better matrix for the freedom necessary for a prolific culture to flourish”. Consistency for such a broad spectrum might require, besides sophisticated maneuvers, an unpretentious stance.

This vision of a frame reminds us of his famous phrase that it is not possible for us to “step outside our skins.” Rorty depicts it as an attempt at linguistic adequacy to something of which we are non-pre-linguistically aware. In other words, language cannot make us hook up with something beyond our experiential course, such as truth in a metaphysical sense. However, that might be the stance similar to that of his ironist intellectual, who seems to continuously adopt a meta-stance by stepping back enough to be able to see a frame, its presuppositions. Such a frame can be found on any scale, within another frame, for instance. That vision can give you the upper hand in critique, argument, or counterargument, for being able to wriggle out of the authority of unconscious adoptions of assumptions. We have at least to pretend to leave our skins, as if we can suspend all judgments to be able to detect what others cannot. It may not be like seeing from a vantage point, if we think suspending judgments not as a whole, but as much as we can. But language is judgment; a word comes with other words it is composed of; pictures, events, sentences, memories, emotions, etc. in its tail, making a bubble of meaning. Here, stepping out of our skin here may not be getting out of language but objecting to buy presuppositions and offer something different.

Such a concern about vision may bring us to a problem of self-referential inconsistency, an issue we have seen in his “Limits of Reductionism” to which he is already sensitive. So, the question is whether Rorty could “provide a metaphilosophical account of” his thought concerning the question whether his claim about the assumption of truth as the correspondence to an objective reality include this claim. Most prominently Hilary Putnam articulated such a problem in his

Realism with a Human Face, 1990. He evaluates Rorty claim in that if “metaphysical realism is *wrong*. We will be better off if we listen to him in the sense of having fewer false beliefs ... but,” he says, “this, of course, is something he cannot admit he really thinks.” Because what that amounts to, “under all that wrapping” is “the attempt to say that *from a God's-Eye View there is no God's-Eye View*³⁵” (Putnam H., 1990, p. 25). This depiction may be more to the point if Rorty is at the same time claimed to defend a relativist position. Putnam’s claim of speaking from a God’s-Eye View refers to the inconsistency of a claim such as “No framework can claim a wider outlook than another; each is as good as the other.” Putnam actually has a claim

that we will behave better if we become Rortians—we may be more tolerant, less prone to fall for various varieties of religious intolerance and political totalitarianism. If that is what is at stake, the issue is momentous indeed. But a fascist could well agree with Rorty at a very abstract level—Mussolini, let us recall, supported pragmatism, claiming that it sanctions unthinking activism. I? If our aim is tolerance and the open society, would it not be better to argue for these directly, rather than to hope that these will come as the byproduct of a change in our metaphysical picture? (ibid., 24-25)

The charge of relativism is also a claim that Rorty is unable to consistently defend himself without going relativist, if he rejects any sign of foundation. If it is the expression of a belief that there is no sensible place for a position somewhere between absolute foundationalism and radical relativism, Rorty already has a claim on the possibility of leaving the framework of this assumption. Then, the accusation is more likely to be inconsistent.

³⁵ Putnam’s emphasis.

More explicitly, Rorty's view of philosophy is outside the frame of a notion of truth understood in terms of correspondence. He recapitulates, in this sense, the problem with arguments thus:

They are expected to be phrased in that very vocabulary. They are expected to show that central elements in that vocabulary are "inconsistent in their own terms" or that they "deconstruct themselves." But that can never be shown. Any argument to the effect that our familiar use of a familiar term is incoherent, or empty, or confused, or vague, or "merely metaphorical" is bound to be inconclusive and question-begging. For such use is, after all, the paradigm [sic] of coherent, meaningful, literal, speech. Such arguments are always parasitic upon, and abbreviations for, claims that a better vocabulary is available. (Rorty R., 1989, pp. 8-9).

If this reply turns charges about argumentation into a matter of paradigm difference, then what Searle means would amount to charging Rorty with not speaking the same language. And similar charges will go on as in Dennett's. That is to say Dennett holds that things matter differently and more seriously in the "real" as opposed to the "academic" world. In other words, Dennett describes this trendy frame of mind as an "appreciation of the futility of proof and the relativity of all knowledge claims" and which, for him, is the "height of sheltered naiveté" and shows "flatfooted ignorance of the proven methods of scientific truth-seeking and their power" (Dennett, 2000, p. 99). Richard Rorty is one of those thinkers who "innocently generalize from their own cases and conclude that nobody else knows how to discover the truth" (ibid.). Dennett can be evaluated in terms of the framework of metaphysical truth, but another advantage would be in his success in being able to "isolate the presuppositions" behind the rationalist foundationalist mindset, an aim he sets forth metaphilosophically is that Rorty does not count on judgments based on "flatfooted

ignorancy,” or a philosopher who does not have the cognitive capacity not to make generalizations from his own case.

Rorty evaluates similar criticisms:

Anyone who says... that truth is not "out there" will be suspected of relativism and irrationalism. Anyone who casts doubt on the distinction between morality and prudence... will be suspected of immorality. To fend off such suspicions, I need to argue that the distinctions between absolutism and relativism, between rationality and irrationality, and between morality and expediency are obsolete and clumsy tools - remnants of a vocabulary we should try to replace. But "argument" is not the right word. For on my account of intellectual progress as the literalization of selected metaphors, rebutting objections to one's redescription of some things will be largely a matter of redescribing other things, trying to outflank the objections by enlarging the scope of one's favorite metaphors. So, my strategy will be to try to make the vocabulary in which these objections are phrased look bad, thereby changing the subject, rather than granting the objector his choice of weapons and terrain by meeting his criticisms head-on. (Rorty R., 1989, p. 44)

Once we realize that progress, for the community as for the individual, is a matter of using new words as well as of arguing from premises phrased in old words, we realize that a critical vocabulary which revolves around notions like "rational," "criteria," "argument" and "foundation" and "absolute" is badly suited to describe the relation between the old and the new. (ibid., 48-49)

Rorty's claim is also that his historicism and views on dropping off the notion of truth do not lead to relativism despite the fact that he accepts it hard to shake off. He does not aim to overthrow a system of belief and build another one, either. He claims to draw attention to some conceptions that stick out as old now, by redefinitions and "play off a new vocabulary against an old one." In his *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* he explains what his philosophy should and should not be expected and it is not a kind of systematic coherence for the sake of that system's logic. If he

manages to effect in changing the outlook and the attitude of thought he targets, he must be considered to have fulfilled his mission.

One should take notice of the difference about the conditional grammar he uses about his claims. Based on what we have seen in history so far, we can conclude that adopting metaphysical realism has come to a point where it no longer yields useful results. What defines Rorty's angle is a set of conditions. He can as well say that adopting a scientific understanding of truth was useful in liberating humans from an arbitrary religious truth. Claiming that holding metaphysical realist intuitions give better results than pragmatist ones mean on a meta-level? This is not an inconsistent pragmatist view though it may not be honest. However, a Rortian pragmatist cannot claim that pragmatism is the true policy for humanity unconditionally. Pragmatist claims can be conditional about themselves. But if one were to ask whether conditionality of a conditional statement is conditional, you cannot stop meaningfully.

When he says truth is not a kind of mechanism serving a vantage point that we can hook up, Debate on his so-called relativism might sometimes seem like an impasse when it leads to a debate on definitions. Rorty's distrust on the "objectivity" of truth is accompanied by his emphasis on how we build a definition and the character of the effect it creates, *i.e.*, whether it is "interesting" enough to inspire us or for enlarging our horizon. A definition then should lead to re-definitions. When larger frames are implicated as such, the debate might look like a looping problem in which there is no halt, but one can nevertheless play off the one against the other. Even if

some intuitions would not change, one can see that one grain in the balance might tilt for Rorty's favor, being able to appeal to how things have turned out to be rather than fundamental principles. Rorty's dissolving the problems he bids on can give you a wider outlook to philosophical problems in terms of what philosophy can do with them for any effect to practice. Besides, his attitude toward concepts like truth, essence, or knowledge can incite a shift in how you take the world for granted, with practical consequences spanning a large area from public well-being to private self-image.

3.4. Mind

The controversy ignited by the *PMN* was caused by some views he explicitly defended in the book. One of the central "assumptions behind most of modern philosophy" that Rorty finds "doubtful" is his center of gravity, the notion of truth as the correspondence to the way the world really is. The results he derived from treating this assumption as "optional," even "better be dropped" caused radical changes in his attitude toward the closely tied assumptions behind problems of mind, knowledge, language, and philosophy itself. He argues that the mind taken as the distinctive characteristic of human and foundations of knowledge are two interrelated questions, which are supposed to deal with the nature of mind and knowledge. Knowledge has traditionally been taken to be possible with a triad of "knower," with "mental processes" to accomplish an "activity of representation" of things outside the mind and an accomplishment of mind to represent outside into itself correctly.

Rorty's philosophy is usually distinguished by its peculiar Neopragmatism. He drew most of reactions by his criticism of some main concepts, theories, and tools of the analytic philosophy such as mind, truth, reality, objectivity, theory, or argument in his version of pragmatic terms, which, as mentioned above,³⁶ he depicted it as Epistemological Behaviorism in the *PMN*. His pragmatism is a proposition of a new manner of thought, without an alternative theory of mind or knowledge, employing, instead, rather literary sounding conceptions such as metaphor, redescription, contingency, freedom, irony, and solidarity. The criticism and the outlook he offered is of a metaphilosophical character for the most part. His philosophy develops around the implications of the rejection of a notion of truth, which is thought to be accurately describing the real world. The notions of "the intrinsic nature of reality" and "correspondence to reality" in search of an "essence" or "foundation" had better be dropped off from philosophical discourse, according to him, for the sake of anything that can be called "progress" in philosophy. This kind of conviction takes a neutral context in which inquiry takes place. Such an untainted pursuit implies a dogmatic element, and might bind philosophical discussion into a certain tract, which might fail it yielding novel results. Yet, the notion of truth as correspondence to reality has become a deep-seated presupposition not only in philosophy but in other areas of culture, as well. The idea of truth as correspondence to an objective reality forces itself through a number of phenomena observed in scientific, moral, and social domains. Rorty's critique of the concept of "truth" thus extends beyond philosophy to social and political domains.

³⁶ p. 16

Rorty's characterizes his aim as "dissolution" rather than a solution of a problem, and accordingly his approach is "therapeutic" rather than "constructive." "The therapy offered" is nevertheless "parasitic upon the constructive efforts of the very analytic philosophers whose frame of reference ... [he is] trying to put in question." Because he says that "most of the particular criticisms of the tradition which [he] offer[s] are borrowed from such systematic philosophers as Sellars, Quine, Davidson, Ryle, Malcolm, Kuhn, and Putnam" (Rorty R., 1979, p. 7). "Parasitic" may suggest a condition that Rorty takes as a position to put his debate in context. This condition is a certain direction, which he calls "the dialectic within" analytic philosophy toward a kind of limit, for leaving the frame of mind that they constructed. He sees another step taken with each of their criticisms and what he "hopes to convince us," is "the need for a few steps further" (ibid.). That is the position where Rorty is, "to criticize the very notion of analytic philosophy and indeed of philosophy itself as it has been understood since the time of Kant" (ibid).

In his critique, in this book, of a general concept of mind, considered "as a separate entity in which 'processes' occur" and functioning as "the mirror of nature", we might observe that Rorty introduces a cultural element as a factor in understanding mind, as initial bearing of his overall stress on the "contingency" as opposed to identifying fundamentality of some phenomena. In the first section of "Chapter II," "The Antipodeans," he shows the possibility of us not having any notion of mental states beyond physical explanation.

Before the *PMN*, in his “Incorrigibility as the mark of the mental”, 1970, he argues that “incorrigibility,” “as the mark of the mental” cannot be explained away by efforts to “topic neutrally” translate “nomological danglers” because there is some sense conveyed by “mentalistic statements” that cannot be captured by any such identification (Rorty R., 2014, p. 147) . On the contrary, he proposes to emphasize incorrigibility in order to “isolate this element” of ineffable mental character. To overcome mentalist “irreducible properties” challenge, drawing on Feyerabend he takes the way the theory of “phlogiston” can be both identical with and was eliminated by the kinetic theory to argue for his alternative “eliminative, rather than reductive” principle proposing that “two things can be identical in a philosophically interesting sense even if they do not share all and only the same properties” (ibid., 148). Although he endorses the claim that mental events do seem to have a special character that cannot be explained away with materialist reduction, instead of drawing on the problem of an ontological duality, he opts for a socio-linguistic explanation. At this point he diverts the domain of discussion and puts it on a new terrain, which may result in dissolution. Leach and Tartaglia summarizes his conclusion: “there is no mark of the mental, although there is nevertheless a family resemblance based on incorrigibility “that ties the various things called ‘mental’ together and makes it possible to contrast them all with the physical” (p. 168).” Coming to this conclusion, they point out to the fact that “Rorty considers many more options than” two most prominent contemporary “putative “marks of the mental,”: “intentionality and phenomenal consciousness” (Rorty R., 2014, p. 10).

The point Rorty connects this conclusion to his eliminative materialism, they say, draws on “Sellars in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*,” [according to which] “Rorty understands incorrigibility as the linguistic practice of allowing first-person reports of sensations and thoughts to trump third-person judgments. But since this practice might one day cease, it could transpire that there are no mental entities” (ibid). This conclusion also suggests the “contingency of language,” which, according to Rorty, “is hardest of all to see,”

because since Hegel the historiography of philosophy has been "progressive," or (as in Heidegger's inversion of Hegel's account of progress) "retrogressive," but never without a sense of inevitability. If we could once see the desire for a permanent, neutral, ahistorical, commensurating vocabulary as itself a historical phenomenon, then perhaps we could write the history of philosophy less dialectically and less sentimentally than has been possible hitherto. (Rorty R., 1979, pp. 391-2, fn29)

As mentioned above, Rorty claims analytic philosophers paved the steps to the conclusion of a need to criticize its frame by their consistent criticisms, he shows “two” such “strikes” against the assumption that starts discussions about mind, “that everybody has always known how to divide the world into the mental and the physical-that this distinction is common-sensical and intuitive, even if that between two sorts of “stuff,” material and immaterial, is philosophical and baffling” (ibid., 17). These are Ryle’s suggestion “that to talk of mental entities is to talk of dispositions to behave,” and Smart’s “it is to talk of neural states” (ibid.).

So, he thinks we can imagine beings almost identical of ourselves except for the fact that

They had notions like “wanting to” and “intending to” and “believing that” and “feeling terrible” and “feeling marvelous.” But they had no notion that these signified mental states - states of a peculiar and distinct sort- quite different from “sitting down,” “having a cold,” and “being sexually aroused.” (ibid, 70)

Even if human scientists from Earth went to check their brain scans, they could not detect any abnormality differing them from us. Rorty could find the reason for this lack of content in their mental states in their acculturation. Because, he says,

Neurology and biochemistry had been the first disciplines in which technological breakthroughs had been achieved, and a large part of the conversation of these people concerned the state of their nerves. When their infants veered toward hot stoves, mothers cried out, “He’ll stimulate his C-fibers.” When people were given clever visual illusions to look at, they said, “How odd! It makes neuron bundle G- 14 quiver, but when I look at it from the side I can see that it’s not a red rectangle at all. (ibid., 71)

It should not mean that Rorty attempts to disprove mental existence through this criticism of mind. He rather shows the fragility of assumptions and intuitions by pointing out possible contingent factors in their occurrence.

3.5. Knowledge and Representation

In the PMN Rorty defends a view of epistemological behaviorism, as he calls it, criticizing theory of knowledge grounded in such “mental processes,” holding that “incorrigible knowledge was just a matter of what practices of justification were adopted by one’s peers” (Rorty R., 1979, p. 99). Epistemological behaviorism is not a position in epistemology in this sense and neither does Rorty claims that it is, but the previous name of his pragmatist attitude. It is a reaction against the presupposition that justification of a belief is rendered by a notion of truth as the representation of an outside reality. Similar to his treatment of the notion of mind,

which is possible to be eliminated from our discourse just as “soul” became an obsoleted idea in time, Rorty questions the necessary status of element in epistemology by evaluating them as a matter of social practice.

One central assumption about philosophy that Rorty puts in question in the *PMN* is that “Philosophy’s central concern is to be a general theory of representation a theory which will divide culture up into the areas which represent reality well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it at all (despite their pretense of doing so)” (Rorty R., 1979, p. 3). This kind of a philosophical mission presupposes an epistemological pivot according to which knowledge is the accurate “representation of what is outside the mind” (ibid.). When mind put as such an agent, it is assumed that we can understand “the possibility and nature of knowledge” by figuring out “the way in which the mind is able to construct [its] representations” (ibid.). He traces an assumption of truth as to two “perennial” questions: the uniqueness of human beings and how we know (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 3). Rorty further follows modified manifestations of such a notion of truth and views it is evolving from the medium of experience to language. He finds the importance of the linguistic turn not on metaphilosophical level but in playing a penultimate role by shifting concerns from experience as the bearer of truth to statements (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 373) in the way nullifying the notion of representation and thus bringing a phase that began with Cartesian cogito to a closure.

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the areas which represent reality well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it at all (despite their pretense of doing so)” (Rorty R., 1979, p. 3). This kind of a philosophical mission presupposes an epistemological pivot according to which knowledge is the accurate “representation of what is outside the mind” (ibid.). When mind put as such an agent, it is assumed that we can understand “the possibility and nature of knowledge” by figuring out “the way in which the mind is able to construct [its] representations” (ibid.). He traces an assumption of truth as to two “perennial” questions: the uniqueness of human beings and how we know (Rorty R., 1979, p. 3). Rorty further follows modified manifestations of such a notion of truth and views it evolving from the medium of experience to language. He finds the importance of the linguistic turn not on metaphilosophical level but in playing a penultimate role by shifting concerns from experience as the bearer of truth to statements (Rorty R. M., 1992, p. 373) in the way nullifying the notion of representation and thus bringing a phase that began with Cartesian cogito to a closure.

In the opening pages of the *PMN*, he says that one lesson he was taught at the very beginning was that philosophical problems are not necessarily perennial; history of philosophy is not the history of “alternative solutions to the same problems” but of different ones. Taking such historical observances into consideration, he finds that dissolving problems rather than solving them is a more harmonious way of expressing his convictions. If philosophical problems are not posed in void, examining the vocabulary will give away the assumptions behind the context. To take a problem “seriously” or not, for him, depends on whether it has a current

validity to affect any judgment. If not, one can say those assumptions in question do not make any difference to practice or it might be that they have expired the time of their efficiency. Rorty thus calls the kind of philosophy he likes to be associated “therapeutic,” rather than “constructive,” or “systematic.” It is “therapeutic,” in the sense, he adds, of “Carnap’s original dissolution of standard textbook problems” (ibid.). Carnap’s claim, for instance, on the meaningless of the debate on “the reality of the external world” between realism and idealism in the context of “pseudo problems” within epistemology (Carnap, 2003, p. 332) is a dissolution of a problem.

What he dubs as the traditional epistemologically centered philosophy, which has been a long “project shared by Aristotle, Locke, Kant, and Searle³⁷” (Rorty R., 1998, p. 73). This is where Rorty clarifies that he does not offer an alternative truth theory but does offer dropping of this project. He proposes a pragmatist way of considering truth, not an epistemological justification. One important misunderstanding about Rorty and other antifoundationalist and antirepresentationalist philosophers is that they are thought to hold an anti-realist view and make it a debate against a claim that there is no truth. When Rorty says that he never “said that there was no such thing as objective truth and validity,” he alludes to Searle’s contention against him that “If there is no such thing as objective truth and validity, then you might as well discuss the person making the statement and his motives for making it.” (Rorty R., 1998, p. 72). He goes on with a synopsis of his pragmatism, saying that “... you gain nothing for the pursuit of such truth by talking about the mind dependence of mind

independence of reality. All there is to talk about are the procedures we use for bringing about agreement among inquirers” (ibid.). That is to say, he does not deny that “There is a mountain over there” but the debate over the existence of the mountain, whether it is “independent of our beliefs” or not, “is no longer worth pursuing.”

Saying “There are mountains over there” is a successful way of playing along with others “a language game” because “it pays to talk about mountains.” A “game” actually presupposes an outside and “real” world from where an audience can watch it. Here “playing” this game does not mean “pretending” or secretly doubting that there are mountains over there. Rorty uses it in a Wittgenstenian sense. For instance, even on occasions where it looks, “even prima facie” that some sentences could be treated as if they are on a “model of realistic portraiture,” such as “The cat is on the mat.,” Rorty notes that

See the cat. See the “cat.” See the mat. See the “mat.” See the isomorphism between the sentence and the fact? No? You are worried by “on” and “is”? So was Wittgenstein. Eventually these worries drove him to the view that using sentences was more like making moves in a game than like flashing pictures on a screen. (Rorty R., 1998, pp. 74, fn 12)

“Believing” that there are mountains is “knowing” how to play that language game that employs the word “mountain”, and it is not to deny the causality of events that give rise to the belief but beyond that “the whole project of distinguishing between what exists in itself and what exists in relation to human minds” has, for Rorty, expired its being philosophically interesting date.

The reason Rorty insists on saying that he does not offer an alternative theory of truth is that “Antifoundationalism,” he says, in his 1998 *Truth and Progress*, “has become the conventional wisdom of analytic philosophers”, but, he says, “the metaphysical distinction between appearance and reality” remains, nonetheless. He summarizes antifoundationalism as

...there is no such thing as belief being justified sans phrase—justified once and for all—for the same reason that there is no such thing as a belief that can be known, once and for all, to be indubitable. There are plenty of beliefs (e.g., “Two and two are four;” “The Holocaust took place”) about which nobody with whom we bother to argue has any doubt. But there are no beliefs that can be known to be immune to all possible doubt. (Rorty R., 1998, p. 2)

One can still hold that, he adds,

since truth is an absolute notion and consists in correspondence, there must be an absolute, non-description-relative, intrinsic nature of reality to be corresponded to. Granted that the criterion of truth is justification, and that justification is relative, the nature of truth is not. (Rorty R., 1998, p. 3)

Even if you deny that truth is the correspondence to reality, unless you provide an alternative theory to that, Rorty says, you are it is taken that “the pragmatist attack on correspondence has failed” (ibid.). Rorty’s answer, being one of the distinctive characteristics of his philosophy, is that “truth is not a goal of inquiry” (ibid.) because it is of “no use to try to specify the nature of truth”. In other words, he recapitulates, if “the only criterion we have for applying the word “true” is justification, and justification is relative”, the question ““Do our practices of justification lead to truth?” is unanswerable and unpragmatic” (ibid., 4). Rorty here takes a situation, for instance, we can say that “we are closer to truth” because of the obvious scientific, or moral progress. But Rorty thinks being closer to truth here is actually being in a better condition and that is “by our lights.” In other words, that

means we are better at “coping with the situations we believe we face, than our ancestors would have been” (ibid.). Would that mean we are at a better relation to “truth”? “We have absolutely nothing to say” (ibid.) Moreover, to say that “yes, we are, or no we are not” would not “make a difference whatever to our practice” (ibid.).

In his view of the vanity of “trying to specify the nature of truth”, Rorty’s draws mainly on Davidson, who maintains that “the very absoluteness of truth is a good reason for thinking ‘true’ indefinable and for thinking that no theory of the nature of truth is possible.” (Rorty R., 1998, p. 3). it is the very “absoluteness” of truth that makes it meaningless to talk about it for “it is only the relative” he says, “about which there is anything to say” (ibid.). It may be useful to add that considering Davidson’s “On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme,” Rorty associates Davidson’s antirepresentationalist view of truth with Tarski’s claim that “we have no understanding of truth that is distinct from our understanding of translation” (ibid.). Despite Rorty’s inspiration from Davidson, the latter nevertheless does not give up his commitment to objective truth as he states in the “On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme.” He also rejects the idea that his criticism of scheme-content dualism would result in a pragmatist attitude:

*Giving up the dualism of scheme and content amounts to abandoning a theme central to empiricism in its main historical manifestations. But I do not think, as friends and critics have variously suggested, that my argument against empiricism makes me, or ought to make me, a pragmatist, a transcendental idealist, or an ‘internal’ realist. All these positions are forms of relativism that I find as hard to understand as the empiricism I attack. (Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, 1984, p. xviii)*

3.6. Philosophy

As of 1979 when the *PMN* was published, Rorty says, analytic philosophy has reached its “post-positivistic stance”, thanks to Wittgenstein and his *Philosophical Investigations*, by deconstructing “captivating pictures” of philosophy such as “conceptual analysis”, “phenomenological analysis”, “explication of meanings”, “examination of the ‘logic of our language’”, or “the structure of the constituting activity of consciousness” (Rorty R., 1979, p. 12). These brands of philosophy promoted by Russell, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Carnap, or Wittgenstein in his early phase were proposed for a new and better understanding of philosophy than previous or contemporary alternatives. Although each may be considered as a “breaking of the crust of a tradition” a progress in that sense, Rorty holds that behind them a Cartesian-Kantian strategy can be traceable: “getting more accurate representations” by working more intensely on mind. This assumption is based on the notion of “knowledge as accuracy of representation,” Rorty goes on, and this notion of knowledge suggests itself by a “picture of mind as a great mirror, containing various representations—some accurate, some not—and capable of being studied by pure, nonempirical methods” (ibid.).

What might place Rorty in the history of philosophy, on the other hand, is the novelty he created, which is of a degree that comes close to edge of “normal discourse” towards the “abnormal,” a critical feature in Rorty’s philosophy, which lends itself to controversy, misunderstanding, or admiration at the same time. The “normal vs. abnormal” here, in Rortian sense, is the “distinction which generalizes Kuhn’s distinction between ‘normal’ and ‘revolutionary’ science” (Rorty R., 1979, p.

11). It applies to Rorty in the way he does not attempt to solve some problems within the “agreed upon set of conventions” of what he calls epistemologically centered philosophy. According to Rorty, you go can into an abnormal discourse by being “ignorant of these conventions” or by knowingly “setting them aside,” which can result in a range of “nonsense to intellectual revolution” (ibid., 320), not necessarily respectively. Rorty’s way is a “setting aside.” Similar to his claim about the way to the criticism of the whole analytic frame of mind being paved by its own internal blows, he shows that conventional epistemological assumptions have already been pushed aside in different steps taken by various philosophers like Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Dewey, Sellars, or Quine in history. Rorty thus sketches a historical survey of 20th century philosophy.

Habermas, in his 1992 *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, represents Rorty’s philosophy as “contextualist postanalytic philosophy of language”, which is a “disciplined self-criticism from within” and one of the forces that “guided and re-formed” analytic philosophy and an instance of “self-overcoming” of it (Habermas, 1992, p. 5). From another angle, his philosophy is an exemplification of what Habermas calls the “break with the tradition,” with the themes that the latter thinks to designate the modernism of the twentieth century. Habermas holds that it is the “themes” rather than the “methods” that characterize modern thought and they are “postmetaphysical thinking, the linguistic turn, situating reason, and reversing the primacy of theory over practice or the overcoming of logocentrism” (Habermas, 1992, p. 6).

The picture of mind as the mirror of world matters because Rorty believes it is “pictures or metaphors,” which come before “propositions or statements” in “determin[ing] most of our philosophical convictions” and this picture “holds traditional philosophy captive” (ibid.). Heidegger supplies what Wittgenstein left missing in his deconstructed picture of mind, which is, according to Rorty, “Heidegger’s greatest contribution,” i.e. “historical awareness of the source of all this mirror-imagery ... [which] lets us see the beginnings of the Cartesian imagery in the Greeks and the metamorphoses of this imagery during the last three centuries” (ibid.). The third of the major inspiration of Rorty’s philosophy, Dewey, gives a final twist that transforms Wittgenstein and Heidegger’s contributions, which focused on the “rarely favored individual” and “the chances of keeping oneself apart from the banal self-deception typical of the latter days of a decaying tradition”: he “lets us see the historical phenomenon of mirror-imagery, the story of the domination of the mind of the West by ocular metaphors, within a social perspective” (ibid., 13). In terms of this pursuit of the public good, Rorty is closely associated with Dewey, just as whom, Rorty also envisions a society in which “culture is no longer dominated by the ideal of objective cognition but by that of aesthetic enhancement ... [and] the arts and the sciences would be ‘the unforced flowers of life.’” (ibid.).

Rorty says Heidegger enables us “distance” ourselves from the tradition by “supplementing” the historical awareness as his “greatest contribution to the tradition” (ibid.12). “Distancing” here has a metaphilosophically significant point. It is removing oneself from a familiar picture. This familiarity is of a kind “familiar ...

as household words”³⁸. Discourse in the same frame of metaphors may have an effect of describing the “natural” way of the world, which is like looking at the same picture over a long time. In this respect, Wittgenstein and Dewey, by deconstruction or in socio-cultural terms, and other philosophers who make a difference in the picture, enable a “distancing” from familiarity. Rorty’s philosophy bears the same significance in terms of such separation or dissociation from what seems to be the way things are. In Rorty’s works there is a continuous flow of interfering with the conventional assumptions behind different concepts, drawing also on other sympathetic views of philosophers and thus supplementing a historical and contemporary awareness. He performs this mission by making re-descriptions, isolating presuppositions, blurring distinctions, disconnecting unities, and offering new metaphors.

3.7. Devitt

Michael Devitt aptly depicts Rorty “urging a view of truth derived from Davidson [that] there is no (non-trivial) question of representations corresponding or failing to correspond to reality” (Devitt, 1997, p. 203). He says that Rorty found in Davidsonian semantics a way “to make any sense of the independence talked of in Realism, [and i]t was the Realists’ insistence on a level of independence unobtainable from the Davidsonian perspective that encouraged Rorty’s ... identification of the Realists’ world with a thing-in-itself” (ibid., 208). Discarding representationalist questions is one of the main pillars of Rorty because, as Devitt suggests, it “dissolves the problem of skepticism,” which “doubts the accuracy of

³⁸ “Familiar in his mouth as household words,” William Shakespeare. *Henry V*, 1598.

'mental or linguistic' representations", such as "thoughts or sentences". It is a trivial question for Rorty because questioning the correspondence to something non-human is not like making scientific predictions for answering a question like "why can't we see anything behind a black hole?" What we can find about being corresponded to will remain something human. It is picturing everything we can and cannot talk about as two different categories, but we have nothing to put into the latter. It is like questioning something non-human, by disregarding its being non-human. It is the ontological commitment in correspondence that asks it a meaningless question. Devitt also confirms Rorty on that "philosophy cannot 'underwrite or debunk' claims to knowledge." He says, "as a naturalistic philosopher", he agrees with Rorty on that "we should free us ourselves from that [skeptical] problematic and the a priori view of philosophy [as a priori foundationalism—indeed epistemology as a whole]" (ibid.). However, he claims that Rorty can dismiss epistemology but not the correspondence theory. He says:

Rorty clearly thinks that we need to reject then- correspondence theory in order to free ourselves from the sceptical problematic. Yet surely there is no such necessary connection between semantics and epistemology. (Maxim 5). We can abandon the sceptical problematic because we see "the quest for certainty" as essentially hopeless and because we think that there is no place in a scientific world-view for the a priori epistemology implicit in such a search. Furthermore, once we are free of the problematic, it is an open, empirical question whether a correspondence theory of truth has a place in the total world-view. I think that it has (chapter 6)." (Devitt, 1997, p. 204)

If Devitt bases his claim that Rorty cannot necessarily associate the skeptical problematic with the correspondence theory on his maxim "there is no such necessary connection between semantics and epistemology", then he claims epistemology needs ontological commitments but in semantics we can just talk about

relations without implying any such connections between them. Then he characterizes the skeptical problematic as epistemological in relation with its foundational claims as different from the correspondence theory, which he says concerns semantics and the skeptical problematic dissolves. Then, we should be able to reject that the correspondence theory does not necessarily claim a relation between a statement and the way things actually are in the outside world. He argues that we can abandon the epistemological skeptical problematic because “the quest for certainty” is hopeless and there is no place for an “implicit a priori epistemology in such a quest” in a scientific worldview. Once we are free of the skeptical problematic whether a correspondence theory of truth has a place in the total worldview becomes an open empirical question because it has a place in the total worldview and does not have to concern itself with a skeptical problem of whether representations are accurate. The problem with this claim is that to discard an ontological relation in the correspondence theory needs Rorty to concur that he is a realist in the way Devitt proposes. He postulates the following maxims, of the 5 in total, to back up his construal of realism by retaining a correspondence relation between human thought, language and facts without foundational skepticism.

His Maxim 5 is based on

The claim that a sentence is correspondence-true is often taken to entail something about whether or how we can tell if it is true. In particular, the claim is often thought to conflict with the view that our judgments of truth are theory-laden. (ibid., 4)

And that is based on “Maxim 4 In considering the semantic issue, don’t take truth for granted.” Based on

(This maxim is oversimplified because realism, though largely metaphysical, is a little bit epistemic and semantic: the world must be independent of our knowledge of it and of our capacity to refer to it. So at least that much epistemology and semantics must be settled to settle realism.)
Do we need, and are we entitled to, a correspondence notion of truth? What does such a notion explain? These are very difficult questions. Accordingly I urge: (ibid.)

That is related to “Maxim 2 Distinguish the metaphysical (ontological) issue of realism from semantic issue.” because, he says,

The main traditional arguments against realism about the commonsense world have come from an a priori epistemology, though it has often been possible to see semantics (the theory of meaning) lurking in the background. From the epistemic perspective for which I shall argue—naturalized epistemology—these arguments put the epistemic cart before the realist horse. (ibid., 3)

Even if these postulations justify the consistency of the Realism Dennett proposes, it looks as if there are too many layers of assumptions behind letting correspondence theory free from such kind of a correspondence relation of a vertical ontological hookup is too much a burden for Rorty to accept. It is not possible for Devitt to object to Rorty on this ground without requiring him to accept all his claims about realism. He argues that Rorty is in fact a realist unlike the claim that he is an anti-realist, by building the consistency holding that Rorty is not relativist about truth but can be attributable with “epistemic relativism” because Relativism about truth leads to anti-Realism, but epistemic relativism does not. So far, rendering Rorty a realist and relativist in epistemic sense, requiring him to change his way toward a more systematic than hermeneutic direction seems to be too much requirement for that would not be Rorty anymore.

Devitt’s second objection to Rorty is:

Why should the rejection of skepticism and a priori philosophy lead us into hermeneutics? Naturalistic philosophers see a systematic and constructive role for philosophy in conjunction with science. (ibid. 204)

Moreover, in an interview in 1995, Rorty already rectified his suggestion in the *PMN* about hermeneutics replacing epistemology, saying that.

*I think it was an unfortunate phrase. I wish I'd never mentioned hermeneutics. The last chapter of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* isn't very good. I think I just should have said: we ought to be able to think of something more interesting to do than keep the epistemology industry going. (Rorty R., 1995)*

Appealing to Rorty's naturalism, he thinks, Rorty should need to "see a systematic and constructive role for philosophy in conjunction with science" and suggests that his hermeneutic tendencies make him sound contradictory claiming that "Rejection of skepticism and a priori philosophy does not necessarily lead us into hermeneutics." However, In the *PMN* Rorty made it clear how he incorporated hermeneutics into his philosophy. He says that he does not propose hermeneutics to fill a gap left behind epistemological foundationalism the same way he does not suggest "epistemological behaviorism" as a better version. So according to what he says explicitly about the way and reasons he employs naturalism and hermeneutics, he does not seem to fit in with the realist dress Devitt wants to put on him. Rorty explains that

I am not putting hermeneutics forward as a "successor subject" to epistemology, as an activity which fills the cultural vacancy once filled by epistemologically centered philosophy. In the interpretation I shall be offering, "hermeneutics" is not the name for a discipline, nor for a method of achieving the sort of results which epistemology failed to achieve, nor for a program of research. On the contrary, hermeneutics is an expression of hope that the cultural space left by the demise of epistemology will not be filled—that our culture should become one in which the demand for constraint and confrontation is no longer felt. (Rorty R., 1979, p. 315)

Rorty explains where he makes of naturalism:

Agreeing with the naturalists that redescription is not “change of essence” needs to be followed up by abandoning the notion of “essence” altogether. But the standard philosophical strategy of most naturalisms is to find some way of showing that our own culture has indeed got hold of the essence of[hu]man—thus making all new and incommensurable vocabularies merely “noncognitive” ornamentation. (ibid. 361-2)

What he finds in Hermeneutics is an “attempt” to set aside “the classical picture of human beings”, which “must be set aside before epistemologically centered philosophy can be set aside”. The picture in question is, he says,

A notion shared by Platonists, Kantians, and positivists: that [hu]man has an essence—namely, to discover essences. The notion that our chief task is to mirror accurately, in our own Glassy Essence, the universe around us is the complement of the notion, common to Democritus and Descartes, that the universe is made up of very simple, clearly and distinctly knowable things, knowledge of whose essences provides the master-vocabulary which permits commensuration of all discourses. (ibid. 358)

He explains where he finds this notion of Hermeneutics:

*“Hermeneutics,” as a polemical term in contemporary philosophy, is a name for the attempt to do. The use of the term for this purpose is largely due to one book Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. Gadamer there makes clear that hermeneutics is not a “method for attaining truth” which fits into the classic picture of [hu]man: “The hermeneutic phenomenon is basically not a problem of method at all.” Rather, Gadamer is asking, roughly, what conclusions might be drawn from the fact that we have to practice hermeneutics—from the “hermeneutic phenomenon” as a fact about people which the epistemological tradition has tried to shunt aside. (ibid. 357-8)*

From a Rortian viewpoint, Devitt's case seems to present one or the other.

attempts to resuscitate the correspondence theory of truth, that any such theory requires the idea that the world is divided into facts and that facts are what Strawson calls "sentence-shaped items," items having the shape of sentences in "Nature's Own Language" to describe the view of my realist (or, as I should prefer to say, representationalist) opponents. (Rorty R., 1998, p. 85)

Then, "abjur[ing] ... all references to "Nature's Own Language," Rorty assumes a hypothetical position thinking that one can believe in a correspondence relation of a statement to a matter of fact without claiming that the latter is captured as it is in itself. It amounts to say that one may not buy the idea that things emanate words for us to catch but that does not require to quit correspondence relation. Rorty nevertheless thinks that one question remains: how do you decide that it is correspondence? "Correspondence theorists," he says, still "need to have criteria for the adequacy of vocabularies as well as of statements, need the notion of one vocabulary somehow 'fitting' the world better than another" (ibid, 85-86). Then, a claim, of which "good sense can be made," as Rorty puts it goes, "some vocabularies (e.g., Newton's) do not just work better than others (e.g., Aristotle's) but do so because they represent reality more adequately" (ibid., 86).

Devitt suggests such a better fit to the world by supporting "*a posteriori* essentialism", a view favored by his realist formulation. He says that science can correctly define what e.g., "a tiger" is on account of their "essential properties" by "determin[ing] its genetic structure" (Devitt, 1997, p. 22). That may not necessarily mean that science conveys "Nature's Own Language" because Devitt says that "we could be wrong about the essential properties of tigers just as we could about any

others” (ibid). So, he does not commit his realism to any of such essential properties but “the existence of entities of certain kinds” for “tactical” reasons. All in all, he implies that as science develops, it can define the world better. Then, he does not have to commit his realism to an “*a priori* form of essentialism”, which requires certain properties for the existence of e.g., a tiger, such as being “large black-and-yellow-striped feline” (ibid, 21). The reason implied here is that a better equipped science can reveal that black-and-yellow stripes are phenotypic traits because regarding possible albino or other stripeless tigers undermine the belief that they are essential properties to define a tiger. So, the essential remains somewhere deeper only a competent scientific inquiry could dig out and find, for instance in a genotype. A doctrine of realism might make sense of a claim like this regarding the fact that his “views on realism ... arise from naturalism and physicalism” (ibid, viii) and his agreement with “scientific realism”, according to which “Tokens of most current unobservable scientific physical types objectively exist independently of the mental” (Devitt, 1997, p. 24).

According to Devitt, we know that having stripes is not an essential property of tigers because science could adequately identify it because it has the means to reach deeper into the reality of things as it, for instance, did by decoding genes. He says that correspondence to reality is an empirical question but how could we be sure that their genotype is closer to the nature of tigers? We do not have a neutral matrix to compare genealogical data to the way tigers really are. A certain discovery may yield better results in prediction and control of the environment, but we cannot conclude that it corresponds better to the nature of reality. That would be inferring a

metaphysical conclusion from empirical facts, but this kind of correspondence cannot have a “place in the total world-view” as he claimed earlier. Devitt assumes such a continuity between the empirical inside and metaphysical outside in picture of thought to which Rorty objects.

Devitt’s scientific realism sounds like the view held by Erich Fromm, who describes “the history of thought” as “the history of an ever-increasing approximation to the truth” (Fromm, 1947, p. 178). Fromm holds it for a similar reason to that of Devitt. According to him even if “[t]he history of science is a history of inadequate and incomplete statements,” “every new insight makes possible the recognition of the inadequacies of previous propositions and offers a springboard for creating a more adequate formulation” (ibid.). Devitt seems to accept the quality of “optimality” as Fromm does, that “scientific knowledge has”, it is “not absolute but ‘optimal’” (ibid.), as an indication of the possibility of reaching truth. It can do so by building on the “optimum of truth attainable in a given historical period” (ibid.) that it gathers. So, the theistic principle of absoluteness in the notion of truth seems to have been eliminated with scientific thought, which traded it with optimality. But this is not an elimination for Rorty, it is putting it further. If Fromm, and Devitt accept that this optimality leads, or “ever-increasingly makes us approach” to somewhere, or something, there is an assumption of a model to be copied. Otherwise, it is like writing better novels, or making better buildings, which cannot lead to a true novel or building. Dogmatic texture of truth passes as its “objective,” or “universal,” features are the remnants of its absolute sense that needs to be noticed.

3.8. Alston

William Alston thinks the “most obvious” reason for his thesis “Truth is important. It is often a matter of considerable import whether a particular bearer of truth value is true or false” (Alston, 1997, p. 1) would be “to determine what states of affairs obtain where that has a bearing on our practical or theoretical concerns” (ibid.). In other words, he concurs that “We are more likely to succeed in our endeavors if they are guided by true beliefs than if they are guided by false beliefs” (ibid., 4). He assumes that

no one ... will question the point that it [truth] often makes a big difference to how we should conduct ourselves, theoretically or practically, whether a certain state of affairs obtains. It is important to my thinking about causality whether causality amounts to counterfactual dependence, and it makes a crucial difference to what it is most advisable for me to do next whether a burglar is in the house. (ibid., 235)

Alston’s above thesis about the importance of truth is one of the two theses that he defends as the formulation of his “Alethic Realism”, which is “realism concerning truth”. The other thesis is that

The realist conception of truth is the right way to think of truth in the sense of “true” in which it applies to beliefs, statements, and propositions. (ibid., 1)

He defends a realist conception of truth and criticizes “the idea of construing truth in terms of some favorable epistemic status” for the reason that such a construal may not “capture what people typically have in mind when they call a belief, statement, or proposition ‘true’.” He considers pragmatists such as Peirce, James, and Dewey defending a position even beyond offering “the epistemic status as a reinterpretation

of truth”; they “push... for the replacement of truth with the favored epistemic status” (ibid., 233).

Alston says that he finds this “replacement of truth in favor of some epistemic status” such as the ones he exemplifies, “quest for coherence, being fruitfully led through our experience, or resolution of problematic situations” even “in a purer form” (ibid., 234) in Rorty, than they are in i.e., other pragmatists like Peirce, James, and Dewey.

Alston presents his claim with the following three pieces quoted from Rorty’s *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 1982.

The pragmatist agrees that if one wants to preserve the notion of “correspondence with reality” then a physicalistic theory of reference is necessary—but he sees no point in preserving that notion. The pragmatist has no notion of truth which would enable him to make sense of the claim that if we achieved everything we ever hoped to achieve by making assertions we might still be making false assertions, failing to “correspond with something”. (Rorty 1982, xxiv)

When he [the pragmatist] asks himself about a given statement S, whether he “knows what has to be the case for it to be true” or merely knows “the conditions which we recognize as establishing the truth or falsity of statements of that class”, he feels as helpless as when asked “Axe you really in love, or merely inflamed by passion?” ... He refuses to take a stand—to provide an “analysis” of “S is true”, for example, or to either assert or deny bivalence. He refuses to make a move in any of the games in which he is invited to take part. (Rorty 1982, xxviii)

What really needs debate between the pragmatist and the intuitive realist is not whether we have intuitions to the effect that “truth is more than assertibility” ... Of course we have such intuitions. How could we escape having them? We have been educated within an intellectual tradition built around such claims ... But it begs the question between pragmatist and realist to say that we must find a philosophical view which “captures” such intuitions. The pragmatist is urging that we do our best to stop having such intuitions that we develop a new intellectual tradition. (Rorty 1982, xxix-xxx). (Ibid., 234)

Even if other pragmatists can be attributed with a position defending “epistemic status” as a “replacement” of truth, it does not apply to Rorty. Just as he does not defend a notion of truth as an “identification of justification,” as he expressed above concerning his objection to Conant, he does not defend any epistemological commitment. What he suggests is not “replacement” but “elimination.” The above characterization cannot be attributed to Rorty. However, Alston depicts some thinkers being, “innocent of any truck with epistemic theories of truth” and does not name Rorty among them. Rorty, nonetheless, defends those views, which Alston actually did not attribute to him. These philosophers, he says, have

been led, in one way or another, to question the apparent truism that the ultimate goal of cognition is to believe what is true and refrain from believing what is false and to propose alternative goals as more basic, central, or worthwhile. Thus the central aim might be identified as "predictive power" or "explanatory efficacy" or "maximal coherence in our belief system". (ibid., 235)

Rorty, again, can be attributed with holding very similar reasons to what Alston suggests they do:

When thinkers seek to dethrone truth in favor of claimants like these, ..., it is typically because of suppositions like those I sought to discredit in Chapter 3, to the effect that truth is unattainable or that we can never know whether we have attained it or not. It is then supposed that predictive or explanatory power, or coherence, is something that we can get at, something the presence or absence of which we can ascertain, and hence something it is reasonable and feasible to look for. (ibid.)

When Alston claims to discredit is what he calls “the alleged impossibility of comparing judgments and facts,” he depicts quite the very picture Rorty aims to deconstruct:

On the realist conception, in order to determine whether a proposition, statement, belief, or judgment is true we would have to ascertain whether it corresponds to some fact in the appropriate way. But this is impossible. We can never get 'outside' our thought (experience, discourse, beliefs . . .) and scrutinize reality itself. All our cognition of the world is mediated by our thoughts (experiences, statements, beliefs . . .); hence we can never get at the reality side of the relation so as to see how the two sides match up. No matter what we do, we are pinned inside the 'circle of our beliefs.' (ibid., 86)

He quotes one “typical formulations of this claim” from Davidson, which Rorty would concur:

If meanings are given by objective truth conditions there is a question how we can know that the conditions are satisfied, for this would appear to require a confrontation between what we believe and reality; and the idea of such a confrontation is absurd. (Davidson, “A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge”, in LePore, ed., 1986,307) (ibid.)

Alston thereby does not oppose the picture but defends the suggested ontological commitment and claims that it is actually what happens with us and the world.

Alston’s first objection is on account of a difference between “determining” and “identifying” truth. He holds that “even if the claims are true, they have no force against a realist theory of truth; for the theory aims only at saying what truth is—not at providing a way of determining what is true and what false” (ibid.,87). He nevertheless carries on finding more evidence to discredit the view and presents the thesis about “compar[ing]” beliefs (statements, judgments ...) with “reality,” “facts,” “the world,” to see if “they correspond,” “fit”, or “match” in a way attributable to

Rorty’s views:

There is no pure, unmediated apprehension of reality, things, objects, or facts as they are in themselves apart from our ways of conceptualizing them or “propositionalizing” them, apart from what we judge them to be. Hence, in seeking to apprehend the other term of the correspondence relation to check its relation to the truth-value-bearing term, we wind up, in spite of ourselves,

with another belief, judgment, or statement, rather than with the extracognitive and extralinguistic item which we were seeking. (ibid., 87)

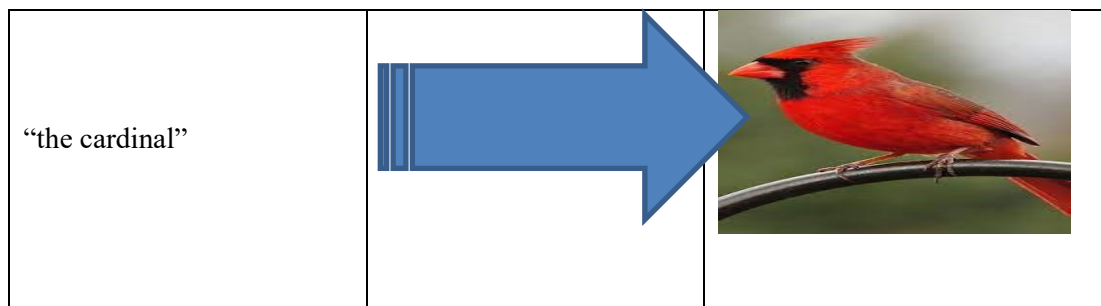
Then, he exemplifies the argument referring to Brand Blanshard's "The Tests of Truth" in his *The Nature of Thought* (1939, vol. 2) as a "typical" sample:

When we turn to judgments where appeal to correspondence is possible, we find that it is always resorted to, and that in such cases uncertainty is banished. Take the judgement, "That bird is a cardinal". If you heard someone make that remark, how would you test it? You would look and see. If there was a correspondence between what was asserted and what you saw, you would call the judgement true; if not, false. That is the way we actually assure ourselves of the truth of all such judgements, and it is correspondence that assures us. (227-28) (ibid., 88)

He quotes Blanshard's depiction of truth according to the correspondence theory in realist terms:

there is some solid chunk of fact, directly presented to sense and beyond all question, to which thought must adjust itself. And this "solid fact" is a fiction. What the theory takes as fact and actually uses as such is another judgement or set of judgements, and what provides the verification is the coherence between the initial judgement and these. (ibid., 88)

Here Blanshard simplifies the view as the depiction of a situation:



Blanshard pictures it more like, for instance, an ornithologist at first glance and after close inspection of a cardinal, although, he says, even the most ignorant person has judgments based on his conception, however simple they are.

initial judgment

later scrutinized judgment

living thing, animal, bird, bigger than a sparrow, reddish, with a hook
--

Family Cardinalidae cardinal, grosbeaks, and relatives Genus Cardinalis cardinals Species Cardinalis Cardinalis, northern cardinal Subspecies Cardinalis cardinalis affinis Subspecies Cardinalis cardinalis canicaudus
--

According to Blanshard the realist “solid fact” is a “fiction.” It is another set of judgments and judgment is part of a “concept” formation and that makes solid fiction a complex cognitive process. Alston quotes his reply:

It assumes that, corresponding to our judgement, there is some solid chunk of fact, directly presented to sense and beyond all question, to which thought must adjust itself. And this “solid fact” is a fiction. What the theory takes as fact and actually uses as such is another judgement or set of judgements, and what provides the verification is the coherence between the initial judgement and these.

Suppose that standing in our place were an animal with all our senses, each developed to the highest acuteness, but unable to attach meanings to sense data as we do, or note likenesses, implications, and differences. Would such a creature perceive what we perceive? Plainly not. To recognize a cardinal is a considerable intellectual achievement, for to do it one must grasp, implicitly but none the less really, the concept of cardinal, and this can only be done by a leap far out of the given into ideal classification. (ibid.)

Indeed, that the brute-fact view of perception is untrue is proved by this alone, that perception may be mistaken; I may take the cardinal for a robin.

If the object were mere given fact, such a mistake would be impossible. (ibid., 88-89)

In a Rortian view, instead of accounting the case as the “verification in terms of the coherence between judgments, we could say that it is a situation in which, for instance, uttering the word “cardinal” passes as valid because we can move on without friction caused by my uttering or we manage to behave in a way that we expect to by uttering “cardinal” because we assume that the consequent happenings would not contradict it.

However, Blanshard gives an edge on Alston when he needs to argue for concepts as necessary part of sense perception. Then Alston can separate the “necessary” from the “part” and thinks that we can assume “perceptual awareness,” or a similar basic state without conceptualization. Despite Blanshard insists that notions that constitute the concept “are so bound up with the identification that our thought would lose its character with the removal of any one of them,” (ibid.,89) and giving the example of the possibility of confusing the cardinal with a robin, it does not add up to the necessary inseparability of the conceptualization with sense data. In fact, Alston finds more force for his arguments in Blanshard’s following statements in the above claim: “They are elements in a theory, a theory of no little complexity, which is based on sense data if you will, but could not possibly consist of them” (ibid.). If something is “based on sense data,” even if taking them apart would cause losing the character of the total, it is possible to point at something, may be less added by conceptualization, if not at all, that may be called a “brute fact”.

Alston more forcefully employs Blanshard's implication at the beginning of his claims quoted above (ibid., 169) for the "presentedness" of something, even if it were to be called a chunk of judgments:

there is such a phenomenon as the presentation or givenness of something to one's awareness. Speaking of vision in particular and following Dretske (1969), I would say that all that is required for my seeing something (my being aware of it in a distinctively visual way) is that I "visually discriminate" it from its background, that it stands out for me visually, and therefore looks a certain way to me (red, round, lumpy, or whatever). (ibid., 90)

Alston uses the same form of example about the kind of perception that an animal can have that Blanshard used to show perception as conceptualization and concluding that an animal cannot perceive what a human does to show that "there is *no* perception without concepts and judgments" (ibid., 90). He finds the sample case in similar "reduced states of visual consciousness—when just waking up, for example—and at the periphery of the visual field... the sensory experience of very young infants" (ibid.) for that conclusion. Blanshard's mistaken-robin-as-cardinal example to conclude that "If the object were mere given fact, such a mistake would be impossible," gives even more advantage to Alston:

The mere visual awareness of a cardinal cannot be mistaken; it is not the sort of thing that can be correct or incorrect. It is the belief or judgment that what I see is a robin that is susceptible of mistake. The argument depends, at least in part, on focusing on the judgmental aspect of perception and ignoring the presentational aspect. (ibid., 91)

Alston cannot identify the same “given” assumption against Rorty for the latter’s similar kind of view on “the alleged impossibility of comparing judgments and facts,” as a base for his belief “to the effect that truth is unattainable or that we can never know whether we have attained it or not,” which holds his point in refraining from the belief that “the ultimate goal of cognition is to believe what is true and false,” which lets him “propose alternative goals as more basic, central, or worthwhile,” which makes “the central aims be identified as “predictive power,” “explanatory efficacy,” or “maximal coherence in our belief system” possible, in favor of which “Rorty, too, can be one of those “thinkers [who] seek to dethrone truth” (ibid., 235).

In the extracts by Rorty above, there cannot be a suggestion for truth be replaced by an epistemic status because there is no epistemic status in question there. In the first piece what Rorty suggests is that even if Alston were able to prove his realist point in the position of the so called best-favored epistemic status replacing truth view, he has no notion of truth presented as such. Rorty already accepts the necessity of a realist position in correspondence with reality. That would be a logical necessity between two claims, not a point in the possibility of a reference obtaining physical reality. For the rest, it is questionable what kind of epistemic status Rorty finds in love or infatuation dilemma. He is not only eliminating a status, but any sense found in epistemology. He is pointing out the cultural character of intuitions that put us in a matrix in which truth is inescapably part of thought to show the possible contingency of those intuitions. Alston’s criticism does not address Rorty here.

When Alston looks for a trace for the existence of something called an independent fact, he assumes its existence beforehand by putting sense perception as a confrontation of two things. He discusses his point from an omnipotent position where he could not be when he claims the possibility of non-judgmental sense experience in the form of a judgment. He assumes a point outside language from which he could attribute neutral remarks for the ones within language. That is why Rorty is already able to answer the question about his second thesis at the beginning negatively.

Alston's claim about the perception of a "crude fact" in the case of peripheral vision or babies suggests an indication of a contact with reality. For Rorty such cases exemplify a causal relation between us and something outside, and even independent of us, but causality does not yield an essence. Rorty does not define this kind of a vision a perception but an "awareness" and alludes to Sellars's

distinction between awareness-as-discriminative behavior and awareness as ... being "in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says" (p. 169). Awareness in the first sense is manifested by rats and amoebas and computers; it is simply reliable signaling. Awareness in the second sense is manifested only by beings whose behavior we construe as the utterance of sentences with the intention of justifying the utterance of other sentences. In this latter sense awareness is justified true belief-knowledge-but in the form sense it is ability to respond to stimuli. The bulk of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" is an argument that such ability is a causal condition for knowledge but not a ground for knowledge. (Rorty R., 1979, pp. 181-182)

3.9. Against Causal Relation

John McDowell finds a "rational constraint" on us by the world arguing that "aims at judgment, or fixation of belief, is answerable to the world—to how things are—

for whether or not it is correctly executed” (Rorty R., 1998, p. 138). He sees a “normative relation” between the “mind and the world” because “[a] belief or judgment to the effect that things are thus and so ... must be a posture or stance that is correctly or incorrectly adopted according to whether or not things are indeed thus and so” (ibid.)

Despite the plausibility of a proposition “this is red” in being “directed towards the world,” (ibid.) Rorty’s answer can be summarized in his statement that:

there are vast areas of culture in which "a belief or judgment that things are thus and so "is indeed" "a posture or stance that is correctly or incorrectly adopted," but in which it would be strange to say that it is "correctly or incorrectly adopted according to whether or not things are indeed thus and so." The addition of this latter phrase may go unnoticed if one's paradigm of a belief or judgment is one of Newton's laws, but it will seem pointless when one is describing beliefs such as "Blake is a better role model for poets than Byron" or "Heidegger's philosophy was better than his politics." In art, morals, and politics we want to judge correctly, but talk of "world-directedness" and of things "indeed [being] thus and so" sounds hollow. (ibid., 138-139)

Murat Baç and Bülke Temizler also share a common point in their argument for “an alternative realist approach regarding the onto-epistemic norms pertaining to human knowledge and our artifactual reality” (Baç & Temizler, 2022, p. 2) by “tak[ing] the idea of constraint seriously and constru[ing] it in a manner” (ibid., 15) without assuming a noumenal existence. According to their view thinking that one cannot, for instance, talk about “truth” once the discursive dimension is removed from the realm of existence ... do not, ... entail that there are no ontological constraints upon our worldly engagements at all” (ibid., 15).

Rorty is criticized for oversimplifying correspondence theories by representing them all commit to a referent of Kantian thing-in-itself or suspecting all realist positions mask Platonic overtones. Charles Taylor similarly charges him with: “pretend[ing] ... that ‘believers in the correspondence theory are “Raving Platonists”—people who believe that ‘a vocabulary is somehow out there in the world’” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 85).

But Rorty has “no doubt” that things can be independent of us. To think otherwise would make him an idealist. The problem is what we make of it. That is, according to him, a “causal independence” (ibid., 86). The independent existence of the world without any qualifications, in a way similarly held by Baç and Temizler, according to Rorty, cannot be claimed without assuming a noumenal existence:

But before you describe ... [something] as [e.g.,] a dinosaur, or as anything else, there is no sense to the claim that it is "out there" having properties. What is out there? The thing-in-itself? The world? Tell us more. Describe it in more detail. Once you have done so, but only then, are we in a position to tell you which of its features are causally independent of having been described and which are not. If you describe it as a dinosaur, then we can tell you that the feature of being oviparous is causally independent of our description of it, but the feature of being an animal whose existence has been suspected only in recent centuries is not. That is not a distinction between "intrinsic" and "merely relational" features of dinosaurs. It is just a distinction between their causal-relations-under-a-description to some things (eggs) and their causal-relations-under-a-description to other things (us). (ibid., 87-88)

However, Rorty adds, regarding the fact that “causal relations must be kept constant under redescription,”

people who pride themselves on being realists may ask: Why do they need to be kept constant? Because they really and truly are invariant or merely because unity is a desirable feature of science, a useful regulative idea that would be endangered if we let causal relations vary with descriptions? I see this as a bad

question, because it presupposes one more version of the scheme-content distinction. It is one more example of the fatal temptation to hold on to the distinction between “in itself” and “for us.” This latter distinction (which is not the same as the harmless and necessary distinction between “is” and “seems”) lurks at the bottom of most of the fruitless controversies in this area of philosophy. (ibid., 88)

The point is, for Rorty, in relation with the picture he depicted at the beginning, we cannot infer from accepting the intuition that we are interacting by something independent from us that that something has an objective nature or constrain us in a way to control our beliefs. We may imagine many other scenarios but that is assuming an edge of a horizon. Here McDowell’s argument against Sellars, Brandom, and Davidson can be raised against Rorty’s “causal relation” with the world. Rorty may be, too “infatuated with the need to repudiate the Myth of the Given—to avoid the British empiricists’ traditional confusion of causation with justification—as to be willing to give up world-directedness and rational answerability to the world” (Rorty R., 1998, p. 141). But “world-directedness” does not necessitate “rational answerability,” “*to the world*” but to us because “only a belief can justify a belief” (ibid.). Rorty says,

This means drawing a sharp line between experience as the cause of the occurrence of a justification, and the empiricist notion of experience as itself justificatory. It means reinterpreting “experience” as the ability to acquire beliefs noninferentially as a result of neurologically describable causal transactions with the world. (ibid.)

“Causal interaction,” according to Rorty, does not give us any privileged or ontologically special means for inference toward a higher order and it can be observed in his comparison with a computer interaction with the world:

Computers are programmed to respond to certain causal transactions with input devices by entering certain program states. We humans program ourselves to respond to causal transactions between the higher brain

centers and the sense organs with dispositions to make assertions. There is no epistemologically interesting difference between a machine's program state and our dispositions, and both may equally well be called "beliefs" or "judgments." There is no more or less intentionality, world-directedness, or rationality in the one case than in the other. We can describe both ourselves and machines in normative, programming terms or in non-normative, hardware terms. (ibid., 141-142)

3.10. Can We Leave the Notion of Truth Behind?

James Conant, as a pragmatist, while agreeing on quite a lot with Rorty, he objects him at the point where he thinks

that there's something we're wrong about and something we're answerable to which isn't just what we'll pass muster with our peers. [Rortian depiction of truth as] "getting things right", that is "being answerable to something non-human the world" and justification as "convincing your peers that this is what we should say about the non-human world" more or less coincide. But I think if one wants to give away account of what truth is and one simply says it is justification and nothing more, at that point ... you've thrown out a notion of truth that you would like to hang on ... and it seems to me at least some pragmatists sometimes have worried about losing that notion of truth. (Rorty, Putnam, & Conant, Pragmatism and Truth, 2002).

Similarly there are critics who insist on the necessity of the notion of truth because they "seem to find something more [in it] than [he] do[es] not—if not the idea of accurate representation of intrinsic nature, then that of 'referentiality or transcendence' or *something*³⁹" says, Rorty that he "cannot get straight" (Rorty R., 1995, p. 150). The problem is that Rorty does not think any of them "offer[s] a handle for the epistemologist who wants to judge the truth indicativeness of our contemporary practices" (ibid.). The issue comes down to a matter of "intuitions" that of realists make them "anxiously defend" it (ibid.).

³⁹ Rorty's emphasis.

The kind of “something more” about “truth” might be what makes it an intuitive concept and an essential component of reasoning bearing too deep a weight to be eliminated. It might be attributing it a structural role of the king in chess, rather than a vestige of theistic attitude. There appears the question of what should be attributed to intuitiveness. Taking into Rorty’s entry of “Intuition” in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 1967, to be of “philosophical interest” truth must mean more than a “hunch,” such as “immediate knowledge of a concept,” which means “knowledge that does not entail ability to define the concept.” Rorty reviews “conceptual intuition” from different philosophical perspectives. Rationalist approach takes “certain terms [to] signify a priori concepts” whereas according to empiricist view they are “not grasped intuitively” and either they have “noncircular definitions,” or they “do not refer to concepts at all but are without meaning.” These views, which remain in the “Cartesian framework”, become “older”, by 1967, compared to the “Linguistic theory of conceptual intuition”, which does not “insist on the necessity of such knowledge” as an “act of abstraction”, accepted as a uniquely human faculty. Instead of a rationalist or empiricist idea of intuitive knowledge as a product of mind’s operation of abstraction in a Cartesian framework, a linguistic approach of a postulation of intuition as the kind of knowledge resulting from a “conditioning process that leads us, after some trial and error, to utter ... in appropriate contexts in appropriate situations” was as good an explanation. That is, it proposed a more viable view than the “older views” of the empiricist or rationalist approaches.

3.11. Russell on Pragmatism

Russell, for instance, is not convinced by William James' view of truth although he is "persuaded by the truth of his doctrine" of radical empiricism, which he revealed in his essay "Does Consciousness Exist?" Russell thinks James "deserves a high place among philosophers on this ground alone" (Russell, 2004, p. 724). In this essay, Russell summarizes, James discards some fundamental notions and distinctions of subject-object, mind and matter, and consciousness and puts "experience" as "the flux of life which furnishes the material to our later reflection" (ibid., 726). James maintains that "consciousness is the name of a nonentity and has no right to a place among first principles. Those who still cling to it are clinging to a mere echo, the faint rumor left behind by the disappearing 'soul' upon the air of philosophy." (ibid., 727). James says that "consciousness" was already being abandoned before he made it explicit, only that "they were not quite radical enough, not quite daring enough in their negations" (James, 1904, p. 477).

James provides Rorty and other pragmatists with convenient ways of describing truth, such as "Ideas ... become true in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience." "...the true is only the expedient in the way of our thinking ... in the long run and on the whole of course." "Our obligation to seek truth is part of our general obligation to do what pays." (Russell, 2004, p. 728). "We cannot reject any hypothesis if consequences useful to life flow from it" (ibid.). That includes beliefs in relation to God and religion. He says, "If the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, it is true. ... We may well believe, on the proofs that religious experience affords, that higher

powers exist and are at work to save the world on ideal lines similar to our own”

(ibid.). To Russell this principle is of “great intellectual difficulties” he goes on with a rephrase of James’ doctrine

*assumes that a belief is ‘true’ when its effects are good.
If this definition is to be useful — and if not it is condemned by the
pragmatist’s test—we must know
(a) What is good.
(b) What are the effects of this or that belief,
and we must know these things before we can know that anything is ‘true’,
since it is only after we have decided that the effects of a belief are good that
we have a right to call it ‘true’.
The result is an incredible complication. (ibid.)*

Thinking Rorty were the interlocutor to an objection such as this one, he would point out whether we should decide on the truth of a proposition ‘before’ or ‘after’ the occurrence. Russell gives an example of a situation supposing “you want to know whether Columbus crossed the Atlantic in 1492” (ibid.). He asserts that the existence of Columbus can be found to be true according to the “causes of my belief, not because of its effects” (ibid.). If it were not, he says, that “Santa Claus exists” would be true since “... he has] always found that the hypothesis of Santa Claus ‘works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word’” (ibid.). The objection here is similar to the one Searle makes and claims that antirepresentationalist attitude may lead to results in which “anything goes.” The truth of the existence of Santa Claus and Columbus is not a matter of personal choice but as James also puts it, a general web of beliefs is in question, in terms of, when they say, what it pays. A “language game” is in question here, which is not played alone, and just as it pays to say that there are mountains over there, one can imagine experiencing the results of talking about Santa Claus as a real person, and Columbus an imaginary one; it does not pay.

About the causes and effects of beliefs, Russell thinks “Columbus exists; is true because of its causes, which lie in history books, for instance. Rorty would again, as he did in reply to Searle’s “Rationality and Realism, What is at Stake?” remind one of distinguishing between

two senses of the phrase ‘represent accurately.’ In the nonphilosophical sense, to ask a witness if she has accurately represented a situation is to ask about her truthfulness or her carefulness. When we say that good historians accurately represent what they find in the archives, we mean that they look hard for relevant documents do not discard documents tending to discredit the historical thesis they are propounding, do not misleadingly quote passages out of context, tell the same historical story among themselves that they tell us, and so on to assume that a historian accurately represents the facts as she knows them is to assume that she behaves in the way in which good, honest historians behave. (Rorty R., 1998, p. 73)

So, it is not that “Columbus exists” is true because one knows that it represents a reality in itself, or to say it is true does not mean “one can take it or leave it” at will.

So, Rorty adds:

It is not to assume anything about the reality of past events, or about the truth conditions of statements concerning such events, or about the necessarily hermeneutical character of the Geisteswissenschaften, or about any other philosophical topic (ibid.)

In case of the truth of a new hypothesis, for example, Russell’s comments that “we must know what is good” and “the effects of that belief” are of an “incredible complication” will be necessarily so. It will all require calculating a large scope of possible outcomes of such a new belief. Considering how we choose what to believe in new cases, a new virus causing a pandemic for instance, it will probably not be a decisive one, but possibly stand on a more or less convenient balance.

There seems to be a tendency to characterize an attitude of ascribing all responsibility of blame or praise to human beings with a sort of unreliability,

nihilism, arbitrariness, or “subjectivist madness.” Russell finds the problem with James’ doctrine in built on a “foundation of skepticism ... ignor[ing] all extra-human facts” (Russell, 2004, p. 736).

As far as it is just true about Rorty how Russell evaluates Dewey’s ideas, this is how much Russell agrees with Dewey:

From the strictly philosophical point of view, the chief importance of Dewey’s work lies in his criticism of the traditional notion of ‘truth’, which is embodied in the theory that he calls ‘instrumentalism’. Truth, as conceived by most professional philosophers, is static and final, perfect and eternal; in religious terminology, it may be identified with God’s thoughts, and with those thoughts which, as rational beings, we share with God. The perfect model of truth is the multiplication table, which is precise and certain and free from all temporal dross. Since Pythagoras, and still more since Plato, mathematics has been linked with theology, and has profoundly influenced the theory of knowledge of most professional philosophers. Dewey’s interests are biological rather than mathematical, and he conceives thought as an evolutionary process. The traditional view would, of course, admit that men gradually come to know more, but each piece of knowledge, when achieved, is regarded as something final. Hegel, it is true, does not regard human knowledge in this way. He conceives human knowledge as an organic whole, gradually growing in every part, and not perfect in any part until the whole is perfect. But although the Hegelian philosophy influenced Dewey in his youth, it still has its Absolute and its eternal world which is more real than the temporal process. These can have no place in Dewey’s thought, for which all reality is temporal, and process, though evolutionary, is not, as for Hegel, the unfolding of an eternal Idea. (Russell, 2004, p. 731)

Russell finds it acceptable, then, the criticism of truth in terms of its Platonic aspects and shares the idea that we cannot get rid of “temporal dross” of experience. He thereby endorses Dewey’s emphasis on biology and therefore randomness and change instead of mathematical certainty, just as Rorty emphasizes Darwinian naturalism.

Dewey's notion of "inquiry" is also adopted and used frequently by Rorty's in explaining his views and like Dewey, Rorty, too, "does not aim at judgments that shall be absolutely 'true' or condemn their contradictions as absolutely 'false'. In his opinion there is a process called 'inquiry', which is one form of mutual adjustment between an organism and its environment." (Russell, 2004, p. 737). However, when Dewey defined "inquiry" as "the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole ... [and]... is concerned with objective transformations of objective subject-matter" (ibid.). Russell could find a Hegelian metaphysical element which look like a "distinction of appearance and reality" in that "the appearance may be confused and fragmentary, but the reality is always orderly and organic", a fact, which, he says, Dewey might not have been aware of (ibid.). Rorty does not have such a "unified whole" in his use of inquiry and can say that the aim of inquiry is not truth. Russell repeats another objection for Dewey that he made against James: deciding the truth of a statement in terms of its causes vs. consequences. He claims that with an account of truth dependent on the pragmatics of the result you cannot even answer the question whether "you [had] coffee with your breakfast this morning" (ibid., 735) while being busy with evaluating the consequences of possible beliefs.

Russell finds the difference between himself and Dewey in judging the truth or falsity of a belief in the "outlook on the world", which makes them take either cause or effect as the criterion. That means, according to Russell, Dewey maintains that "warranted assertibility", with which he characterizes a belief, rather than "truth",

“depends upon the future” because he holds that “Thus a belief about some event in the past is to be classified as ‘good’ or ‘bad’, not according to whether the event really took place, but according to the future effects of the belief” (Russell, 2004, p. 736) and therefore “it is in our power to alter what should be asserted ... in so far as it is in our power to alter the future” (ibid.). Russell somehow downplays Dewey’s reasoning here by concluding that this pragmatist notion of truth allows one to alter facts if one finds them “distasteful” and can say that, with “enough skill and power”, Caesar did not cross the Rubicon, by “arrang[ing] a social environment in which th[is] statement ... will have ‘warranted assertibility’” (ibid.). It may amount to refusing to acknowledge a fact and sophistry. Another objection of Russell is that the “good” or “satisfactoriness” to evaluate a belief is itself a vague enough conception to ascertain. Besides he suggests a fallacy in the argument of infinite regress because a decision in the goodness or badness of a belief will itself require a still further decision for the goodness or the badness of it (ibid.).

One thing that can be said against Russell’s objection against pragmatist mindset is that he appears to assume beliefs taken or rejected individually. Such a challenge cannot be posed to at least Rorty’s pragmatism, which does not offer a picture in which we first go through an experience as it is and then adjust it in accordance with some interests. A belief is a part of a web of beliefs, which in relation to each other gives you a satisfactory reason go on with believing that you had coffee in the morning, or any disagreeing within the web makes you wonder where the problem arises. Believing that drinking tea or coffee for breakfast is not an isolated occurrence from your daily habits, shopping list, or the feel in your taste buds, etc.

Taking Russell's other example, that Columbus crossed the ocean in 1492 is true, means for Rortian pragmatism that believing that pays in the language game that you are a part of, a game in which the history books, timelines, exams, museums, etc. will put you in a disadvantaged position if you believe that Columbus crossed the ocean in 1492 is false; and not that this sentence mirrors a realm of truth in itself.

However, if you already take a "fact" as already established, and it is up to the competence of the language to be able to reflect it sufficiently, the incongruity between "the outlooks in the world" that Russell brings up does not become compatible by arguments. Russell reveals this "outlook" in the problem he sees with Dewey's pragmatist theory, which is, "the severing of the relation between a belief and the fact of facts which would commonly be said to 'verify' it" (ibid. 869), and in his criticism that "Dewey's divergence from what has hitherto been regarded as common sense is due to his refusal to admit 'facts' into his metaphysic, in the sense in which 'facts' are stubborn and cannot be manipulated" (ibid. 735). On such an occasion, Rorty would openly repeat that, first all, his own version of pragmatism "urges that philosophers perform their principal social function only when they change intuitions, as opposed to reconciling them" (Rorty R., 1998, p. 130). Rorty, accordingly, envisages a new *Weltanschauung*.

If Russell's view on truth looks as much opposed to that of Dewey's as Searle's to Rorty's, there are more in-between attitudes presented by, according to Rorty, Donald Davidson, Wilfrid Sellars, Robert Brandom, and John McDowell, for instance. Davidson holds that, Rorty quotes, "we do not 'understand the notion of

truth, as applied to language, independent of the notion of translation” and Sellars similarly claims that semantical statements of the Tarski-Carnap variety do not assert relations between linguistic and extra-linguistic items” (ibid. 129 fn.7). They both agree that

... the search for truth cannot lead us beyond our own practices into what Sellars called “an archē” beyond discourse”. It can only be a search for a discourse that works better than previous discourses, a discourse linked with those previous discourses by the fact that most of the beliefs had by any participation in discourse must be true (ibid. 130).

Rorty adds Brandom’s argument, which he says, “fill in the details of Davidson’s argument that a grasp of the distinction between true and false belief ‘can emerge only in the context of interpretation, which alone forces us to the idea of an objective, public truth’ (ibid.):

[Brandom] agrees with Davidson that interpretation comes first and objectivity later - that the distinction between intersubjective agreement and objective truth is itself only one of the devices we use to improve our social practices. But he thinks that Davidsonians should be more tolerant of notions such as “representation” and “correspondence to reality.” (ibid.)

McDowell has a similar attitude to notion of “experience” to that of Brandom's to truth, Rorty maintains and says that “McDowell thinks that one can be a psychological nominalist and still find something true and important in empiricism” as “Brandom thinks that one can be a good pragmatist and a good Davidsonian and still find something true in the correspondence theory of truth and in the distinction between reality and appearance. ... Brandom is, in this respect, to Davidson as McDowell is to Sellars” (ibid.).

Russell makes a distinction in his critique of Dewey's pragmatic vision of truth in terms of cause and effects of a belief in determining its truth or falsity. one of Rorty's main themes in the PMN is the claim that "'theory of knowledge' as a notion based upon a confusion between the justification of knowledge-claims and their causal explanation-between, roughly, social practices and postulated psychological processes" (Rorty R., 1979, p. 10). "Justification," Rorty maintains, "is public":

in the sense that dispute between these various people about what to believe will probably make no reference to how their quirky minds work, nor should it. So the claim that we possess a system of internal representations embodies, at worst, not only the confusion between pictures and propositions but a more general confusion between causation and inference (Rorty R., 1979, p. 254)

One of Rorty's main convictions is what Sellars calls as the "logical space of reasons" in maintaining that "a claim to knowledge is a claim to have justified belief, and that is rarely the case that we appeal to the proper functioning of an organism as a *justification*": In characterizing an episode or a state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says. (Rorty R., 1979, p. 141). Then, "Why should [we] have a thought that a causal account of how one comes to have a belief should be an indication of the justification one has for that belief?"

His answer leads back to Locke and "seventeenth-century writers generally," who "did not think of knowledge as justified true belief":

This was because they did not think of knowledge as a relation between a person and a proposition. We find it natural to think of "what S knows" as

the collection of propositions completing true statements by S which begin “I know that . . .” He thought, as had Aristotle, of “knowledge of” as prior to “knowledge that,” and thus of knowledge as a relation between persons and objects rather than persons and propositions. Given that picture, the notion of an examination of our “faculty of understanding” makes sense, as does the notion that it is fitted to deal with some sorts of objects and not with others. It makes even more sense if one is convinced that this faculty is something like a wax tablet upon which objects make impressions, and if one thinks of “having an impression” as in itself a knowing rather than a causal antecedent of knowing.” (Rorty R., 1979, pp. 141-142)

This notion of knowing as causation Rorty says is what Sellars calls a “mistake of a piece with the so-called ‘naturalistic fallacy’ in ethics, the attempt to ‘analyze epistemic facts without remainder into non-epistemic facts’ ...” (ibid. 141.).

3.11. Bjørn Ramberg’s Insider Criticism

In his “Post-Ontological Philosophy of Mind: Rorty versus Davidson” Ramberg gets Rorty to review his assessment of the notion of truth by emphasizing the role of “normativity” and “philosophical distinctiveness of agency” where Rorty ignores them. Regarding Rorty’s reliance on “Davidson’s work in his effort to circumvent the intuitions that entrench the representationalist framework” (Ramberg, 2000, p. 351), even more than Sellars and Quine, because “because it makes it seem pointless to raise the sorts of questions about our thinking and its relation to the world that philosophers of the representationalist variety wish to pursue” (ibid.). Ramberg finds what Rorty misses these points in “Davidson's claims about the significance of the concept of truth” and his “account of the relation between the mental and the physical”. Truth, Ramberg reminds, according to Rorty, is “specious to accord special philosophical significance ... once you take a theory of truth to be “an empirical theory about the truth-conditions of each sentence in some corpus of

sentences” (ibid., 352) and “there is [no] ... ‘philosophically interesting’ distinction to be drawn between the mental and the physical” (ibid., 353).

Ramberg sees a Rortian philosophical significance in the “vocabulary of agency” he finds in “the vocabulary of propositional-attitude ascription” that Davidson distinguishes from “vocabularies of scientific explanation” and argues that in “a metaphilosophical context, that renders it impervious to Rorty's criticisms (ibid.).

Moreover, he argues

that the direction in which my use of Davidson's distinction points is best pursued in what are distinctively Rortyan terms. Unlike Rorty, I believe that as naturalistic pragmatists we ought not only to recognize the distinctiveness of agency (as I will refer to the claim at issue), but also do our bit to entrench it in philosophy. While Rorty in effect criticizes Davidson for being insufficiently Davidsonian in hanging on to the idea of the philosophical distinctiveness of agency, I criticize Rorty for being insufficiently Rortyan in his negative assessment of the motivations for drawing a philosophical distinction between the vocabulary of agency and vocabularies of scientific explanation. (ibid.)

Ramberg discusses his point in relation to Quine's indeterminacy-underdetermination distinction and argues that even though Rorty is right in thinking that it indicates a “commitment to ontology as a ranking of vocabularies” but argues that Davidson’s use of this Quinean terminology and “endorses[ing] the idea of the indeterminacy of interpretation” misleads Rorty in thinking that Davidson, too, is committed to an ontological distinction (ibid., 354-355). Because he argues that even if Quine believes that “intentional ascriptions are second-rate forms of description, it is in Davidson's deontologized version *simply* a way of putting the point that one vocabulary is not reducible to the other (ibid., 356).

“Vocabulary of agency” must be philosophically significant for Ramberg in a normative relation with each other not with a non-human authority.

Describing anything, if Davidson is right, is an ability we have only because it is possible for others to see us as in general conforming to the norms that the predicates of agency embody. We do not stand over against the normative demands embodied in the principle of charity as subjects of reflective choice. This is a point that Rorty ought to accept, because it supports his claim, against the project of normative epistemology, that we do not in general "have any choice about how to form beliefs" (1995c, p. 152). We are made the believers we are by the communicative interactions constituted by complex patterns of causal interaction with others in a shared world. (ibid., 362)

Rorty grants Ramberg’s criticism in answering Davidson’s insistence of the importance of the concept of truth and the “intentional stance” “by suggesting that the famous Brentanian irreducibility of the intentional is an unfortunate distraction from the inescapability of the normative. By concentrating on the latter, he shows how Davidson offers what he nicely describes as a "post-ontological philosophy of mind" (Rorty R., 2000, pp. 370-371). Rorty admits that

I have turned a blind eye to the fact that the mind-body distinction is intertwined with the person-thing distinction. I have not tried to relate the two distinctions. Davidson, by combining a theory of action with a theory of truth and meaning, has. Ramberg helps bring Davidson's two lines of inquiry together when he says that an account of truth is automatically an account of agency, and conversely. He helps us see that Davidson, like Dewey, is trying to break down the distinction between the knowing, theorizing, spectatorial mind and the responsible participant in social practices. (ibid., 371)

As a result, Rorty states that “Ramberg has persuaded me to abandon two doctrines be abandoned, and that ‘true of’ and ‘refers to’ are not word-world relations.” (ibid., 375). Rorty calls it a “partial reconciliation of pragmatism and realism,”

for the same reason that most of our beliefs must be true, most of our norms must be obeyed.... Snow would not be what it is if we were mostly wrong

about it, and the norms for the use of 'snow' would not be the norms they are if we did not, most of the time, obey them. That norms are mostly obeyed and objects mostly gotten right are two ways of making a single point (ibid., 374).

However, these concessions do not weaken the plausibility of the initial picture he put in his axis. Ramberg's criticism has he explicitly stated moves in a non-ontologically oriented direction and does not assume an outside exertion of facts. What Rorty admits as "true in relation with the world" is not a commitment to an objective normativity but to ours.

CHAPTER 4

TRUTH AND ITS COGNITION

4.1. Absolute Sense

The problem with the concept of truth in its philosophical and scientific use, according to Rorty's observation, is its dogmatic texture that has passed as its "objective," or "universal," features. It is the absolute sense that truth is used in religious dogma, and this is what Rorty wants to be noticed in its scientific and philosophical use. In Abrahamic religions truth is associated with God: "I am the way, the truth, and the life"⁴⁰; "... Allah is the Truth... the Most High, the Grand"⁴¹; "... the seal of God is *emet* (truth)"⁴². Two other pillars of these religions, the sacred books, which are inerrant, and the prophet - who is infallible—are both instantiations of this Truth par excellence. Truth claimed as such is beyond contingent constraints and thus offers utmost assurance for those who follow it. This notion of truth appeals to authority; belief is demanded because it is said so by God through the prophet in the book. Religion does not take it a duty to demonstrate the validity of this belief.

When such invariable truth in a sacred book or unalterable truth in the words of a holy person conflicts with varying and altering matters of fact, the tension can be relieved by appealing to allegory as a way of expressing truth and claiming it is not always literally conveyable. There may be different levels of truth as thus understood

⁴⁰ John 14:6

⁴¹ 22:62, Surah Al-Hajj

⁴² Talmud, Book 2, Chapter 27

considered hidden in deeper meanings. God, in this sense, speaks through allegory and in parables. There might be up to twelve levels of biblical interpretation (Behler) and according to Ibn Rushd, hidden meaning of truth in the Koran can be reached through allegorical interpretation (Averroes). *Haqiqa*, e.g. ultimate truth (Renard, 1996, p. 255), is one of the four “doors” to *tasawwuf*, which is the “final goal of mystical journey” (Renard, 1996, p. 300); the penultimate stage to spiritual perfection (i.e., *Marifa*). Allegorical interpretation, in fact, goes as far back to Ancient Greek myths in which “allegorical representations of abstract cosmological, philosophical, or moral truths” (Behler) are hosted. According to Charles Taylor religion and ancient mythology owe their power to an element of “story”, whether it is a parable in the Bible or the cave imagery in the Republic, wherever it is possible to draw deeper meanings and attribute them deeper and more profound truth through different interpretations.

One factor that gives the idea of truth per se a dogmatic aspect is its “indefinable” character. Rorty notes that as “there are many ways to talk about what is going on, and that none of them gets closer to the way things are in themselves than any other” (Rorty R., 1998, p. 2), “we have no idea [of] what [it] is supposed to mean” (ibid., p. 1). He appreciates Davidson’s contribution in this realization because

Davidson has helped us realize that the very absoluteness of truth is a good reason for thinking "true" indefinable and for thinking that no theory of the nature of truth is possible. It is only the relative about which there is anything to say. (This is why the God of orthodox monotheists, for example, remains so tiresomely ineffable.) (Rorty R., 1998, p. 3)

As it is implied by Davidson's remark definition is in a way to limit a notion, which is present in its Latin origin, *dē-finīre*, or to enclose it by its possible distinctions or by defining its boundaries. To define a notion through "indefinableness" is to suspend definition and hold it in an obscure state. The irony in the case of truth is that it is at the same time put in use to attain clarity. However, the presupposed intention does not match with the use of truth⁴³. About truth there is more sense "in silence" than words as it is with Plotinus's "one." Plotinus might be an illustration to the close connection between the connotations of truth and God with his position between Plato and Christian theology.

While Russell contends that "all dogma belongs to theology," Charles Taylor thinks it is the attitude of "literalism" that gives way to dogma. According to Rorty dogma survived both religion and science. The idea of God plays its role by proxy through the notion of truth independent from contingencies. Scientific revolution as a victory over theology does not necessarily mean a victory over all religious presuppositions. Rorty's secularism, Russell's views on scientific turn in the history of Western philosophy and Taylor's point in fundamentalism reflect on the idea of truth. Rorty is a self-proclaimed and proud secularist, and his doctrine does not need a theoretical basis to fight against fundamentalism in every frontier of culture. His standpoint, though, is not one of the options above. Such truth is the promise of a vision "purged of all earthly dross, and pure and holy" (London, 2011, p. 59). He agrees with Dewey's view that

There is no god and there is no soul. Hence, there is no need for the props of traditional religion. With dogma and creed excluded, then immutable truth is

⁴³ See the section on the ordinary language use of truth.

dead and buried. There is no room for fixed and natural law or permanent moral absolutes (Dewey, 1933, p. 33)

Similarly, he says, "...[r]eality as it is in itself, apart from human needs and interests," becomes "just another of the obsequious Names of God" (Rorty R., 2007, p. 134). In Rortian terms, it is to claim to "justify a proposition tout court," which amounts to saying that "all reasons are reasons for all people without being restrained by spatial, temporal, and social conditions" (Rorty R., 2000, p. 60). Rorty holds that

to presuppose the existence of a natural order of reasons to which our arguments will, with luck, better and better approximate. The idea of such an order is one more relic of the idea that truth consists in correspondence to the intrinsic nature of things, a nature which somehow precedes and underlies all descriptive vocabularies. (ibid.)

4.2. Scientific Sense

Russell reserves "all *dogma* to theology" as "all definite knowledge belongs to science" (Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 2004, p. 1). By "definite knowledge" he means the kind of knowledge that we can demonstrate to be true, that is, the kind of knowledge that we know "we can know." He contends that dogmatic character of theological belief is due to its claim to knowledge "where in fact we have ignorance" (Russell, 2004, p. 2); it is a claim to know what we cannot know. Rorty's views about truth make us think that he puts "dogma" to a place perhaps not as commonsensical as Russell puts it. Dogma does not have a permanent station for Rorty; it may not have always and only belonged to theology. Enlightenment as the age of Reason had its advantages fighting against dogmata yet when scientific

revolution gave way to an attitude of scientism it signaled that it started to assume the role of an authority it once reacted against.

It must not be a matter of contents of a belief but an attitude towards knowledge resulting from a presupposition such that a certain authority is the best reference to truth. What Rorty observes in the history of ideas is a presupposition of truth quite in its theological sense survived in science and philosophy and what has been claimed for the most part by scientific or philosophical inquiry to aim at. This is the idea of objective truth. It is appreciated because it is impartial as the representation of the way things are. We would like to assume a zero ground of being immune to contingency that must reside somewhere we have not yet managed to discover. Just as Rorty's understanding of dogma is not based on the subject matter of a statement, Russell finds it important to emphasize that scientific outlook is not matter of content. He emphasizes that "it is not *what* the man of science believes that distinguishes him, but *how* and *why* he believes it. His beliefs are tentative, not dogmatic; they are based on evidence, not on authority or intuition" (Russell, 2004, p. 486).

It becomes a problem when dogma exerts authority without being imminently recognizable and it accomplishes this force most powerfully when unnoticed and just felt like "natural," being interwoven into the fabric of common sense. Theology may not quintessentially have the power to affect common sense as it did in the scholastic era, but the problem is to recognize what forces are at play in governing the way of beliefs. To adopt a different viewpoint from what is accepted and expected is a

revolutionary change and when science proved itself to common sense it was the scientific revolution taking over the grand power of religion. Joel Achenbach finds the reason for the seismic effects of Galileo's claim in the 17th century that the Earth spins on its axis and orbits the sun, not in "rejecting church doctrine" but in that "[h]e was [in fact] asking people to believe something that defied common sense—because it sure looks like the sun's going around the Earth, and you can't feel the Earth spinning" (Achenbach, 2015).

When a certain way of thinking manages to permeate through the common feelings of a society it has got the privilege of authority to influence the thought atmosphere in its own way. In Rorty's terms, it accomplishes to put forth its own vocabulary into social and intellectual life. However, science, which is primarily a "method" rather than a "body of facts" (Achenbach, 2015) is understandable having become an "authority" but it is not easy to see it as "authority" because of the "provisional" character of scientific hypotheses. Scientists can point out the truth on certain conditions but not absolutely. We tend to associate dogma, as Russell did, with theology and think that science has its basis in excluding dogma because it is always "new evidence" that shakes the credibility of previous hypotheses. Evidence is an authority for the scientist to direct her beliefs because "[i]n science it's not a sin to change your mind when the evidence demands it" (Achenbach, 2015).

New evidence was once available through direct observation, then it came to off limits of our senses and indirect observation was possible through the traces of, e.g., quantum experiments. In astrophysics the known universe is limited to the edge of

indirect results of observations. With such “enlargement” of the boundaries of observation of human being who has a privilege to be the observer of cosmos, it became popular to think of scientific theories as a chain, which outdo a previous one in history as a more competent description of physical phenomena. The physics of Aristotle was replaced by Copernicus’ heliocentric theory. Newton’s first law is thought to represent the physical world much more accurately than the physics of Descartes, Huygens, and the outcast of the Copernican revolution. However, in the 19th century, the theory of relativity renders Newton’s mechanics questionable. The law of gravity cannot account for the perihelion shift of Mercury but Einstein’s general law of relativity successfully predicts a gravitational deflection of light when it enters in a strong enough gravitational field which is confirmed by the positions of stars in the solar eclipse of 1919 (Shapiro & Shapiro, 2010). In cases no direct empirical evidence is available to discover laws or to form new theories; it is traces behind physical phenomena that count such as the Lamb Shift, which Hawking uses to measure indirect effects of pairs of virtual particles and anti-particles that cannot be observed directly⁴⁴. Quantum mechanics used such evidence that changed its character to replace Einstein.

As scientific theories are replaced by more competent ones in explaining and predicting physical phenomena, they may give the impression that they are “discovered,” and it seems that there is a certain built-in regularity in cosmos. Within the limits of known universe, whether macro or micro cosmos, we see regularity. The

⁴⁴ The existence of the virtual particles and anti-particles can be detected by the “Lamb shift” that they produce in the spectrum energy of light from excited hydrogen atoms. (Hawking, 2016).

Earth takes 365 days to revolve around the Sun. Another planet, which is one trillion kilometers away, takes one million years to orbit its star. We see a template that we are able to cognize. We like to think that the human race is intellectually going forward and closer to the truth of things by having a better understanding of them. Although “scientists can be as dogmatic as anyone else” as Achenbach states, “their dogma is always wilting in the hot glare of new research” (Achenbach, 2015). Francis Collins, a genetics researcher who led Human Genome Project, has utmost belief in science to “find the truth” despite “[i]t may get it wrong the first time and maybe the second time, ultimately it will find the truth” (ibid.). What Rorty observes in such thought climate is that “we treat the idea that physics gets you closer to reality than morals as an updated version of the priests’ claim to be in closer touch with God than the laity” (Rorty R. , 2007, p. 134).

The power of evidence with “new research” is its ability to explain and predict natural phenomena. The problem is how to interpret explanatory or predictive power of a theory. It may be a kind of abductive reasoning that makes one move from “approximate truth” to trust scientific investigation would yield truth. Nonetheless, Igor Douven holds that “to subscribe to a conception of truth that posits a necessary connection between explanatory force and truth—for instance, because it stipulates explanatory superiority to be necessary for truth” is not a supported view nowadays,” (Douven, 2011) which makes it not possible to defend abduction a priori. Arthur Fine, whom Rorty relies on his philosophy of science, finds the roots of such realism at “methodological level,”

infecting all of his arguments in this domain. It resides, in the first instance, in his repeating the question-begging move from explanatory efficacy to the truth of the explanatory hypothesis. And in the second instance, it resides in his twofold mishandling of the concept of approximate truth: first, in his endeavor to project from some body of assumed approximate truths to some further and novel such truths, and second, in his need of genuine access to the relation of correspondence. There are no general connections of this first sort, however, sanctioned by the logic of approximate truth, nor secondly, any such warranted access. However, the realist must pretend that there are in order to claim explanatory power for his realism (Fine, 1986, p. 120).

Not all scientists have that kind of an expectation: Nancy Cartwright rejects the idea that quantum physics has replaced classical physics or at least supplied “a far better approximation to the truth,” instead, she defends a “patchwork”-like relationship between scientific laws and argues that “we do use both classical and quantum physics; the only difference is that we choose one of them according to the problem we are to deal with” (Cartwright, 1999, p. 2). Emile Boutroux asks whether some laws in fact state the causes of phenomena and poses a possibly more essential question than this: whether there is in fact “certain degree of genuinely irreducible contingency” in universe, the possibility of which would imply that “the laws of nature are not self-sufficient but have their reason in causes that govern them: the standpoint of the understanding, therefore, is manifestly not the ultimate standpoint of the knowledge of things” (Boutroux, 1920, p. 6). This is an ongoing debate among scientists but other than specialists of a specific scientific study, very few people are actually capable of analyzing and judging the results. People, nonetheless, do form beliefs about scientific conclusions and non-professional attitudes toward scientific knowledge matters.

We may with justice feel, as Davidson does about Dewey, that Rorty's aim "was to bring truth, and with it the pretensions of philosophers down to earth" (Davidson, 1990, p. 279). Rorty extends this scope to philosophy and science to be cut down to size. Deflating the claim to truth brings, for Rorty, consequences for philosophy and science to leave their supposedly superior hierarchical status over other parts of culture. Davidson suggests this attitude is a manifestation of confusing two, albeit related, questions: "what sort of concept truth is" and "what kinds of truth there are" (Davidson, p. 280). Fine says,

What is it to accept the evidence of one's senses and, in the same way, to accept confirmed scientific theories? It is to take them into one's life as true, with all that implies concerning adjusting one's behavior, practical and theoretical, to accommodate these truths. Now, of course, there are truths, and truths. Some are more central to us and our lives, some less so. I might be mistaken about anything, but were I mistaken about where I am right now, that might affect me more than would my perhaps mistaken belief in charmed quarks.... I take it that we are being asked not to distinguish between kinds of truth or modes or existence or the like, but only among truths themselves in terms of centrality, degrees of belief, or such. (Fine, 1986, 127)

It is an important point in terms of providing a way to see the difference of Rorty's view from other similar tendencies toward the concept of truth. Davidson describes it a common task of philosophers, other than Dewey and Rorty, such as Peirce, James, Putnam, to "cut the concept down to size" (Davidson, 1990, p. 280). Rorty sees it a futile attempt both to deflate the Platonic form-like sense of the concept and still save an objective sense of truth. His philosophy shows how we can afford the consequences after reviewing what it cost so far.

The victory of the idea of objective scientific truth against arbitrary theological dominion on knowledge is not a change of the possession of or an approximation to the real nature of things but another way of dealing with our environment. Rorty does not assume a metaphysical approach intending to discover the essential meaning of truth or attempt to build an alternative theory. The notions of “the intrinsic nature of reality” and “correspondence to reality” are better to be dropped off from philosophical discourse for the sake of anything that can be called “progress” in philosophy. Truth is an ineffable term, and its arbitrary character should be noticed as it shares it with other similarities with the notion of the God of orthodox monotheists as a result of Platonic hypostatization of the adjective “true”. Truth had significance then against religious dogma, but its rival has lost its significance so truth in that sense is no longer functional if not replacing it. There are precursors of the dropping the notion of objective reality in the history of philosophy; what should be done is to take a next step to complete the turn.

The notion of appearance directs how we understand “progress” in humanities, social, and natural sciences in some areas of culture are in a more privileged position to better explain things as they really are. Giving separate accounts of progress in science and in morals is a new intellectual dimension that Rortian antirepresentationalism offers. Moral progress as such, is to increase moral responsibility to other beings, which is not possible without recognizing different “realities” for them. The idea of an objective truth poses a hindrance before new “gestalt switches,” but “the history of philosophy is the history of Gestalt-switches, not of the painstaking carrying out of research programs” (Rorty R., 1998, p. 11)

says Rorty. The task of philosophy to progress is for the most part to glimpse a possibility that had not previously been grasped by being able to see obsolete attitudes of thought, to throw away the indispensable ladders up which our culture has climbed in the past, and thus solve new problems.

4.3. *Sensus Communis*

Belief in the permanence of truth has penetrated deep into *sensus communis* and consequently to suggest dropping it off sounds like a felony against it. Rorty has a starting point in an attitude against dogma, but he does not, as it might be expected and sometimes argued, swing towards a relativist end of a philosophical pendulum. His critique is the moral that he gathers from the history of philosophy. He does not produce counterarguments against the notion of “truth-as-reality-in-itself.” He aims to enlighten assumptions behind the “contemporary” idea of truth in philosophy and show that the idea of truth has become a dogma. Such is the notion that should be capitalized: “Truth”, with a capital T, which Rorty aims to dethrone. An objectively representable truth to be reached has stopped contributing to, if not damaged, cultural progress after the Enlightenment. One should also bear in mind the fact that Rorty as a “historicist” thinker, does not judge the whole history of the development of this idea, which has in time assumed the place and privilege once attributed to God. It would be appropriate to put it in a way to say that the idea of truth existing as “objective reality” has done its course. What he insists is that it is time to let this picture go. What if we do not? Rorty describes changing faces of truth and dogma by turning into each other. He sees this picture according to his reading of the history of ideas.

We can take the statements of Dan Kahan, who is known for his works in “Cultural Cognition Project”⁴⁵, as a strong hint in terms of the constitution of *sensus communis*. He says that “people tend to use scientific knowledge to reinforce beliefs that have already been shaped by their worldview” (Achenbach, 2015), which is to say that scientific evidence does not count “sacred” for everyone as it does for a scientist. Kahan gives another factor in constructing *sensus communis*: “tribal affinity.” “Those of us in the science-communication business,” he states, “are as tribal as anyone else... We believe in scientific ideas not because we have truly evaluated all the evidence but because we feel an affinity for the scientific community” (ibid.). That you believe in evolution, according to him, “is just a description about you... It’s not an account of how you reason” (ibid.). Achenbach has a different opinion on the effect of the “tribe” in shaping one’s belief: according to him, “[f]or some people, the tribe is more important than the truth; for the best scientists, the truth is more important than the tribe” (ibid.). The two views have a point for Rorty’s claim for the meaning of truth as truth for a certain audience and nothing above the truth of a “tribe.”

Sensus communis holds that the goal of inquiry is truth. Yet, this should imply that our beliefs, or practices, are usually the consequences of our judgments or analyses of what should be done according to what is true unconditionally, but we do not measure our decisions against an absolute criterion of truth. Accordingly, this is to

⁴⁵ cf. <https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/e16374d0980344fa911266bf40b60314>

say that justification is relative to an audience. According to Rorty, “that the goal of inquiry is correspondence to the intrinsic nature of things” is “the common sense of the vulgar” (Rorty R., 1998, p. 39). It is like waiting for a messiah to lead to the light, by their claim, only according to what is absolutely true as the one who returns to the cave after seeing sunlight⁴⁶. He knows how much the others are away from the truth his goal is to lead them out of the cave, from where they see “through a glass, darkly,” to the clear sight of truth. This is representationalism in its primeval, or “vulgar,” form. Resemblance of scientific realism to theistic conception of truth is occurred to Rorty through the philosopher of science, Arthur Fine, and he takes on the analogy in his “Pragmatism as Anti-authoritarianism” “between the pragmatists’ criticism of the idea that truth is a matter of correspondence to the intrinsic nature of reality and the Enlightenment’s criticism of the idea that morality is a matter of correspondence to the will of a Divine Being” (Rorty R., 2006, p. 257). He sees a “heartfelt devotion to realism as the Enlightenment’s version of the religious urge to bow down before a non-human power” (ibid.).

When Rorty says that the only criterion we have for applying the word "true" is justification, and justification is always relative to an audience, the focus of the critic might be more on “justification” than on “audience.” However, the “audience” here is not a group of randomly selected people without a common identity; they are more like a “tribe,” who share common *sensus communis*. Against Francis Collins,’ and a

⁴⁶ This is not to claim that it is what Plato actually means in his allegory of the cave. As Rorty warns his reader, it is what is made of Plato, under the name of Platonism.

widely shared, belief that all inquiry will inevitably lead to truth and as Achenbach, and many other believes it, truth comes over time, Rorty holds that,

The need to justify our beliefs and desires to ourselves and to our fellow agents subjects us to norms, and obedience to these norms produces a behavioral pattern that we must detect in others before confidently attributing beliefs to them. But there seems no occasion to look for obedience to an additional norm – the commandment to seek the truth. For [...] obedience to that commandment will produce no behavior not produced by the need to offer justification. (Rorty R., 1998, p. 26)

4.4. Meaning

The ineffability of “truth” is partly a result of a practice of hypostatization of the adjective “true.” In this respect there is a similarity between the way reality and appearance distinction and a dogmatic claim is taken. Hypostatization is a means to create an arbitrary authority such as objective truth. Plato hypostatizes adjectives like justice, rightness, and goodness in his theory of forms. Rorty sees no point in relating progress to such reification of abstract adjectives since it has no use for us answer questions like

How do we know that greater predictive power and greater control of the environment (including a greater ability to cure diseases, build bombs, explore space, etc.) gets us closer to truth, conceived of as an accurate representation of how things are in themselves, apart from human needs and interests? How do we know that increased health, security, equality of opportunity, longevity, freedom from humiliation, and similar indices of greater human flourishing are indices of moral or political progress? (Rorty R., 1998, p. 4)

Changing abstract adjectives into nouns gives us a motivation to ascribe material existence to them and suppose that with sufficient effort there is a possibility to measure the quality of e.g., truth in a true belief against the genuine truth like a

gemologist examines a piece of stone with a loop. However, in the case of Rorty, whose attitude is not towards a theory of truth at all, both the ordinary use of truth, e.g., in folk psychology or the mental role in its cognition have their own contribution to shed light on the contrast between the “dogmatic” character that was given to the concept and a Rortian understanding of it. There are different “thought” theories that handle this mental activity. The role of language and mental imagery are the main axes of such thought theories. Regarding the prominence of Wittgensteinian view of language in his philosophy, it would be a proper Rortian move, to consider thought mainly a linguistic phenomenon and not deeming it a product of a representational process between the mind and the world out there and see the concept of “truth” itself in the “vagueness” of ordinary language. However, “truth” is grammatically an abstract concept, and some differences are observed between the cognition of abstract and concrete concepts, which should refer us, at least partially, to the notion of “mental imagery.” The linguistic character of the concept of “truth” has its share in shaping its ordinary use. Mental imagery taken as a kind of “picture” in the mind is not only usually held by folk psychology but also that is the frequent assumption in scientific and philosophical discussions. Nevertheless, such “naive” depiction of “picture theory of imagery” is a general theme of criticism by rival theories of imagery which variously defend a quasi or non-pictorial theory of imagery.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Cf. *The Case for Mental Imagery* by Kosslyn, Thompson & Ganis (2006), *The Psychology of Imagination* by Sartre, 1948., Slezak, P. (1995), The “Philosophical” Case Against Visual Images. In P. Slezak, T. Caelli, & R. Clark (Eds.), *Perspectives on Cognitive Science: Theories, Experiments and Foundations*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex. Tye, M. (1991). *The Imagery Debate*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

There are cognitive differences between concrete and abstract words. Referring us to a physical entity, concrete concepts have the advantage of easier procession by the mind; they are “more easily learned and remembered” than abstract ones (Hill, Korhonen, & Bentz, 2013, p. 579); (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 720); (Brysbaert, Warriner, & Kuperman, 2014, p. 904); (Korhonen & Hill, p. 725); (Crutch & Warrington, 2005, p. 616). A simple reason at first consideration is the perceptible features of concrete concepts. A concrete concept is a picture: rock, paper, or scissors match a nonverbal definition each time they are needed. For abstract concepts there is no such reservoir of images in the memory⁴⁸. Truth has no picture. Outside the cave in which slaves sit turning their back to the entrance watching the shadows of some puppets behind them, there waits no entity to be seen. There is nothing outside the cave. This, of course, is the situation in the domain of literal understanding.

The meaning of “truth” is an obfuscated issue partly due to its differing uses in everyday, scientific, religious, philosophical, logical, or mathematical senses. In everyday speech, it is a natural attitude to take for granted the truth of what someone says since this is the minimum requirement of a decent conversation. It is more than the opposite of “lie” in such a domain; the truth of “s/he is lying” has more value

⁴⁸ Although it is intuitively and statistically true that concreteness and imageability should assume each other, Wiemer-Hastings & Xu should be taken into consideration when they note that “imageability itself requires explanation” and add, “Imageability is likely associated with conceptual characteristics that afford imagery. Recent studies have furthermore shown that concreteness and imageability, and concreteness and context availability are not consistently correlated for the entire range of concreteness” (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 721).

than invalidating a claim. Truth as such acts like a shadow authority behind declarative sentences⁴⁹. It has a function of organizing the world and finding one's way accordingly. As some robotic devices change direction when they hit something that hinders further movement, we drop beliefs as we hit "untruth". A true datum serves a reliable certain point of a for us like a brick to build a bridge to walk on, but an untruth can mean just anything; we only know a is not the issue, but it can just be a point of b, c, d, f, g, or z etc. Truth, in a sense, serves as banister for us to clutch in a world of unknowns. It is like "on" and "off" states of an electrical circuit or binary Boolean operation, we move along digit values of "true" and "false". Truth as such is "contact with reality" whose loss in this sense may cause you to be labeled psychosis. We need a constant value of truth in our experiences that make up our memory. We must believe that we can trust our experiences to move on in life. Truth serves to build order and habits are developed in order. We arrange our expectations in a certain direction; we do not live in a world in where anything happens all the time. That's why we enjoy fairy tales or magic tricks. Erich Fromm claims an evolutionary role for truth in developing a viable life as a necessary concept to deal with one's environment. The "truth" here is identification of "reality," the success of which will turn one to "optimal" direction.

We aim communication with language, but communication is full of misunderstanding, lack and failures of understanding. Notions can gain different meanings in different cultures, times, and even persons. While contingency of

⁴⁹ This might also be seen as endorsing a certain theory of truth like one by Saul Kripke or F. P. Ramsey's Redundancy Theory.

meaning is a serious issue, it is somehow a necessary component of culture, since, as Russell puts it, it would be impossible to communicate if everyone meant exactly the same thing by what they say (Hacking, 1975, p. 173). Information gap is a must component of communication. Thomas Reid's principal of humanity and Davidson's principal of charity presupposes the "not impossibility" of communication. To keep communication, in a way, within successful limits, as Cicero considers it a sin to deviate from, is within commonsensical meanings of notions.

The reason behind our tendency to reify truth may have relations to our cognitive tendencies toward the abstract. There are cognitive differences between concrete and abstract words. Referring us to a physical entity, concrete concepts have the advantage of easier procession by the mind; they are "more easily learned and remembered" than abstract ones (Hill, Korhonen, & Bentz, 2013, p. 579); (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 720); (Brysbaert, Warriner, & Kuperman, 2014, p. 904); (Korhonen & Hill, p. 725); (Crutch & Warrington, 2005, p. 616). A simple reason at first consideration is the perceptible features of concrete concepts. A concrete concept is a picture: rock, paper, or scissors match a nonverbal definition each time they are needed. For abstract concepts there is no such reservoir of images in the memory⁵⁰. Truth has no picture. Outside the cave in which slaves sit turning their back to the entrance watching the shadows of some puppets behind them, there

⁵⁰ Although it is intuitively and statistically true that concreteness and imageability should assume each other, Wiemer-Hastings & Xu should be taken into consideration when they note that "imageability itself requires explanation" and add, "Imageability is likely associated with conceptual characteristics that afford imagery. Recent studies have furthermore shown that concreteness and imageability, and concreteness and context availability, are not consistently correlated for the entire range of concreteness" (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 721).

waits no entity to be seen. There is nothing outside the cave. This, of course, is the situation in the domain of literal understanding.

Bertrand Russell reminds us that it is easy to “draw metaphysical conclusions from language”, and “the only way to avoid fallacious arguments of this kind is to push the logical and psychological study of language further than has been done by most metaphysicians” (Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 2004, p. 58). So, how would truth be seen just as one of the other abstract nouns when its traditional metaphysical and psychological connotations were to be taken off? Abstractness or concreteness is matter of degree in the first place; in studies on abstract and concrete concepts, they are held to “vary in concreteness from very abstract to very concrete” (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 720). “Spoon” and “tendency” for instance, take place at the opposite ends of a continuum from “highly abstract” to “highly concrete” (Crutch & Warrington, 2005, p. 617).

However, it is not a fixed series once and for all. Crutch and Warrington note that this continuum is “probable,” and the dichotomy is “relative rather than absolute” (Crutch & Warrington, 2005, pp. 623-624). In such a continuum, “truth” is considered to stand rather at the highly abstract end. It is among concepts that have very low concreteness ratings such as, “reality, chance, wisdom, value, and might” (Crutch & Warrington, 2005, p. 625) (Crutch & Warrington, 2005, p. 625).

According to a study concept of “emancipation, happiness, mischief, and pity” are taken to be less abstract than “aspect, desperation, exception, hope, ingratitude, and jeopardy” (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 735). “Grate, lighter, dozen, and

site” are valued among the most concrete concepts in another study on abstract concepts (Brysbaert, Warriner, & Kuperman, *Concreteness ratings for 40 thousand generally known English word lemmas*, 2014, p. 911). Results of a survey of 40 thousand words in English using a 1-5 scale, “truth” is rated 1.96; “true” 1.7; “real” 2.5; and “reality” 1.72. Among the least concrete words there is “absoluteness” with a rating of 1.5; “abstractness” 1.45; and “absurdity” 1.25. “A” has the lowest concreteness rating with 1.04 and among the most concrete ones with a rating of “5” are “title page, tomato sauce, tour guide, tree house, vacuum cleaner, and water bed” (Brysbaert, Warriner, & Kuperman, *Supplementary material to 'Concreteness ratings for 40 thousand generally known English word lemmas'*).

Being at the far end, we deal with more steps further from a common picture, which makes a concept more and more blurry as we go further away and is a greater matter of subjective judgment than concrete concepts. It is found out that “abstract concepts had significantly fewer intrinsic item properties and more properties expressing subjective experiences than concrete concepts” (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 719). It also means that “subjective experiences are regular aspects of such concepts” (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 725), which is their advantage. The “picture” that we could get with concrete concepts is a solid reference point that we can hook up with and thus we know that we are more likely on the same page with them in our communication with others than we are with abstract concepts, which makes the former more “objective.” Abstract concepts do not refer to physical objects and this makes it questionable how they are processed. One reason might be their subjective character since [m]any characteristics of abstract concepts are just as

abstract as the concepts themselves (e.g., “liberty” for *emancipation*). Thus, it is difficult to imagine how abstract concepts may be formed from purely perceptual sources, for example, as perceptual symbols (Barsalou, 1999).

The main challenge lies in the properties related to subjective experience. Mental processes in particular are triggered by perceptions but are not themselves perceived. Many abstract concepts seem to require mental processes or emotions that specify relevant situation aspects and unite them into coherent concepts (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 732). The “objective” character of concrete concepts gives them the advantage of being more “communicable” whereas with abstract concepts there is more vagueness at issue. The same study also concludes that “[p]roperties were significantly less specific for abstract than for concrete concepts” and “[t]hus, abstractness emerged as a function of several, both qualitative and quantitative, factors” (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 719). One reason for this is the “contextual” and “intrinsic” properties of abstract and concrete concepts respectively:

Many abstract concepts are relational concepts... that are characterized by their links to external concepts rather than by intrinsic properties, unlike most concrete concepts. Accordingly, abstract item properties may include frequent mention of contextually related entities. For example, Hampton... observed that many properties generated for abstract concepts describe a social situation involving an agent, and suggested that abstract concepts would commonly involve behaviors, agent characteristics (such as goals), and other aspects of a situation. (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 721)

The vagueness with abstract concepts is then, the frequent reference to other concepts. It follows that abstract concepts do not actually stand by themselves, whereas concrete concepts could be due to their intrinsic properties, stand as a web

of concepts. This might be due to, according to Wiemer-Hastings and Xu, “a cognitive economy where more complex abstract concepts are represented by less complex ones”, which they show in the example of *emancipation*:

...[it] can be described as a transition (process) from one social state to another. The first social state may be described as oppression, the second as liberty. The transition process is physical or spiritual liberation. Notably, these are all abstract concepts. Oppression may be represented by a relatively concrete schema of two people, one of who constrains the other's liberty, whereas emancipation is a more complex concept that involves two schemata and a transition between them. Schema or frame transition processes have been conceptualized previously, specifically for perceptual changes during object rotation or movement... They may be usefully applied to transitions of social schemata, which may be particularly important in more complex abstract concepts. (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, pp. 732-3)

The “ineffable” character of the concept of truth might then be connected to its abstractness. Wiemer-Hastings and Xu point out that “abstract concepts resemble frames or schemata in that many of their properties are unspecific, which allows for the representation of a diversity of situations or events” (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 731). They relate this schemata-like characteristic to the “broad focus” of abstract concepts and add, “[o]ften, the focus encompasses a complex arrangement of entities and processes. For example, *indifference* involves a person, mental state, relation to some state of affairs, and a state of affairs.” (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 732).

Besides the properties of subjectivity, relationality, and vagueness of abstract concepts, another point that needs attention is that the materiality or abstractness of a concept is a matter of degree. Wiemer-Hastings and Xu state that “abstractness tends

to increase with situation complexity...For instance, a *person* is less complex than a *social state*" (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu Xu, 2005, p. 731). The situation with truth as an abstract concept about subjectivity is most intensified because concreteness and abstractness is actually a matter of degree and truth must take place rather at the most abstract end of the line.

4.5. Plato's Role

Nonetheless, the allegory still drives us to take truth as the "thing" out there and within reach. Literal non-imageability of truth makes us resort to a "metaphorical" image of it. Rorty's point of criticism in Plato is the idea of "intellectual vision", in Russell's words, which is most apparent in the cave analogy. Plato seeks to explain the difference between clear intellectual vision and the confused vision of sense-perception by an analogy from the sense of sight. Sight, he says, differs from the other senses, since it requires not only the eye and the object, but also light. We see clearly objects on which the sun shines: in twilight we see confusedly, and in pitch-darkness not at all. Now the world of ideas is what we see when the object is illuminated by the sun, while the world of passing things is a confused twilight world. The eye is compared to the soul, and the sun, as the source of light, to truth or goodness.

The soul is like an eye: when resting upon that on which truth and being shine, the soul perceives and understands, and is radiant with intelligence; but when turned towards the twilight of becoming and perishing, then she has opinion only, and goes blinking about, and is first of one opinion and then of another, and seems to have no intelligence.... Now what imparts truth to the known and the power of knowing to the knower is what I would have you term the idea of good, and this you will deem to be the cause of science. (Russell, History of Western Philosophy, 2004)

Among other concepts that are the target of Rorty's criticism, the Truth that he has in mind is pretty much a Platonist origin. However, despite Rorty's opposition with Platonist concepts is not restricted with truth only, his "antagonism" is not with the "very complex, shifting, dubiously consistent thoughts" of Plato, "the genius who wrote the Dialogues" (Rorty R., 1999, p. xii). He rather goes against a tradition which is result of what western philosophy has made of Plato. His main concern with this tradition is a set of philosophical dualisms which "can be traced back to one or another passage in Plato's writings," and which "dominated the history of Western philosophy" such as "appearance-reality, matter-mind, made-found, sensible-intellectual, etc." (ibid.). The concept Rorty considers in this sense is very much like the one Plato takes out from this world and attributes as the ontological character of the Forms. Among these Rorty treats the definition of truth by correspondence theory more than one of the truth theories but a central issue occupying assumptions behind much philosophical and scientific inquiries. Thus, he puts the notion of truth as the correspondence between a mind, concepts, or a sentence and the things as they really are at the center of his critique. In this sense he treats Platonic idea of truth as a form in the ideal domain and correspondence theory in a similar way. In fact, R.L. Kirkham associates Plato's discussion about the truth and falsity of a sentence in *Sophist* with "correspondence-as-congruence" theory (Kirkham, 1992, p. 120).

Stranger: "Theaetetus sits." Not a lengthy statement, isn't it?

Theaetetus: No, of very modest length.

Stranger: Now it is for you to say what it is about—to whom it belongs.

Theaetetus: Clearly about me. It belongs to me.

Stranger: Now take another.

Theaetetus: Namely?

Stranger: "Theaetetus, whom I am talking to at this moment, flies."

Theaetetus: That too can only be described as belonging to me and about me.
Stranger: And moreover we agree that every statement must have a certain character.
Theaetetus: Yes.
Stranger: Then what sort of character can we assign to each of these?
Theaetetus: One is false, the other true.
Stranger: And the true one states about you the things that are [or the facts] as they are.
Theaetetus: Certainly.
Stranger: Whereas the false statement states about you things different from the things that are.
Theaetetus: Yes.
Stranger: And accordingly states things that are not as being.
Theaetetus: No doubt.
Stranger: Yes, but things that exist, different from things that exist in your case. For we said that in the case of everything there are many things that are and also many that are not.
Theaetetus: Quite so. (Hamilton & Cairns, 1999, pp. 263c-d)

Secondly, the cave allegory in the *Republic* has conceptual and metaphorical significance for Rorty in his critique of truth. This, again, is not Rorty's criticism of Plato per se but what the Western philosophical tradition has made of him and shaped a notion of truth out of him. In his *Plato's Doctrine of Truth and The Essence of Truth*, Heidegger discusses *aletheia* in relation to the notion of *paideia* in Plato's *Republic* and specifically with the allegory of the cave in which he sees a starting point of turn in the meaning of *aletheia* as disclosure to a kind of relation rather like correspondence between what is known and what is actually out there. William Richardson views Heidegger seeing in Plato truth being no longer "truth becomes not the non-concealment of what appears but conformity between viewing and viewed" and "not only is the essence of truth changed but its proper domain as well," and he quotes Heidegger, "Thus springs from the primacy of *ιδέα* and *ιδεῖν* over *ἀ-λήθεια* a

transformation of the essence of truth. Truth becomes ὀρθότης, correctness of perception and expression.” (William & Richardson , 2003, p. 308).

The image of bounded people watching shadows is part of the metaphor that has a resemblance to the image that Rorty has in mind in his critique of truth and representation. He particularly tries one to realize the attitude here, that is, the image of watching prisoners watching shadows. On another level it is watching all those in the cave, those who cannot see behind, the exit from the cave. One sees truth correlatively one has a wider outlook and accordingly the one who is able to get out of the cave will see all and that will be a “better” truth. It is such an image, according to Rorty, which guides all inquiry, whether scientific or philosophical. We try to reach that which is outside the cave. Paul Shorey argues that Plato banishes poets from his ideal society because they do “not deal in essential truth,” but “copies the copy of the reality” (Page, Capps, Rouse, Post, & Warmington, 1942, pp. xviii, fn.b).

A Rortian way of reading the history of Western philosophy may suggest us that “man” was rarely considered “the measure of all things” and as Rorty suggested, this tendency was not limited to philosophical discussions but the prevalent assumption in science, as well as in religion, was that the aim of inquiry is to reach the knowledge of that which is objective, transcended and therefore not bounded by the contingencies. Protagoras’ aphorism as an intervention to the traditional idea of truth has been interpreted in a similar way Rorty is criticized with relativism today, even if we know the context Rorty speaks that we lack in the case of Protagoras.

Bernard Williams has a different way of putting his criticism: he will also urge that Rorty actually creates two camps of “demands for truthfulness” vs. “doubt for truth” while stating that which are nevertheless remain closely connected to each other (Rorty R., 2002). Inspired by Nietzsche, Williams seeks for the possibility of restoring the “intrinsic value of” truth “understood in a perspective quite different from the Platonic and Christian metaphysics” (ibid.). This criticism alludes to Rorty’s rejection of the belief in “the Truth is out there” and as Rorty observes it to be the case Williams argues that what Rorty does may amount to “throwing out the baby of intrinsically valuable truth with the Platonist bathwater” (ibid.).

4.6. Etymology

Behind insistent accusations of Rorty with relativism despite his efforts to contextualize his claims, there is a similar attitude toward the Sophists, who are believed to be able to defend anything convincingly according to the results. For whatever the reasons are, we seem to hold on to the idea of truth for its strong associations with what is good and the related values, such as, purity, freedom, or loyalty and a relative notion like “useful” does not seem to fulfill its place. We tend to think we might lose all those positive ideas carried by it. In everyday use we take it synonymously with reality, fact and sincerity and as the opposite of deception, lie, or fiction in English. The word “truth” in Old English as “*triewð* (West Saxon), *treowð* (Mercian) comes from *triewe*, *treowe* "faithful" and thus carries meanings such as "faith, faithfulness, fidelity, and loyalty". Pascal Engel, at the beginning of his discussion with Rorty on truth, emphasizes the relation of “truth” with “trust”,

saying that they have “the same etymology” (Rorty & Engel, 2007, p. 68). Its

connotations in modern English are such as,

sincerity; genuineness; honesty; the real state of affairs; something that is the case; actuality; fundamental reality ... transcendent of perceived actuality; the world of a particular person or in a particular manner; a true relation or account; judgment, statement, proposition, or idea that accords with fact or reality, is logically or intuitively necessary, or follows by sound reasoning from established or necessary truths; relationship, conformity, or agreement with fact or reality, or among true facts or proposition. (Webster's Third New English Dictionary)

In terms of the discourse on what truth is Plato is credited with a description usually in his Republic with the allegory of the cave. In ancient Greek the word is *ἀληθεία* for truth and it also has meanings as opposed to “lie or mere appearance; reality, as opposed to appearance; real war, as opposed to exercise or parade; and true event, realization of dream or omen”. Relatedly *alethes* means “true;” *alethos*, “truly”; and *alethein* is “to speak the truth” (Wolenski, 2004). On the other hand, “*atrekes*, *nemertes*, *adolos*, *ortos*, *apseudos*, *etymos* and *etetymos* are the adjectives to describe true” (ibid.). The notion of *ἀληθεία* has an intrinsic relationship with *léth-*, forgetting, with the privative prefix *ἀ-*. Gregory Nagy exhibits its relation to the “Homeric word *muthos*” which is “associated with narrating from memory... as a *muthos* (as at *Iliad* 1.273) ... the act of *mne-* 'remembering'. Therefore, he says,

The very concept of alethes 'true' or aletheia 'truth' expresses the need to avoid such in the speech-act, the muthos, of recollection or narrating from memory, and Homeric diction can actually combine alethes 'true' with a derivative of muthos, the verb mutheomai 'make a muthos', as in the expression alethea muthesasthai 'speak true things' at Iliad 6.382 (the whole speech in question is introduced as a muthos at 6.381). (Nagy, 1996, p. 123)

Bern Magnus differentiates two senses of truth for Heidegger. One is

truth conceived as a correspondence between an idea and the thing it represents is a derivative mode. Because Heidegger invariably assigns the correspondence concept of truth to 'metaphysics,' understood in the restricted sense in which it designates the history of Western philosophy, we have called it the "epistemological" concept of truth. (Magnus, 1970, p. 70)

In *Metaphysics* (1011b) Aristotle defines truth as “to say of what is as that it is, and of what is not that it is not”. Barry Allen differentiates three assumptions in this definition:

the priority of nature over language, culture, or the effects of historical experience; the idea that truth is a kind of sameness, falsity a difference, between what is said and what there is; and the secondary and derivative character of the signs by which truth is symbolized and communicated. Classical truth subordinates the being (the existence and identity) of signs (linguistic or otherwise) to the natural, physical, finally given presence of the nonsigns they stand for. (Allen B. , 1993, pp. 9-10)

Jan Wolenski says that

it was Aristotle who proposed the classical (or correspondence) theory of truth for the first time. However, the fact that his writings contain different and often mutually non-equivalent statements on truth is less recognized. (Wolenski, 1994).

In Romanic languages “truth” is a form of *vērītas* in Latin. It means “*Reality, real life, especially of the likeness of life in works of art; nature, the truth of nature; and of character, truth, rectitude, or integrity.*”

Verus as an adjective was a very old Latin word that had several meanings. It could be used as a simple explicative or affirmative (verum!). Most often, in Plautus and Republican literature, it meant “true” in the sense of firm, capable of withstanding a test or trial. For example: “Farewell, ... continue conquering with true [vera, stalwart] courage as you have done so far” (Casina 87-88). In this sense the Romans seem to have related verus to words with similar sounds and meanings: assevere, persevere, severus. Cicero's

Laelius affirms that "a public meeting, though composed of very ignorant men, can, nevertheless, usually see the difference between a 'demagogue' (popularis), that is, a shallow, flattering citizen, and one who is constans, verus, and gravis." (De amicitia 95).

Veritas seems to have begun its Latin life as the abstraction of a quality of human behavior, like gravitas or simplicitas. It appears in a few instances as early as Terence and has a meaning not far from severitas (rigor, sternness, austerity, integrity of judgment), as opposed to compliance or levity: "There was stern veritas in his face, fides in his words" (Tristis veritas inest in voltu atque in verbis fides [Andria 858]). Quinctio 6.26] (Barton, 2001, p. 68)

In Medieval Philosophy most notable works of *De Veritate* are by Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

The first medieval work on truth is the dialogue De veritate of Anselm of Canterbury (c.1080-85). The analysis results in establishing truth as rightness or rectitude (rectitudo), denoting that something is as it ought to be, that it does that "for which it is made" (Ch. 2). Anselm's definition, then, is ultimately (Ch. 11), "rightness perceptible only to the mind" (rectitudo mente sola perceptibilis) - the addition is meant to exclude cases of a merely visible rectitude, e.g., that of a (straight) stick (Aertsen, 1984, p. 5).

Thomas Aquinas formulates truth as,

veritas est adaequatio intellectus et rei, secundum quod intellectus dicit esse quod est vel non esse quod non est (De Veritate 1,2). The passage which begins with the word secundum, is simply a repetition of Aristotle's main formulation. But the first part of --veritas est adaequatio intellectus et rei—is an obvious addition to Aristotle... Usually, [this] is quoted in its simplified version limited to its first part: veritas est adaequatio intellectus et rei; in fact, this shortened formula is the most popular wording of the classical truth-definition, 1994)

CHAPTER 5

POST-ANALYTIC CONCERNS

In a summary Rorty's theses about his suspicions of the "the notion of "philosophical method" and of the idea that philosophy has always dealt, and will always deal, with the same recalcitrant problems" are that

1. *[Referring to the Analytic methodology as] ... "Drawing out the meaning of our statements" is a pre-Quinean way of describing philosophers' practice of paraphrasing statements in ways that further their very diverse purposes. It would be pointless to think of the disagreements between Carnap and Austin, Davidson and Lewis, Kripke and Brandom, Fine and Leplin, or Nagel and Dennett as arising from the differing meanings that they believe themselves to have found in certain statements.*
2. *The philosophers I have just named belong to, or at least were raised in, a common disciplinary matrix – one in which most members of Anglophone philosophy departments were also raised. Philosophers so raised do not practice a common method. What binds them together is rather a shared interest in the question, "What happens if we transform old philosophical questions about the relation of thought to reality into questions about the relation of language to reality?"*
3. *Dummett is wrong in thinking that such transformations suggest that philosophy of language is first philosophy. His picture of the rest of philosophy as occupied with the analysis of "specific types of sentence or special forms of expression," ... analyses that can be guided or corrected by discoveries about the nature of meaning made by philosophers of language, has no relevance to the actual arguments that analytic philosophers invoke.*
4. *The diverse answers to the question of the relation between language and reality given by analytic philosophers do indeed divide up along some of the same lines that once divided realists from idealists.*
5. *The term "method" should be restricted to agreed-upon procedures for settling disputes between competing claims. Such a procedure was what Ayer and Carnap on the one side, and Husserl on the other, thought had recently been discovered. They were wrong. Nagel and Dennett no more appeal to such a procedure than did Cassirer and Heidegger. Neither logical analysis nor phenomenology produced anything like the procedure for settling philosophical quarrels that the founders envisaged.*
6. *When "method" is used in this restricted sense, meaning "neutral decision procedure," there is no such thing as either philosophical or scientific*

method. There are only local and specific agreements on procedure within such specific expert cultures as stellar spectroscopy, modal logic, admiralty law, possible-world semantics, or Sanskrit philology.

7. *The idea that philosophy should be put on the secure path of a science is ... [a] bad ... idea, ... It is one thing to say that philosophers should form a distinct expert culture, but quite another to suggest that they ought to be more like mathematicians than like lawyers, ... You can have an expert culture without having an agreed-upon procedure for resolving disputes. Expertise is a matter of familiarity with the course of a previous conversation, not a matter of ability to bring that conversation to a conclusion by attaining general agreement.*
8. *If twentieth-century analytic philosophy gets favorable reviews ... not because ... [of] its exceptional clarity and rigor. It will be because they have seen that following up on Frege's suggestion that we talk about the statements rather than about thoughts made it possible to frame the old issue between representationalist atomists and non-representationalist holists in a new way.*
9. *The issue between the non-representationalists and the representationalists is not a matter of competing methods. Nor is the issue about whether a proper graduate education in philosophy should include reading Hegel and Heidegger or mastering symbolic logic. Both are matters of what one thinks is important and interesting to talk about. There is not now, and there never will be, a method for settling disputes about what is interesting and important.*
10. *The idea of method is, etymology suggests, the idea of a road that takes you from the starting point of inquiry to its goal. The best translation of the Greek meth' odō is "on track." Representationalists, because they believe that there are objects that are what they are apart from the way they are described, can take seriously the picture of a track leading from subject to object. Anti-representationalists cannot. They see inquiry not as crossing a gap but as a gradual reweaving of individual or communal beliefs and desires under the pressure of causal impacts made by the behavior of people and things.*
11. *Anti-representationalists are sometimes accused, as Fine has been by Leplin and I have been by Nagel, of wanting to walk away from philosophy. But this charge confuses walking away from a certain historically determined disciplinary matrix with walking away from philosophy itself. Philosophy is not something anybody can ever walk away from; it is an amorphous blob that will englobe anyone attempting such an excursion. But unless people occasionally walk away from old disciplinary matrices as briskly as Descartes and Hobbes walked away from Aristotelianism, or Carnap and Heidegger from neo-Kantianism, decadent scholasticism is almost inevitable.*
12. *Sometimes those who walk away from worn-out disciplinary matrices offer new philosophical research programs, as Descartes and Carnap did.*

Sometimes they do not, as in the cases of Montaigne and Heidegger. But research programs are not essential to philosophy. They are of course a great boon to the professionalization of philosophy as an academic specialty. But greater professionalization should not be confused with intellectual progress, any more than a nation's economic or military might should be confused with its contribution to civilization.

- 13. Professionalization gives an edge to atomists over holists and thus to representationalists over non-representationalists. For philosophers who have theories about the elementary components of language or of thought and about how these elements get compounded look more systematic, and thus more professional, than philosophers who say that everything is relative to context. The latter see their opponents' so-called elementary components as simply nodes in webs of changing relationships.*
- 14. The big split between "continental" and "analytic" philosophy is largely due to the fact that historicism and antirepresentationalism are much more common among non-Anglophone philosophers than among their Anglophone colleagues. It is easy to bring Davidson together with Derrida and Gadamer, or Brandom together with Hegel and Heidegger.*
- 15. Philosophical progress is not made by patiently carrying out research programs to the end. Such programs all eventually trickle into the sands. It is made by great imaginative feats. These are performed by people like Hegel or Wittgenstein who tell us that a picture has been holding us captive. Many people on both sides of the analytic–continental split are spending much of their time waiting for Godot. They hope someone will do for us what *Philosophical Investigations* or *Being and Time* did for our predecessors – wake us from what we belatedly realize to have been dogmatic slumber.*
- 16. Waiting for a guru is a perfectly respectable thing for us philosophers to do. It is waiting for the human imagination to flare up once again, waiting for it to suggest a way of speaking that we had not thought of before. Just as intellectuals cannot live without pathos, they cannot live without gurus. But they can live without priests. They do not need the sort of guru who explains that his or her authority comes from a special relation to something non-human, a relation gained by having found the correct track across an abyss. (Rorty R., 2007, pp. 142-146)*

For all apparent disagreement between his earlier commitment to analytic program and the views he developed later in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* and *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, it is by no means an abrupt change of direction in Rorty's philosophical viewpoint. A more panoramic observation of his thought with

an unbroken view of its development throughout his works would show it otherwise. Metaphilosophy, in this regard, is Rorty's domain, in which he composed his critique since the beginning of his career. His analytical experience further contributes to his metaphilosophical perception to lead him to propose a "revolutionary" turn, in a sense, in philosophy. In *PMN*, he employs arguments within the analytic framework to support his case, which is to overcome the framework itself. It is an attitude sometimes interpreted as a "disappointment" with the analytic approach to philosophy. In his later works notions such as method, nature, argument, and truth are suspended in his discussions. This tendency makes him harder to approach.

5.1. Irony

Rorty draws attention to the desire to unite "public good" and "private perfection" in a single theory as a remnant of theological or metaphysical frame of thought. "The closest we will come to joining these two quests" he maintains, "is to see the aim of a just and free society as letting its citizens be as privatistic, "irrationalist," and aestheticist as they please so long as they do it on their own time - causing no harm to others and using no resources needed by those less advantaged" (Rorty R., 1989, p. xiv). He could then characterize different authors in terms of this distinction, such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Baudelaire, Proust, and Nabokov as exemplars of "private perfection," and "Marx, Mill, Dewey, Habermas, and Rawls" as "fellow citizens ... engaging in a shared, social effort - the effort to make our institutions and practices more just and less cruel" (ibid.). Rorty himself, on the other hand, experiences the thrust of both as early as he starts studying philosophy and

looks for a vision to unite them. As he told in detail in his autobiographical pieces, he dubs these two drives in his life as “Trotsky” and “wild orchids.”

When Rorty drops the wish to reach a unifying theory, he starts building his metaphilosophical convictions as well. In his *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, he says, “this book tries to show how things look if we drop the demand for a theory which unifies the public and private, and are content to treat the demands of self-creation and of human solidarity as equally valid, yet forever incommensurable” and draws his “liberal ironist” (Rorty R., 1989, p. xv). It would not be wrong to assume that Rorty depicted himself and his philosophical views with this figure. He borrows the “liberal” from Judith Shklar, who defines it as “the people who think that cruelty is the worst thing we do” (ibid. xv). Reflecting his public intellectual side, this liberal part entertains the “hope that suffering will be diminished, [and] that the humiliation of human beings by other human beings may cease” (ibid.), however he does not enter into “grounding” such desires.

Rorty’ defines his “ironist” by the “final vocabulary.” A final vocabulary, he says, are the

set of words which ... [human beings] employ to justify their actions, their beliefs, and their lives. These are the words in which we formulate praise of our friends and contempt for our enemies, our long-term projects, our deepest self-doubts and our highest hopes. They are the words in which we tell, sometimes prospectively and sometimes retrospectively, the story of our lives (Rorty R., 1989, p. 73).

This vocabulary is called “final” in accordance with Rorty’s antifoundationalist, antirepresentationalist, antiessentialist and historicist convictions of the contingency of the self and language. He thus explains the finality:

It is "final" in the sense that if doubt is cast on the worth of these words, their user has no noncircular argumentative recourse. Those words are as far as he can go with language; beyond them there is only helpless passivity or a resort to force. A small part of a final vocabulary is made up of thin, flexible, and ubiquitous terms such as “true,” “good,” “right,” and “beautiful.” The larger part contains thicker, more rigid, and more parochial terms, for example, “Christ,” “England,” “professional standards,” “decency,” “kindness,” “the Revolution,” “the Church,” “progressive,” “rigorous,” “creative.” The more parochial terms do most of the work. (ibid.).

Rorty then defines “ironist” according to three criteria:

*[1] She has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses, because she has been impressed by other vocabularies, vocabularies taken as final by people or books she has encountered;
[2] she realizes that argument phrased in her present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve these doubts;
[3] insofar as she philosophizes about her situation, she does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself. (Rorty R., 1989, p. 73)*

Here appears the risk of associating irony with relativism, as Rorty’s views are often charged with the same motive. This is actually a question that the above claims could bring to one’s mind. Rorty’s liberal ironist both “grasps” the contingency of his vocabulary of beliefs yet he does not refrain from defending them. Rorty alludes to Schumpeter’s to exemplify his state of mind of: “To realize the relative validity of one’s convictions and yet stand for them unflinchingly is what distinguishes a civilized man from a barbarian” (*ibid* 46). This conviction, for Rorty, is “the chief virtue of the members of a liberal society”. Those are the individuals, for him, who recognize “contingency” as “freedom,” as “figures like Nietzsche, William James, Freud, Proust and Wittgenstein” did (*ibid*).

Rorty then quotes the objection of Michael Sandel, who is “an acute contemporary critic of the liberal tradition”:

If one’s convictions are only relatively valid, why stand for them unflinchingly? In a tragically configured moral universe, such as Berlin assumes, is the ideal of freedom any less subject than competing ideals to the ultimate incommensurability of values? If so, what can its privileged status consist? And if freedom has no morally privileged status, if it is just one value among many, then what can be said for liberalism? (Rorty R., 1989, p. 46)

Rorty’s first answer to this challenge is actually a repetition of one of his starting points and it is a basic defense that could be exploited against any similar attacks. He simply alludes to Sandel’s tone and says that he speaks with the vocabulary of Enlightenment and moreover he “takes advantage of the fact that Schumpeter and Berlin themselves make use of this vocabulary, and attempting thereby to show that their view is incoherent (ibid., 47). Rorty portrays the liberal ironist citizens of his “utopia” as people who have “a sense of the contingency of their language of moral deliberation, and thus of their consciences, and thus of their community” (ibid., 61). As the title “liberal ironist” suggests, these citizens have the ability to combine “commitment with a sense of the contingency of their own commitment” (ibid.). The question of how it is possible to incorporate contingency with commitment would again lead Rorty back to his starting assumptions and to assume the same previous stance of his: to whose vocabulary does this question belong to? Moreover, historical atrocities have been committed whether one thinks that moral convictions are relatively or universally valid. In the end wars, massacres, or brutality are claimed to have been done in the name of truth after all, perpetrators do not really justify their

actions by appealing to the ineffability of truth or goodness. It is just the opposite in that each side claims to have the “real” knowledge, justification, or the reason of whatever they stand for, religion, moral cause, truth, nature whatever their cause is.

Rorty’s ironist, or Rorty, is never comfortable with a set of words. He does not nestle in fixed meanings. He watches vocabularies opposing each other to his own advantage as he displayed in his philosophizing and makes it explicit in his words: “Ironists who are inclined to philosophize see the choice between vocabularies as made neither within a neutral and universal metavocabulary not by an attempt to fight one’s way past appearances to the real, but simply by playing the new off against the old” (Rorty R., 1989, p. 73). “The opposite of irony,” according to Rorty, is “common sense” (ibid 74). Just as an ironist feels uncomfortable with his “final” vocabulary, an individual who is adhered to common sense that much feels safe and cozy in his final vocabulary. These two attitudes have their own consequences. If one believes in the absoluteness of one’s sentiments, then he assumes all the rest of the world to be so. These people believe that “statements formulated in . . . [their] final vocabulary suffice to describe and judge the beliefs, actions and lives of those who employ alternative final vocabularies” (ibid). Rorty appears to have chosen the authors who calls his “heroes” and interprets in his way to see new vistas in the manner of an ironist, who has eyes and ears to recognize “the people with poetic gifts”: “Pythagoras, Plato, Milton, Newton, Goethe, Kant, Kierkegaard, Baudelaire, Darwin, and Freud” (ibid 77). What he means by the “poetic gift” here is the ability to redescribe the world (ibid). The ironist eye has a different vision than a regular

metaphysician's; the former does not crave putting such original into the boxes that we have long been taught: the philosopher, the scientist, or the poet (ibid).

Although Rorty's ideas first came as an uprising against the authority of Anglo-American analytic tradition, Daniel Dennett wants it to be taken into consideration that Rortian heresy became the "current orthodoxy among the literati" as early as 1998 (Dennett, 2000, p. 1). About Rortian irony, on the other hand, he maintains that we cannot so easily do away with the responsibility of what we say. In fact we owe responsibility for the soundness of our actions and for the safety of others as in the case of engineers who could not afford, say being ironists since "knowing that thousands of people's safety may depend on the bridge they design, engage in focused exercises with specified constraints designed to determine that, according to all current knowledge, their designs are safe and sound" (Dennett, 1998, p. 2). Chomsky has a similar charge: according to him irony cannot work in the "real" world and such "fancy" ideas are actually rich men frug and not something, for instance, the third world can afford. According to his experiences, it is actually detrimental to concrete achievements in the way of social development. The so-called postmodernist attitude is not a way to understand the "real world" with all its relativist and irrationalist outlook, which almost functions like a tool for oppressive forces. It draws intellectuals away from associating themselves with popular struggles and undermines their contributions to them. What they need is a rational stance, otherwise, Chomsky thinks, "you can be an easy victim for any outside force." (Chomsky, 2012), (Chomsky, 2018). Habermas, as well, Rorty says, "sees the

line of ironist thinking which runs from Hegel through Foucault and Derrida as destructive of social hope” (Rorty R., 1989, p. 83).

Rorty replies to this particular way of attitude against irony as being “largely irrelevant to public life and political questions” (Rorty R., 1989, p. 83). Because, he thinks, it is a matter of “private self-image,” it is not really a position to be assumed in politics. Here, it is actually Enlightenment rationalism that makes this charge again. Rorty holds that

Habermas assumes that the task of philosophy is to supply some social glue which will replace religious belief, and to see Enlightenment talk of "universality" and "rationality" as the best candidate for this glue. So he sees this kind of criticism of the Enlightenment, and of the idea of rationality, as dissolving the bonds between members of liberal societies. He thinks of the contextualism and perspectivalism for which I praised Nietzsche, in previous chapters, as irresponsible subjectivism. (Rorty R., 1989, p. 83)

Even if it were not the case of an ironist attitude in question as a specifically private refinement, Rorty again maintains that

Philosophy and politics are not that tightly linked. There will always be room for a lot of philosophical disagreement between people who share the same politics, and for diametrically opposed political views among philosophers of the same school. In particular, there is no reason why a fascist could not be a pragmatist, in the sense of agreeing with pretty much everything Dewey said about the nature of truth, knowledge, rationality and morality. Nietzsche would have agreed with Dewey against Plato and Kant on all these specifically philosophical topics. Had they debated, the only substantial disagreement between Nietzsche and Dewey would have been about the value of egalitarian ideas, ideas of human brotherhood and sisterhood, and thus about the value of democracy (Rorty R., 1999, p. 23).

Now Rorty becomes the one who has the advantage of suspecting the other side, about assuming a “tight link” between philosophy and politics. Rorty must

nonetheless have a point in his contention regarding, for instance, besides what he says, the closeness between his and Chomsky's political views about "the growing passivity of the leftist intelligentsia since the 30s ... [and their deserting] the public arena (Chomsky, 2012). Not only is there an expectation of a link between one's political and philosophical beliefs but there might be a wider gap among beliefs in such a way that one does not imply the other, for instance, Hitler is said to be an animal lover, or it was a normal behavior of a decent person to beat their child, for instance, a hundred years ago. One reason, accordingly, might be an assumption about the existence of a core self, or nature, unchanging and discoverable when studied correctly. "In particular," Rorty observes, there is a leftist tendency "for a philosophical view which cannot be used by the political right, one which will lend itself only to good causes" (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 23). He recounts that "Otto Neurath is reputed to have said that 'no one can use logical empiricism to ground a totalitarian argument'" (ibid. 39) but he holds that "No argumentative roads from epistemological or semantic premises will take one to political conclusions, any more than to conclusions about the relative value of literary works." (ibid.). It was such an attitude, for instance, when, Rorty says, "the members of the Vienna Circle, like many contemporary writers, saw Heidegger's philosophy and Hider's politics as bound up with each other" (ibid.).

In the same way, Rorty holds that

Just as you cannot learn much about the value of Heidegger's views on truth and rationality from the fact that he was a Nazi, so you cannot learn much about the value of Dewey's (quite similar) views on the same subjects from the fact that he was a lifelong fighter for good, leftist political causes, nor from the fact that he shared Walt Whitman's sense that "the United States are

themselves the greatest poem". Your opinion of pragmatism can, and should, be independent of your opinion of either democracy or America. (ibid. 24).

That must be another reason for being persuaded that "any philosophical view is a tool which can be used by many different hands" as Rorty puts it.

5.2. Justice as Larger Loyalty

Rorty's works are not about certain eureka moments, or some postmodern "slogans and battlecries" (Searle, 1993, p. 78), as it might be misunderstood as if he were promoting beliefs such as "Philosophy has come to an end," "No values can be justified and none is better than the other," "There are no criteria of good," "Truth is out there," or "Anything goes". His style is rather like variations on themes such as linguistic turn, mind, objectivity, truth, freedom, democracy, solidarity, or irony. It is the moments of insight, hope, observations hidden in plain sight, or unprecedented interpretations embedded in the course of his writings that hold and charm the reader, which might be more similar to a literary work. One instance is his questioning the possibility of a global economic justice, "an honest day's work, in a ditch or at a computer, earn[ing] no higher a wage in Cincinnati or Paris than in a small town in Botswana" (Rorty R., 2007, p. 43) along with keeping financing democratic institutions and freedoms in the first world, if they stand at the expense of the other. This will lead to the possibility of redescribing "justice as a larger loyalty", thus exchanging a "sentimental" notion with the one springing from reason (Rorty R., 2007, p. 44). That would amount to bringing "universal validity" up against "historical consensus," thus Kantian and non- Kantian morality.

Expressions of “redescription” and “reformulation” are significant elements of Rorty’s vocabulary since they serve to distinguish novel thinking from Enlightenment rationalism. According to him, “the difference between a search for foundations and an attempt at redescription is emblematic of the difference between the culture of liberalism and older forms of cultural life” (Rorty R., 1989, p. 45). What we should be able to see is the “contingency” of our vocabularies and observe that “the liberal societies of our century have produced more and more people who are able to recognize the contingency of the vocabulary in which they state their highest hopes – the contingency of their own consciences” (ibid).

Possible moral conflicts between universal validity of justice and historical consensus of loyalty might be dissolved in such a review. That is, we may say that Euthyphro indicts his own father not because he puts the universal over the parochial, but he is being loyal to some people different and more inclusive than expected, or Antigone buries her brother not because she is obeying some laws more superior or essential than those of the King, but being loyal to a different group, one larger, the divine; the other closer, familial. He comes to the point where “we cannot resolve conflicting loyalties by turning away from them all toward something categorically distinct from loyalty – the universal moral obligation” (Rorty R. , 2007, p. 47). What matters metaphilosophically here, is whether “justice” can be redescribed in terms of “loyalty.”

Rorty points out Michael Walzer and Anette Baier, who do not need “universal notions of morality” and have a non-Kantian way of bypassing unconditionality.

Michael Walzer inverts Kantian “*phronēsis* as a thickening up of thin abstract principles” (Rorty R. , 2007, p. 46), and in general, the Kantian intuition that morality starts thin and goes thick as circumstances diversify in a society (ibid., 44). Anette Baier, Rorty says, has somehow a similar understanding of morality, which does not start with thin or abstract kind of “obligation” but rather “as a relation of reciprocal trust among a closely knit group,” which one pays “naturally” to each other in a tight circle like family, which seems like a thick conception. “Baier sees “obligation” enter the scene “only when your loyalty to a smaller group conflict with your loyalty to a larger group” (ibid., 45). It is a similar view of morality with that of Walzer, who thinks that “Morality is thick from the beginning, culturally integrated, fully resonant, and it reveals itself thinly only on special occasions, when moral language is turned to special purposes” (ibid., 44-45). Rorty thinks the same attitude is comparable to Rawls’ “shared *concept* of justice and various conflicting *conceptions* of justice” (ibid., 46). As it appears, in Rawls’ terms, concrete problems arise with “thicker” conceptions of justice, that is, “principles and criteria for deciding which distinctions are arbitrary and when a balance between competing claims is proper” (ibid.), and not really with “thin” concepts where anyone can claim to “justice.”

Defining “justice” as larger loyalty is an example of what Rorty calls “complicat[ing] ... traditional distinctions” or “offer[ing] contentious reinterpretations” between [e.g.] the objective and the subjective, reason and passion, knowledge and opinion, science and politics” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 63) with reference to other philosophers, contemporary or historical, whom he finds to be with a similar philosophical

temperament. He also contrasts this kind of attitude with other differing ones, usually shared by Kantian and Platonic philosophies. What Rorty does not share with them is the notion of particular instances converging in a universal truth to have an authoritative power to be accepted as a true instance. That is, if, some “thick”, “conceptions of justice” were to conflict each other, “the thin concept can often be turned against any of the thick conceptions from which it emerged, in the form of critical questions” (Rorty R. , 2007, p. 46). On this question, however, Rorty says, “neither Rawls nor Walzer think that unpacking the concept of justice will, by itself, resolve such critical questions by supplying a criterion of arbitrariness” (ibid. 46).

Habermas, on the other hand, as Rorty points out, would remain likely on the Kantian side of universal validity of thin concepts. Take, for instance, human rights issues. In her address to the United Nations in 1948 in Paris, Eleanor Roosevelt says that the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “may well become the international Magna Carta of all men everywhere” (Eleanor Roosevelt: Address to the United Nations General Assembly, 1948), and expresses a similar hope for universal obligation. However, Rorty asks, in the name of what such “demands for reform made on the rest of the world by Western liberal societies are made”: universal “morality, justice, or humanity” required by laws of reason or simply “expressions of loyalty to local, Western, conceptions of justice” are. When put it this way we can believe that such values are regarded to have a value of adoption if they spring from an essential source that necessarily binds everyone. That is, “Kantian notion of rationality”, which is assumed to be appear “if people are willing

to reason together long enough, is what Habermas calls ‘the force of the better argument’ will lead them to concur” (Rorty R. , 2007, p. 54).

5.3. Searle and the Western Rationalistic Tradition

Rorty asks, what if the West gets rid of this “rationalistic rhetoric to approach the non-West” and instead, assume “a role of someone with an instructive story to tell” (Rorty R. , 2007, p. 55). Rorty makes an assumption clear; if one cannot claim the categorical upper hand of universality of reason, then such values as human rights and freedoms would not have a force to be adopted and they are too valuable to be risked. The problem Rorty puts forward is whether such values as rights and freedoms are more adoptable if they are taken with the traditional assumptions that they are an expression of human nature uncovered or positive contributions to humanity as results of previous historical occurrences.

Rorty points out the views of Habermas at one end and that of Walzer at the other. Habermas, he says, thinks liberal western values should demonstrate their “epistemic superiority” by “transculturally valid premises”. But then, Rorty appeals to his doubts about, that he thinks Walzer also takes for granted, the possibility of a “trans-cultural reason before which to try the question of the superiority of the Western idea of reasonableness” (Rorty R. , 2007, p. 49). Rorty does not find any use of it since he “see[s] no point in saying that it is more rational to prefer one’s neighbors to one’s family in the event of a nuclear holocaust, or more rational to prefer leveling off incomes around the world to preserving the institutions of liberal Western societies” (ibid. 54). This view relates back to Rorty’s rejection of the Kantian idea of

philosophy as the tribunal of reason. By the same token he would suggest that we cannot possibly find a universal hook, neither do we need one, to put western liberal notions to bind non-liberal ones.

He suggests, instead:

that the rhetoric we Westerners use in trying to get everyone to be more like us would be improved if we were more frankly ethnocentric, and less professedly universalist. It would be better to say: here is what we in the West look like as a result of ceasing to hold slaves, beginning to educate women, separating church and state, and so on. Here is what happened after we started treating certain distinctions between people as arbitrary rather than fraught with moral significance. If you would try treating them that way, you might like the results. (Rorty R. , 2007, p. 55)

This redescription of justice as enlargement of loyalty connects also to Rorty's another more general notion of philosophy as a fulfillment of Enlightenment ideal of humanity's maturity with the caveat that "we need to peel apart Enlightenment liberalism from Enlightenment rationalism" (Rorty R. , 2007, p. 55). "Getting rid of rationalistic rhetoric" would save us from a mission of grounding morality and let us "approach ... in the role of someone with an instructive story to tell" (ibid.) On theoretical grounds, he advises "discarding the residual rationalism that we inherit from the Enlightenment" (ibid.), for example, because of "the apparent incompatibility of the correspondence theory of truth with a naturalistic account of the origin of human minds" (ibid.). Beliefs split on truth as such, as Rorty points out Searle's claim that correspondence theory "is essential to the Western Rationalist Tradition" and he argues that "Dewey and Davidson have shown us how to keep the benefits of Western rationalism without the philosophical hangups caused by attempts to explicate this notion." (ibid. 55, fn. 21).

5.4. Rationality

Rorty's comment on being rational is that it can mean having "enough resources to permit agreement how to coexist without violence" "among [one's] shared beliefs and desires" and consequently, being irrational means "not shar[ing] enough relevant beliefs and desires ... to make possible fruitful conversation about the issue in dispute" (Rorty R. , 2007, pp. 53-54). Rorty thinks it is no use to expect to make an irrational person to believe and desire as such, but we can only hope for a settlement for a "modus vivendi", which may well include "threat" or even "force". On a contrary view, Searle describes a "Western Rationalistic Tradition", which is fundamentally defined by a "conception of reality and its relation with thought and language", which underlies the Western conception of science with its "very particular conception[s] of truth, reason, reality, rationality, logic, knowledge, evidence, and proof" (Searle, 1993, p. 57). He accordingly identifies the aim of science as "to get a set of true sentences, ideally in the form of precise theories, that are true because they correspond, at least approximately, to an independently existing reality." (ibid.). Though taking "an independently existing reality" for granted, he recognizes the difficulty of attaining the "accuracy and objectivity ... because of the fact that all representation is *a from a point of view and under some aspects and not others*"⁵¹ and identifies this perspectivism as "one of the central epistemic principles of the Western Rationalistic Tradition in its current incarnation" (ibid., 58).

⁵¹ Searle's emphasis.

However, if perspectives make it only “difficult” to attain the existing reality, he must have taken it a matter of discovery to reach it and possibility of different perspectives converging to the same reality in the end. His argument that may necessarily concern Rorty’s claim on rationality is directly related to his claim on the necessity of a basis of objective reality. According to Searle, those who criticize rationality, objective reality, or truth, as Rorty does, on the basis that it is another instance of an “uncritical acceptance of a belief in God”, do it by turning the same critical treatment to these concepts, thinking if the latter was successfully abolished, then why can’t we demolish the former by the same standards? In other words, he interprets this attitude as a “self-destruction”, as opposed to “self-criticism” (ibid. 59). He previously identifies “creation of theory” and “self-critical quality” as two basic features of Western Rationalistic Tradition. Obviously, he values the creation of “theory by the Greek” as a “decisive step” in determining Western Rationalistic Tradition because of its relation to human “coping mechanism”, a factor he takes as basic in living. He shares the emphasis of the same factor with Rorty as the latter draws on the coping operation over and over throughout his works as one of the basic components of his pragmatic worldview.

The split starts where Searle’s coping is with “the real world” and Rorty’s with “environment,” which he does not attach an ontological status. Searle thinks “survival” is possible “being able to cope with the real world” and “the ways that human beings characteristically cope with the real world is essentially involve representing it to themselves in language.” (ibid.). Searle accepts that the “self-criticism” as a quality that puts the tradition “under challenge” letting it “never [be] a

unified tradition” by “subject[ing] any belief to the most rigorous standards of rationality, evidence, and truth” (ibid., 58). As he takes the notion that “reality exists independently of human representations” to be one of the “foundational principle[s] of the Western Rationalistic Tradition” (ibid., 60), it appears that he describes the role of “self-criticism” applied to the “basic conceptions” of the tradition such as, reason, truth, rationality, or knowledge, in such a way that it looks as if it makes the structure created by this tradition malfunction by subjecting its own building blocks to scrutiny. It acts like an autoimmune disorder, an entity producing antibodies against its own tissues and causing hypersensitivity reactions. Thus, Searle sees the “debates” of, what he calls “postmodern subculture in universities” a kind of deviation from a healthy condition. He then defines such an operation not really “self-criticism” but a “self-destruction.” This view is also resonant with the tendency that renders Rorty Antichrist of philosophy and led Searle name Rorty one of the agents of such a destruction (ibid., 72).

Rorty, on the other makes it explicit in his reply to Searle that the point is both “preventing the Young Turks from wrecking” and at the same time “keep[ing] the Old Guard from freezing out the Young Turks” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 70). In his reply to Searle’s “Rationality and Realism, What is at Stake?” Rorty recapitulates the charges against him:

A number of contemporary philosophers, including myself, do their best to complicate the traditional distinctions between the objective and the subjective, reason and passion, knowledge and opinion, science and politics. We offer contentious reinterpretations of these distinctions, draw them in nontraditional ways. For example, we deny that the search for objective truth is a search for correspondence to reality and urge that it be seen instead as a search for the widest possible intersubjective agreement. So we are often

accused of endangering the traditions and practices that people have in mind when they speak of “academic freedom” or “scientific integrity” or “scholarly standards.” (Rorty R. , Truth and Progress, 1998, pp. 63-64)

Other than showing that he sees the allegations Rorty does not get into Searle’s frame of Western Rationalistic Tradition and its building blocks that bear the load of the tradition, which cannot afford their elimination. Even if he does not directly address Searle’s account, Rorty relocates it in his frame by continuing the above quotation:

This charge assumes that the relation between a belief about the nature of truth and certain social practices is presuppositional. A practice presupposes a belief only if dropping the belief constitutes a good reason for altering the practice. For example, the belief that surgeons do not perform operations merely to make money for themselves or their hospitals, but do so only if there is a good chance the operation will benefit the patient, is presupposed by current practices of financing health care. The belief that many diseases are caused by bacteria and viruses, and that few can be cured by acupuncture, is presupposed by current practices of disbursing public funds for medical research. (Rorty R. , Truth and Progress, 1998)

What Rorty makes of the allegations is the question, whether, for instance, in Searle’s terms, “intellectual standards will be up for grabs, if we stop believing that, e.g., “truth of a sentence consists in its correspondence to reality.” Searle thinks arbitrariness should be allowed in “assigning intellectual quality” instead of “rational standards.” While accepting that “some disputes may be un settleable,” he says, “that does not mean that anything goes” (Searle, 1993, p. 68). Searle holds that that is what is happening with the “postmodern subculture” in higher education, of which he takes Rorty as a part, while accepting using “postmodernism” in a loosely defined

sense. He calls it a “postmodernist” approach if “certain traditional assumptions about the nature of truth, objectivity, rationality, reality, and intellectual quality” are challenged or attacked and claims that it occupies a “subculture” alongside the “traditional university”, which is “dedicated to the discovery, extension, and dissemination of knowledge as traditionally conceived” (Searle, 1993, pp. 55,56).

Overall, Searle takes the alleged “postmodern subculture” is an attempt of Western Rationalistic Tradition’s self-destruction. Nevertheless, he says they do not have much force, except in “some social sciences departments and certain law schools”, but “had very little influence in philosophy, the natural sciences economics, engineering, or mathematics” in his 1993 essay (Searle, 1993, p. 77). Historically he recounts that the movement in the late 60s and 70s was able to leak where it could find a breach to pass through, “primarily those humanities disciplines concerned with literary studies —English, French, and Comparative Literature especially” (ibid.,71), and as for 1993, he says, “The philosophers who make an explicit point of rejecting the Western Rationalistic Tradition, such as Richard Rorty or Jacques Derrida, are much more influential in departments of literature than they are in philosophy departments” (ibid., 77).

However, he says, “many disciplines, for example, analytic philosophy”, were solid enough in their “traditional intellectual values” (Searle, 1993, p. 71) not to give way to the postmodern inclinations. The motive behind, he claims, is para-philosophical; “ideological domination of antirealist and antirationalist conceptions” in higher education is for “us[ing] ... [it] as a device for political transformation” since those

who promoted postmodernism “thought that social political transformation could be achieved through educational and cultural transformation, and that the political ideals of the 1960s could be achieved through education.” (ibid.71). He finds an instantiation of this alleged declination of intellectual standards in what he calls a “subtle redefinition of the idea of an academic subject from that of a *domain to be studied* to that of a *cause to be advanced*”⁵² and he believes it to be the case with “many of the multiculturalist proposals for curricular reform” such as “Women’s Studies, Chicano Studies, Gay and Lesbian Studies, African American Studies, and other elements of the recent attempts at curricular reform” (ibid. 73,74).

He believes, instead of the traditional purpose of education, “to develop an identity as a member of a larger and universal human intellectual culture”, this is a strive for, “reinforc[ing the student’s] pride in and self-identification with a particular subgroup” in terms of, for instance, “race, gender, class, and ethnicity” (Searle, 1993, p. 73). Searle shows his concerns about the results of lacking rationalistic, universalist, and realist presuppositions in higher education, and generally in intellectual world, the criteria for academic excellence will collapse because of such relativization of objectivity.

In his reply, Rorty does not seem to buy Searle’s picture of Western Rationalistic Tradition like a structure held by a number of principles. He identifies six of them, actually and these are

1. “*Reality exists independently of human representations.*” (Searle, 1993, p. 60)

⁵² Searle’s own emphasis.

2. *“At least one of the functions of language is to communicate meanings from speakers to hearers, and sometimes those meanings enable the communication to refer to objects and states of affairs in the world that exist independently of language.” (ibid., 61)*
3. *“Truth is a matter of the accuracy of representation.” (ibid., 62)*
4. *“Knowledge is objective.” (ibid., 66)*
5. *“Logic and rationality are formal.” (ibid., 67)*
6. *“Intellectual standards are not up for grabs. There are both objectively and intersubjectively valid criteria of intellectual achievement and excellence.” (ibid., 68)*

Rorty clarifies some assumptions that Searle makes here. He says that what Searle thinks to be under threat are some “social practices,” that is, in his case these are “academic freedom, scientific integrity, or scholarly standards” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 64). He puts forward that “a practice presupposes a belief only if dropping the belief constitutes a good reason for altering the practice” (ibid.). What it amounts to is to raise doubts about the possibility of giving up on academic freedom, scientific integrity, or scholarly standards if one were to quit believing, for instance, that “knowledge is accuracy of representation”. Regarding the debate in terms of the framework of analytic tradition that assumes truth as the representation of facts of reality, Searle defends a belief that the Western Rationalistic Tradition owes its secular achievements to holding that assumption. That is the truth which outlaws the arbitrary authority on scientific bases. Rorty believes that we can sustain and develop those values such as democracy, freedom, equality, or human rights. which we gained in this tradition by leaving the assumption of objective truth. That supposition has worked as a means to defeat obstacles in front of our progress, but it has gained a similar arbitrary character by turning into a base for judging value of phenomena and become an obstacle before the maturation of humankind.

Rorty's answer is about the scope of a presupposition over a practice. According to him it depends on the kind of proposition; taking the fuzziness of the distinction between the philosophical and empirical, he maintains, many of the cases stand clear enough to be distinguished even if in some of them they can stand close to each other on a spectrum where they are at opposite ends. He takes the practices of "financing health care", for instance, the presupposition behind it would be "that surgeons do not perform operations merely to make money for themselves or their hospitals, but do so only if there is a good chance the operation will benefit the patient" (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 64). This, he says, an empirical presupposition, which is different from philosophical presuppositions such as "The truth of a sentence consists in its correspondence to reality" or "Ethical judgments are claims to knowledge rather than mere expressions of feeling" (ibid. 64).

Rorty emphasizes the point that we know "what counts for or against," (ibid.) for instance, the presupposition that "many diseases are caused by bacteria and viruses, and that few can be cured by acupuncture" (ibid.). Most simply, numbers, according to statistic e.g., can change the practice of "disbursing public funds for medical research" (ibid.), if, for instance, more people are cured from diseases by acupuncture than other medical methods, then one would expect a change in the social practice and more finance would be supplied for its research. However, what can credit or discredit a philosophical presupposition is not clear because, Rorty points out, "Philosophical views are just not tied very closely either to observation and experiment or to practice" (ibid.). That means funds are allotted to virology, and

not to acupuncture, not because finance management presupposes that viruses exist in a reality independent from any human representation. One does say that there are viruses in an objective reality but that would be, for Rorty, “rhetorical ornaments of practice rather than foundation of practice” (ibid.). Searle, then, wants to make a similar relation between a practice and a philosophical belief to the one between an empirical belief and an action but that does not work, according to Rorty, because the latter is “clear and tied very closely either to observation and experiment or to practice” (ibid.) whereas the former is just not.

5.5. Argumentation

It appears that Searle would not be convinced of Rorty’s reply since he expects replies to be composed in the same frame of reference that he builds his realist-representationalist edifice, given his complaint that “it is very hard to find any clear, rigorous, and explicit arguments against the core elements of the Western Rationalistic Tradition” (Searle, 1993, p. 77). Nevertheless, he already anticipates that “the part of what is under attack is the whole idea of ‘clear, rigorous, and explicit arguments’” and “Somehow or other, there is the feeling that the Western Rationalistic Tradition has become superseded or obsolete, but actual attempts at refutations are rare.” (ibid.). The argument for argument indicates a split between deeper reference frames. It is significant for analytic philosophy in general, “a high degree of clarity and precision of formulation and argument” but at the same time if the “techniques and predilections of [it] are not only unhistorical but anti-historical” (Sorell, 2005, p. 1), Rorty’s contention may seem some “slogans and battlecries” to Searle and he would take historical change of ideas treated “as if it were a change in

the weather, something that just happened without need of argument or proof” and insists on “actual attempts at refutations” against the view that “the Western Rationalistic Tradition has become superseded or obsolete” (Searle, 1993, p. 77). Even if Searle expects from a “rigorous argument”, what Rorty calls, being “airtight” like Plato did, to “avoid premature certainty”, even then, Rorty objects, “what counts as a good argument is as relative to contingent circumstance as what counts as a good reading list. Argumentation is not a skyhook that can lift one out of one’s particular time and place.” (Rorty R. , 2010, p. 3).

Another objection might be raised against Searle about what argumentation can or cannot do by Rorty’s thought about how philosophical problems change. Rorty states that Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey managed their philosophies without “devot[ing] themselves to discovering false propositions or bad arguments in the works of their predecessors (though they occasionally do that too).” (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 6). Nevertheless, he says, they all “set aside” or “abandoned” “some basic notions such as “of knowledge as accurate representation, made possible by special mental processes and intelligible through a general theory of representation”, “foundations of knowledge”, “philosophy as revolving around the Cartesian attempt to answer the epistemological skeptic”, or “‘the mind’ common to Descartes, Locke, and Kant—as a special subject of study, located in inner space, containing elements or processes which make knowledge possible” (ibid.).

Yet, they did not, Rorty says, argued against whether Lockean or Kantian epistemology or metaphysics, nor did they have “alternative theories of knowledge

or philosophies of mind”; they “set aside epistemology and metaphysics as possible disciplines” just as the seventeenth-century philosophers set aside the scholastic problematic. Their assertion of the “possibility of a post-Kantian culture, one in which there is no all-encompassing discipline which legitimizes or grounds the others” is like asserting that religion has no connection with science or politics. The former is not a counterargument against “any particular Kantian doctrine” or the latter “against Aquinas’s claim that God’s existence can be proved by natural reason” (ibid). Rorty sees Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey bringing in Kuhn’s sense of “revolutionary” philosophy, that is, they “introduce[d] new maps of terrain (viz., of the whole panorama of human activities) which simply do not include those features which previously seemed to dominate” (ibid.7).

What changes in the new philosophy is then the “vocabulary,” which makes argumentation possible since, for Rorty, the old vocabulary “would seem ... pointless” to the new one. The “vocabulary” here is the whole arsenal of definitions, re-definitions, and new metaphors. How the new vocabulary is built is by no means a matter of argumentation. Rorty would suggest imagination, hunch, or even sleight-of-hand for its establishment. In “Kuhnian terminology” he states that “no revolution can succeed which employs a vocabulary commensurable with the old, and thus none can succeed by employing arguments which make unequivocal use of terms shared with the traditional wisdom.” (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 58 fn.28). Once a new vocabulary has set in, “better arguments become possible, says Rorty, but how much the new vocabulary can persuade the tradition, or “the revolution’s victims”, in Rortian terms, remains doubtful, since the latter, “will always find [them] question begging” (ibid.).

There is a possibility of seeing the charges of frivolous postmodernity against Rorty as “defensive reflexes of the philosophical tradition which he attacked”, the same way Rorty described the accusations against Dewey being irrational and relativist, but it requires one “to take seriously the criticisms” (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 13) he made, like he advised for Dewey to be understood.

5.6. Philosophical Foundation

The point behind the disagreement between Rorty and Searle comes down to the question of whether a philosophical belief behind a social practice is foundational or optional. The way Rorty decides on this issue is historicist in the sense that he emphasizes social and cultural practices and takes it as a process. The way Searle defends his point is how practices would collapse without the foundations he identified. If Rorty is found plausible in showing that social practices in question are optional, he has the better hand. Thus, he maintains that

Philosophical views are just not tied very closely either to observation and experiment or to practice. This is why they are sometimes dismissed as merely philosophical, where “merely” suggests that views on these subjects are optional – that most people, for most purposes, can get along without any. But precisely to the extent that such views are in fact optional, social practices do not have philosophical presuppositions. (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 64)⁵³

This kind of understanding of Rorty’s views as a means to “anything goes” attitude is common with other attitudes that take him a straightforward or covert relativist. The difference is, of course, the latter interpretation is to criticize his pragmatism and the

⁵³ Rorty’s emphases.

former uses him as an excuse to some abusive practices. It is in fact for the very former deviant uses that some people think what Rorty takes as antifoundationalist-antirepresentationalist may in fact be a relativist attitude and it may lead to encourage them. Rorty here and elsewhere will repeat how his views cannot be qualified thus. For instance, he summarizes his reasons for this case:

What we deny is that these notions can be explained or defended by reference to the notion of "correspondence to mind-independent reality." Philosophers on my side of the argument think that we can explain what we mean when we say that academic research should be disinterested and objective only by pointing to the ways in which free universities do, to their role in keeping democratic government and liberal institutions alive and functioning. (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 69).

5.7. The Role of Philosophy in Western Rationalistic Tradition

Searle's pillars of the Western Rationalistic Tradition, about reality, language, truth, and knowledge suggest social, and moral, as well as intellectual, results. This entitlement claims a perennial role for philosophy concerning the rest of culture similar to the one Rorty maintains that a foundationalist idea of philosophy assumes:

culture ... [as] the assemblage of claims to knowledge, and philosophy adjudicates such claims. It can do so because it understands the foundations of knowledge, and it finds these foundations in a study of man-as-knower, of the "mental processes" or the "activity of representation" which make knowledge possible. To know is to represent accurately what is outside the mind; so to understand the way in which the mind is able to construct such representations. Philosophy's central concern is to be a general theory of representation, a theory which will divide culture up into areas which represent reality well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it at all (despite their pretense of doing so) (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 3).

When representationalist and foundationalist discourse eliminated, Kantian “notion of philosophy as a tribunal of pure reason, upholding or denying the claims of the rest of culture” or neo- Kantian “notion of philosophy as a foundational discipline which ‘grounds’ knowledge-claims”, (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 4) accordingly, have no place in Rorty’s views. However, Rorty’s retort against Searle, that there is no presuppositional relationship between the practices of intellectual, academic, or scientific practices and the realist, representationalist philosophical beliefs, he notes, is *not* “put forward as a philosophical truth about the necessary, ahistorical relation of philosophy to the rest of culture.” “It is,” he says, “simply a sociological truth about the lack of interest that most people have in philosophy.” And adds

It is like the truth that the adoption of the ethics of suggested by St. Paul does not depend upon the Orthodox, as opposed to the Arian, position, on the relation between the First and Second Persons of the Trinity. That is a sociological truth about contemporary Christians, not an ahistorical truth about the relation between ethics and theology. Things were otherwise in the days when not only your physical safety but your choice of which charioteers to cheer for in the hippodrome depended upon your theological allegiances. (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 75)

As well as arguing that “philosophy does not make much difference to our practices”, he also says “it should not be allowed to do so.” (Rorty R. , Truth and Progress, 1998, p. 76). He gives a justification for this argument when he claims that

Philosophers on my side of the argument think that if we stop trying to give epistemological justifications for academic freedom [for instance], and instead give sociopolitical justifications, we shall be both more honest and more clear-headed. We think that disinterested, objective inquiry would not only survive the adoption of our philosophical views, but might survive in a desirably purified form. (Rorty R. , Truth and Progress, 1998, p. 69)

Rorty has a similar clash with the same realist-foundationalist attitude about science.

Searle criticizes him on this account:

There are some philosophers who think that we should stop thinking of science as corresponding to an independently existing reality. Rather, we should think that science in particular, and language in general, just gives us a set of devices for coping. On this view, language is for “coping,” as opposed to “matching” or “corresponding.” Thus according to Richard Rorty, the pragmatist “drops the notion of truth as correspondence with reality altogether, and says that modern science does not enable us to cope because it corresponds, it just plain enables us to cope.” (Searle, 1993, p. 76)

Searle in the above quotation takes correspondence to intrinsic reality as a strong enough presupposition that we cannot help but assuming in coping with the world and it is just not possible coping without corresponding. It is more or less saying that scientific work is successful because it manages, at least, to come closer to reality as it is in itself. In other words, if a scientific project works, then it must have hold onto truth in itself. Rorty, speaking as a pragmatist, says that he actually “shares with the positivist, the Baconian and Hobbesian notion that knowledge is power, a tool for coping with reality. But ... [a pragmatist] carries this Baconian point through to its extreme, as the positivist does not.” (Rorty R. , 1982, p. xvii).

Rorty’s argument, which Searle must have found unconvincing, is, in a historicist temperament, pointing out what actually happened with representationalist view so far. He argues “that several hundred years of effort have failed to make interesting sense of the notion ‘correspondence’ (either of thoughts to things or of words to things).” “Interesting” here is a metaphilosophically significant condition for Rorty. He uses it in a sense of being able to make a difference or a novelty in the series of different historical philosophical views. That is to say presupposing that there is an

objective truth waiting to be discovered out there has had no effect on the kind of accomplishment that makes us better at coping with the world. This instance also exemplifies one point that leads Rorty's metaphilosophy is the moral of history, which what history of philosophy teaches us about how we should adopt our attitude.

In this case Rorty says

The pragmatist takes the moral of this discouraging history to be that "true sentences work because they correspond to the way things are" is no more illuminating than "it is right because it fulfills the way things are" is no more illuminating than "it is right because it fulfills the Moral Law." Both remarks, in the pragmatist's eyes, are empty metaphysical compliments—harmless as rhetorical pats on the back to the successful inquirer or agent, but troublesome if taken seriously and "clarified" philosophically. (Rorty R. , 1982, p. xvii)

5.8. James Conant on Cruelty: 1984

Returning to Russell's prognosis that the difference in the judgment of a belief that it is true or false depends on the "outlook of the world," we can further confirm that Russell also stands at the very opposite of Rorty in terms of the pragmatic attitude towards truth and knowledge and its social repercussions. Thinking that pragmatism is "unwilling to admit 'stubborn facts'", he in a way concedes to Rorty's description of the "intentionalist notion" that "the world reaches up and hooks language in factual (e.g., causal) relationship, ... [and] we shall always be 'in touch with the world'" (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 289). Russell also connects this attitude to "the belief in human power, and ... the hopefulness engendered by machine production and the scientific manipulation of our physical environment"; an idea, he adds, which is supported by "many of Dr Dewey's supporters", as well (Russell, 2004, p. 871).

That means for Russell a philosophy of “social power”, which “make the philosophy of instrumentalism attractive to those who are more impressed by our new control over natural forces than by the limitations to which that control is still subject” (Russell, 2004, p. 872). If relying on social power as the solidarity of fellow human beings in the way to the well-being of a society is at least true for Rorty but Russell does not consider solidarity as an element of pragmatic attitude here. Even just the opposite, he regards it as hubris: “the sense of the collective power of the human communities ... revived by modern technique” (ibid. 873). He calls it a “cosmic impiety”, as “a grave danger” we will face when “[t]he concept of ‘truth’ as something dependent upon facts largely outside human control” is no more believed, and “a further step is taken on the road towards a certain kind of madness—the intoxication of power which invaded philosophy with Fichte, and to which modern men, whether philosophers or not, are prone” (ibid.). Russell deemed this realist view of truth as a “check upon pride ... inculcat[ing] the necessary element of humility” (ibid.).

What Rorty saw as a way to social benefit and happiness, he saw an “intoxication ... [which] is the greatest danger of our time, and that any philosophy which, however unintentionally, contributes to it is increasing the danger of vast social disaster.” (ibid.). Despite Russell’s contempt⁵⁴, Rorty does not think an overall praise of

⁵⁴ Rorty holds that “Pragmatism is often said to be a distinctively American philosophy. Sometimes this is said in tones of contempt, as it was by Bertrand Russell. Russell meant that pragmatism is a shallow philosophy, suitable for an immature country.” (Rorty R. , *Philosophy and Social Hope*, 1999, p. 23). However, Russell mentions both James and Dewey with high esteem in his *History of Western Philosophy* and tries to fix a misunderstanding between him and Dewey with an apology. He says:

pragmatism, “by people who suggest that it would be un-American, and thus immoral, not to be a pragmatist - for to oppose pragmatism is to oppose the democratic way of life” is “misguided,” as well because he maintains that “Philosophy and politics are not that tightly linked. There will always be room for a lot of philosophical disagreement between people who share the same politics” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 23).

James Conant sees a similar role for objective facts in “checking upon” an “intoxication of power” that leads to a social disaster in George Orwell’s *1984* and criticizes Rorty with “misreading,” “which illuminates the shortcomings of Rorty's preferred method of dissolving philosophical problems” (Conant, 2000, p. 268). Rorty’s own response to Conant in the same reader must be satisfying for anyone who wants to compare their arguments but there are a few points Conant leaves obscure. First of all, Conant claims that “Rorty is unable to read Orwell” (ibid., 269) and Rorty is aiming to “deprive us of the resources for saying” “many of the things

Thus, George Raymond Geiger, in a laudatory essay, says that Dr Dewey’s method ‘would mean a revolution in thought just as middle-class and unspectacular, but just as stupendous, as the revolution in industry of a century ago’. It seemed to me that I was saying the same thing when I wrote ‘Dr Dewey has an outlook which, where it is distinctive, is in harmony with the age of industrialism and collective enterprise. It is natural that his strongest appeal should be to Americans, and also that he should be almost equally appreciated by the progressive elements in countries like China and Mexico.’
To my regret and surprise, this statement, which I had supposed completely innocuous, vexed Dr Dewey, who replied: ‘Mr. Russell’s confirmed habit of connecting the pragmatic theory of knowing with obnoxious aspects of American industrialism ... is much as if I were to link his philosophy to the interests of the English landed aristocracy.’
For my part, I am accustomed to having my opinions explained (especially by Communists) as due to my connection with the British aristocracy, and I am quite willing to suppose that my views, like other men’s, are influenced by social environment. But if, in regard to Dr Dewey, I am mistaken as to the social influences concerned, I regret the mistake. (Russell, 2004, p. 736).

that Orwell himself is most concerned to be able to say—and to preserve as sayable for future generations” (ibid., 270). Similarly, throughout his critique Conant bases his claims on what Orwell really meant. However, what matters in this case is not what Orwell as the author of the novel thinks but what the novel reveals and that depends on the success of the critic’s interpretation. A novel is not a philosophical defense of a view, and the author cannot exert an authority in the meaning of his work even if he intends to do it. However, it is not clear whether Conant equates the narrator with the author.

Secondly, Conant keeps repeating his claim that Rorty is “obsessed” with tackling realist doctrines, but “obsession” cannot be a reason for failure. It depends on the result of what that “obsession” yields. Kant must have been really obsessed with the foundations of experience or Nietzsche with Christianity but that did not stop them reaching meaningful conclusions.

Contrary views on objective reality and the Party’s abuse of a doctrine are already apparent in the novel but another very simple observation would be Party’s social conditioning through oligarchic power. One of the thought criminals who shares the same cells with Winston is almost dying of hunger and given a piece of bread. At that moment a voice roars from the telescreen: “‘Burnstead!’ ‘2713 Burnstead J! Let fall that piece of bread.’ The chinless man dropped the piece of bread on the floor.” (Orwell, 1949, p. 194). The matrix is a lack of freedom to a degree that a starving person gives up eating on order. Under such circumstances what is at clash is not realist vs antirealist philosophies but a power struggle. Anything can be used against

people to kill individual liberty for the sake of the oligarch. O'Brien explains

Winston:

The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others. We are interested solely in power. Not wealth, or luxury or long life or happiness; in the power, pure power... We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship ... the object of power is power. (ibid., 217)

A reader, or a critic of a novel can choose different objects in salience such as power above and put her view in a plausible unity. If the Party seeks power for its own sake, it can implement any means, as they did with Nietzsche, or Socialism, or any other available idea. This confession of O'Brien is a strong endorsement of Rorty's precedence on freedom over truth, which we can question only under favorable circumstances.

5.9. Conceptions Dropped Out

A similar attitude was in modern physics against the traditional conception of "force", which was presupposed for the "change of motion" was then found "superfluous." It was a similar kind of reification to an idea of a subsistent reality to be caught and can be eliminated. Russell recapitulates this change of conception:

"Force," in Newton, is the cause of change of motion, whether in magnitude or direction. The notion of cause is regarded as important, and force is conceived imaginatively as the sort of thing that we experience when we push or pull. For this reason it was considered an objection to gravitation that it acted at a distance, and Newton himself conceded that there must be some medium by which it was transmitted. Gradually it was found that all the equations could be written down without bringing in forces. What was observable was a certain relation between acceleration and configuration; to

say that this relation was brought about by the intermediacy of the 'force' was to add nothing to our knowledge. Observation shows that planets have at all times an acceleration towards the sun, which varies inversely as the square of their distance from it. To say that this is due to the 'force' of gravitation is merely verbal, like saying that opium makes people sleep because it has a dormitive virtue. The modern physicist, therefore, merely states formulae which determine accelerations, and avoids the word 'force' altogether. 'Force' was the faint ghost of the vitalist view as to the causes of motions, and gradually the ghost has been exorcized. (Russell, 2004, pp. 578-579)

Russell, too, when talking about Aristotle's Categories, has a similar attitude toward "substance" and "essence" with that of Rorty's toward "truth." He says that these conceptions can only be "a linguistic convenience" but "transferred to metaphysics." They are "a mere imaginary hook, from which the occurrences are supposed to hang." But, he says, occurrences have "no need of a hook, any more than the earth needs an elephant to rest upon." So, he concludes, "'substance' is a metaphysical mistake, due to transference to the world-structure of the structure of sentences composed of a subject and a predicate." (Russell, 2004, p. 194).

In philosophy such hypostatization seems more acceptable and persistent than in physical sciences. A similar situation to Aristotelian "substance" is with that of "mind" according to Rorty.

Since to be concerned with philosophical matters was to be concerned with that which the eye cannot see nor the ear hear, both seventeenth-century nonextended substance and contemporary nonlocatable thoughts and feels were thought to be more philosophically respectable than the ghosts for whose peace religious believers pray. But contemporary philosophers, having updated Descartes, can be dualists without their dualism making the slightest difference to any human interest or concern, without interfering with science or lending any support to religion. For insofar as dualism reduces to the bare

insistence that pains and thoughts have no places, nothing whatever hangs on the distinction between mind and body. (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 68)

Russell speaks about a similar “exorcism of ghost” called “force” when he mentions Locke’s “refut[ation of] the scholastic doctrine of essence” in Chapter VI of Book III, “of the Names of Substances” and “how much metaphysical lumber it sweeps away”, which, he says, will only be realized by “only those who have allowed themselves to be afflicted by the scholastics”. Locke holds that “Essence, as we can know it, is purely verbal; it consists merely in the definition of a general term” and “To argue about ... essence is to argue about words”. Similarly, he says “Distinct species are not a fact of nature, but of language; they are distinct complex ideas with distinct names annexed to them”. Russell says, “This point of view was not generally accepted until Darwin persuaded men to adopt the theory of evolution by gradual changes.” (Russell, 2004, p. 557). Rorty sees, in a similar vein, “optional glosses” where Searle sees unquestionable propositions “without the practices themselves.” Where Searle sees presupposing an independently existing reality as “conditions of intelligibility,” Rorty sees “rhetorical flourishes designed to make practitioners feel they are being true to something big and strong: the Intrinsic Nature of Reality” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 82).

Even if Rorty argues, on various occasions, against the notion that our beliefs should match with a fact in the objective reality out there, his main point is that these debates do not yield any more positive results. Apparently Rorty does not think results are getting better as the debates over “correspondence” and “representation”

continue on more and more “harder cases” and he says it rather becomes “endless haggling” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 74). He claimed that “moral and social virtues” like “honesty, care, or truthfulness” would not be affected by dropping a philosophical presupposition such as realism as Searle defends it.

If neither realist-foundationalist nor pragmatist philosophy will make a difference in the social practices of academic, scientific, or other communities, then why should we adopt his views, Rorty reflects. One result would be a change in an attitude that he calls “physics-envy.” As a result of a representationalist viewpoint some disciplines are deemed to have higher contribution to knowledge than others. Rorty explains:

distinctions between disciplines will no longer be drawn in phallogocentric terms, such as “hard” and “soft.” Biologists and historians might stop looking down their noses at colleagues in other departments who cannot produce experimental or archival data in support of their conclusions. We might stop debating the pointless and tiresome question of whether doctoral dissertations in English literature constitute contributions to knowledge, rather than being merely expressions of opinion. Sociologists and psychologists might stop asking themselves whether they are following rigorous scientific procedures and start asking themselves whether they have any suggestions to make to their fellow citizens about how our lives, or our institutions, should be changed. (Rorty R. , 1998, pp. 69-70)

That is an attitude, Rorty notes, which has been prevalent among as well. It appears in Searle, Rorty quotes, when he mentions “literary frivolity” and “the more scientific portions of our civilization”, which is also an emblem of “the traditional alliance of analytical philosophy with the natural sciences against the humanities.” (Rorty R. , 1998, pp. 81, fn 21). To be more concrete, for instance, he relates that “In

the 1930s, the seedtime of analytic philosophy, the contrast between Carnap's respect for scientists and Heidegger's respect for poets was seen as a contrast between responsibility and frivolous irresponsibility" (ibid.).

5.10. Maturation

Another consequence of Rorty's antirepresentationalism is matter of longer term, he maintains that even if he "argued that philosophy does not make much difference to our practices and that it should not be allowed to do so" (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 76) . He rectifies the inconsistency with the pragmatist claim that "every difference must make a difference to practice" by assigning the pragmatist position a long-term significance, which he claims would be resulted with a "better tradition" than Searle's Western Rationalistic Tradition, which he thinks, "is *wrong*"⁵⁵ (ibid.). This position is closely connected with Dewey's pragmatism. Rorty sees his way of pragmatism as a step taken into the "maturation" of humanity. He often makes reference to changing religious beliefs and practices to make his antirepresentationalist point. The most prominent similarity is between the idea of an omnipotent god and a reality as it is in itself. Rorty, motivated by Dewey's view, sees this idea of God a step in the coping mechanism of humanity with the world. God was the constant surrogate parent standing firm to be trusted. But, Rorty says, "Dewey saw need as one we could outgrow. Just as the child outgrows the need for parental care and the need to believe in parental omnipotence and benevolence, so

⁵⁵ Rorty's emphasis.

we may in time outgrow the need to believe in divinities that concern themselves with our happiness ...” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 78).

Maturation poses an opposite expectation to that of an objective outside reality. The latter suggests a kind of “salvation” whether by hoping to meet outside the cave or by believing in coming closer to it. Maturation, in a social sense, requires self-sufficiency and responsibility, and can to a large extent be achieved by learning from experiences, taking necessary action to hinder negatively resulting processes happen again or reinforce ones that have the potential to carry things forward. For the objection against this picture of humanity Rorty quotes G.K. Chesterton, “pragmatism is a matter of human needs and one of the first of human needs is to be something more than a pragmatist.” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 76) Russell defends a similar thesis against Dewey about “the necessity of human mind to believe in absolute truths.”

It now becomes a matter of better identification of what humanity needs. What seems to be to Dewey’s advantage on this matter is that it sounds more plausible to take changing historical conditions into account whereas what Dewey called “absolutist” view persists in a “natural condition” as a necessity. Dewey maintains, according to Rorty, that the belief in the objective truth or other distinctions such as “theory and practice, mind and body, objective and subjective, morality and prudence” or other “binary oppositions of Western metaphysics” were to serve a novelty “in their time”:

they were neither confusions nor repressive devices nor mystifications. On the contrary, they were instruments that Greek thinkers used to change social conditions, often for the better. But over a couple of millennia, these instruments outlived their usefulness. Dewey thought that, just as many Christians had outgrown the need to ask whether the sentences of the Creed

correspond to objective reality, so civilization as a whole might outgrow the supposed necessity to believe in absolute truths. (Rorty R. , Truth and Progress, 1998, p. 77)

Plausibility of Dewey's pragmatic theory of truth as Rorty endorses it also consists in, as Dewey considers it to be, being

true in the pragmatic sense of truth: it works, it clears up difficulties, removes obscurities, puts individuals into more experimental, less dogmatic, and less arbitrarily sceptical relations to life. ... The pragmatist is quite content to have the truth of his theory in its working in these various ways, and to leave to the intellectualist the proud possession of [truth as] an unanalyzable, unverifiable, unworking property. (ibid., 78)

In the same way, what Chesterton thought was a necessary human need Dewey would think, is true so far as it serves a purpose, it is temporary and can be “outgrown”. Rorty would say it can be “sublimated or replaced” if it is deemed as part of some “deep emotional needs” as Western Rationalistic Tradition” is a “secularized version of the Western Monotheistic Tradition” (ibid., 76). He will call this replacement elsewhere “Take care of Freedom and Truth will take of itself” (Rorty R. , Take care of freedom and truth will take care of itself, Interviews with Richard Rorty, 2006), or “human solidarity” (Rorty R. , 1989, pp. 189-198). This suggestion reminds, Rorty's emphasis on what Dewey kept in Hegel; “the insight that ideas and movements that had begun as instruments of emancipation (Greek metaphysics, Christianity, the rise of bourgeoisie, the Hegelian System) had typically, over the course of time, turned into instruments of repression —into parts of what Dewey called ‘the crust of convention.’” (Rorty R. , 1998, pp. 77-78), or what Wittgenstein called “pictures that hold us captive” (ibid. 80).

That is to say that, among other things, it is time we got rid of worn-out distinctions of the so-called Western Rationalistic Tradition and started worrying about the environment that could generate new ideas. That is what Rorty's priority is, which may be stated in other words, borrowing from Dewey, "Change in philosophical opinion is ... in the service of sociopolitical progress" (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 79). It means that it is more important to keep and move forward "the practices and traditions that make up academic freedom" than to guard a truth theory, whether representationalist or antirepresentationalist (ibid.), which would pose an example to an "immature need" (ibid., 80). What can stand for a "need" for the "maturation" of humanity in this sense, according to Rorty is solidarity, for instance, and in the same sense he finds a "comfort" derived from "being true to something big and strong: the Intrinsic Nature of Reality" by guarding some propositions as tenets of rationality an "immature" one because, he says, the former is "as unnecessary and as potentially dangerous as the comfort derived from the conviction that one is obeying the Will of God," (ibid. 82), the latter requires "rely[ing] on one another" (ibid.). In the kind of post-metaphysical culture that Rorty draws, he says there is no promise of getting rid of the same "perpetual oscillation between skepticism and dogmatism" but there will be "a few [less] excuses for fanaticism and intolerance" (ibid., 83).

5.11. Need to Believe

Bertrand Russell confirms this "deep emotional need" Chesterton brings up when confronting Pragmatism but takes care of it separating "emotional" and "intellectual" states. He, too, seeks refuge in philosophy, at the beginning of his "intellectual

journey” in a similar way to Rorty. He says, “When ... [he] was young he hoped to find religious satisfaction in philosophy”, because of which he finds “something nonhuman to admire” in “the eternal Platonic world”, “even after ... [he] abandon[s] Hegel” (Russell, 2009, p. 21). This kind of a need to believe in something beyond human would be what Chesterton meant when he said, “one of the first of human needs is to be something more than a pragmatist” and what Dewey, and Rorty, claims to be discardable during the course of maturation. Russell admits that he

always ardently desired to find some justification for the emotions inspired by certain things that seemed to stand outside human life and to deserve feelings of awe”. ... such as the starry heavens and a stormy sea on a rocky coast; [things] in part of the vastness of the scientific universe, both in space and time, as compared to the life of mankind; in part of the edifice of impersonal truth, especially truth which, like that of mathematics, does not merely describe the world that happens to exist.” (Russell, 2009, p. 21)

Yet he takes it a matter of “emotions” and “though ... [his] emotions violently rebel,” “intellectually” he “goes with the humanists” and is “unable to believe that, in the world as known, there is anything ... [he] can value outside human beings, and, to a much lesser extent, animals.” So “emotionally” he was not consoled by Philosophy like Boethius, but “intellectually” he “found as much satisfaction in philosophy as anyone could reasonably have expected” by his logical analysis (ibid., 22).

Not only Rorty and Dewey but Kant deals with “maturation” as a phase in human social history. In his “Answer to the question: ‘What is Enlightenment’,” 1784, he centers his explication on “*Unmüdugkeit*”, immaturity. He maintains that it is mainly incurred by “fear”, a fear of thinking for oneself. Enlightenment, he says, is freeing

oneself from all institutions that impose shackles to one's thinking by different dogmas, or learned behavior that induces one to laziness to act for oneself. He portrays "matters of religion as the focal point of enlightenment" and "religious immaturity as the most pernicious and dishonorable variety of all." (Kant, 1991, p. 10). It is a similar kind of maturity that Rorty promotes in his pragmatism. But ironically, rationalist scientific thinking was the main leverage in the age of Enlightenment against the traditional and religious dogma in letting humans emerge from their immaturity.

What Rorty suggests is that after rationality eventually sealed its victory over dogma can focus on its more liberating elements that can work for today, such as secularism, which he and Habermas agree on being "the Enlightenment's central achievement" and consequently, Rorty says, both consider the same mission "as our predecessors': getting our fellow citizens to rely less on tradition, and to be more willing to experiment with new customs and institutions" (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 168). Secularism apparently bears more potential than to lead humanity out of religious dogma; it can lead a society to shed its other remains of the "crust of tradition" envisaged in Rorty's pragmatist mature culture. Rorty thinks secularism of the Enlightenment may be formulated as "that everything we say and do and believe is a matter of fulfilling human needs and interests", and that would equal to saying "that human beings are on their own, and have no supernatural light to guide them to the Truth" (Rorty R. , 1999, p. xxvii). In this respect of a thoroughly secular society Rortian pragmatism is a continuation of the Enlightenment ideal.

Rorty shares Kant's attitude toward the Enlightenment by repudiation of a similar authority, that is "something non-human, whether the Will of God or the Intrinsic Nature of Reality". Getting rid of an arbitrary authority is actually an ideal target for any movement that has a bid to progress. Tom Sorell argues that despite one of the hallmarks of analytic philosophy is "to do away with arguments from authority and professions of discipleship", "critical reflection to any subject-matter" has a limit and adds that "being a kind of philosophy", "it has a range of characteristic concerns, and understanding what makes them characteristic is partly historical understanding", which is "essential for addressing the philosophical question of the nature of philosophy itself" (Sorell, 2005, pp. 5-6). This is the kind of repudiation which, Rorty maintains, to be led even further than Dewey did, who took "the point of human life to be free cooperation with our fellow humans in order to improve our situation" and believed with such a spirit, democracy needs a "more thorough-going secularism than either Enlightenment rationalism or nineteenth-century positivism had achieved". What he offers is to set aside "any authority save that of a consensus of our fellow humans" (Rorty R., 2021, p. 1). This is also an instance of Rorty's historicist attitude of what we can learn from history. Rather than pushing the responsibility, the point being "improving our situation", to an arbiter, whether a God, reason, revelation, science, or truth, it comes down to us to make the decision. It is a matter of not making an arbiter out of any authority other than us as history taught that it was a number of fellow humans each time that stepped in to save the day, whether Jesus, Pericles, Newton, or The *Encyclopédistes*. Rorty correspondingly holds freedom over above all and thinks that "truth will take care of itself" only we can take care of freedom.

The problem Rorty observes with the notion of truth is that when it is stripped off from the context that gives its meaning and transferred to daily, scientific, and philosophical domains there arise a sense that there is a fixed truth somewhere out there waiting to be discovered. He observes it as a remnant of a period in the history of ideas in which religion and dogma was the authority shaping the spirit of an age. As the Age of Science takes over religion, values of thought develop accordingly, in which case the presupposition of an objectively universal truth, as Rorty sees it, has become increasingly irrelevant and even impeding to the progress of today's thought. One root problem on this issue between him and his critics is about the position of this conception of truth; whether it is a presupposition that could and should be discarded or it is an axiomatic value that we cannot afford to lose. Rorty would say that the rather "synthetic" character of the history of thought does not work on axioms. "Play[ing] the new off the old", on the other hand, as the way Rorty sees history of ideas, makes it convenient for him to discard truth as one more "contingent" parameter of a certain period, even if for others who tend to put human thought on axiomatic principles would not accept to lose truth as one basic tenet of our thinking.

Rorty's criticism is not only toward the idea of objective truth but a whole atmosphere of thought which requires it as such. A question at this point might be raised: whether the idea of truth shapes the whole system of ideas or a certain description of the history of ideas requires a certain conception of truth. Regarding truth in this sense, "history" plays a more basic role for Rorty than truth shaping his

philosophy. It is by considering history as a picture of contingent events that he does not see truth having so deep roots as it is commonly thought. It more seems to be a matter of resonance for Rorty; the concept of—objective—truth, once resonated with ideas to produce an effect but it lost its resonance to procure a solution to problems posed by today.

5.12. Frivolity

Rorty, in his reply to Searle, quite a few times refers to the latter's phrase "literary frivolity." It is, according to Searle the style of the "Nietzscheanized Left", which he claims "is the way [they] conduct intellectual life" (Searle, 1993, p. 78). Here the "Nietzscheanized Left" is the "postmodern subculture" that would stand for the opposite of the values that Searle hold the Western Rationalistic Tradition guards and "literary frivolity" suggests a sham originality under the guise of literature, insincere intellectual activities with an "anything goes" attitude. Rorty actually thinks that is the difference that Searle thinks there is between them: the latter "with a decent respect for hard fact, and other associated intellectual virtues" and Rorty as "someone who relishes, and helps encourage, ... 'the general air of vaguely literary frivolity that pervades the Nietzscheanized Left'" (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 80). It is, Rorty states, "characteristic of the traditional alliance if analytic philosophy with natural sciences against the humanities", an attitude also appeared when "Carnap's respect for scientists" was seen as a semblance of "responsibility" while "Heidegger's respect for poets" "frivolous irresponsibility" (Rorty R. , 1998, pp. 81, fn.21).

Searle comes up with an example. Against “charges that they have abandoned their educational mission” humanities departments were faced with, as a reply, “six heads of prominent humanities institutes” write a pamphlet “issued by “The American Council of Learned Societies”, saying that “As the most powerful modern philosophies and theories have been demonstrating, claims of disinterest, objectivity and universality are not to be trusted, and themselves tend to reflect local historical conditions.⁵⁶” Searle adds that they also back up their cause by arguing that “claims to objectivity are usually disguised forms of power seeking”. (Searle, 1993, p. 69). Rorty admits the fault. He says, “that dreadful sentence” does take it for granted a view as if it was defended by Rorty, and other “people who believe that the philosophical views ... [he] share[s] with Kuhn and Derrida entail that the universities have no further use for notions like ‘disinterest’ and ‘objectivity.’ (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 69).

In his autobiographical “Trotsky and Wild Orchids” Rorty already presents unwelcoming comments about his views and there are compilations of critical essays about his views in which he sets forth his replies for each⁵⁷. But there is a trend of judgment, “adopting his views for frivolous reasons” that Rorty specifically rejects. This detail is important in clearing Rorty, and misrepresentations made up of hasty categorizations and to see that “what philosophy is good for” is a genuine question. Against such charges for adopting his views Rorty feels the need to provide some

⁵⁶ The American Council of Learned Societies, *Speaking for the Humanities*, ACSL Occasional Paper, No. 7, (1989), 18. Quoted by Searle.

⁵⁷ Brandom, Robert B. ed. *Rorty and His Critics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. Festenstein, Matthew and Simon Thompson, *Richard Rorty: Critical Dialogues*. Malden: Blackwell, 2001.

autobiographical information for closure. Some critics “from both ends of political spectrum” saw Rorty’s position in philosophy and its relation to politics is so odd that it cannot be adopted sincerely and he would “say anything to get a gasp” since “he is just amusing himself by contradicting everybody else” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 5).

The way he is charged with such frivolousness indicates a perspective that his views are construed in a similar fashion Chomsky evaluates “postmodernist cults” of e.g., “Derrida, Lacan, Lyotard, Kristeva, and partly Foucault” (Chomsky, 2012). That is, Rorty is sometimes depicted as if he acts in accordance with “Paris Irrationalism” like those intellectuals “who, when they cannot come up with novel ideas, tend to produce views for the sake of making it to the front pages, by “tearing everything to shreds” for instance, or they can say “everything was wrong, the Enlightenment was wrong,” or “there is no foundationalism” (Chomsky, Noam Chomsky speaks to Dutch activists on various topics, 2011). There is a postmodern tenor caught in Rorty that makes him accept the title “willy-nilly,” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 4). But it is his “philosophical views he shares with Nietzsche and Dewey” that forbid him to draw on “objective value” and “objective truth” and corroborate “the so-called postmodernists in most of their criticisms of traditional philosophical talk about ‘reason’” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 5).

This claim does not only concern his antirepresentationalist views as in Searle. Rorty’s political stance, as he names himself as a cold war bourgeois liberal, has a contribution in such allegations. Especially his defending a kind of “national pride”, which he equals with “individual self-respect” (Rorty R. , 1998, pp. 1-38) and seeing

as “good example of the best kind of society so far invented” and with “Whitman and Dewey... as opening a prospect on illimitable democratic vistas” while not forgetting “its past and present atrocities and vices, and ... its continuing eagerness to elect fools and knaves to high office” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 4). While his philosophical views which are branded as “postmodern”, his patriotism sounds offensive to the left, people “who admire Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida as much as [he does]” because they are the people, Rorty says, who happen to see the US not in the best terms and are mostly united “in what Jonathan Yardley called the ‘America Sucks Sweepstakes’” (ibid.). The problem with the right, he says, is what he shares with the “so-called postmodernists ... in most of their criticism of traditional philosophical talk about ‘reason’” and his refusal to call a “democratic society” as “grounded in Rational First Principles” or the embodiment of “truth and reason”, which all in all make his views “count... as the ‘treason of clerks’” (ibid., 4)

5.13. Reception: Laudatory

Harold Bloom’s “the most interesting philosopher in the world today” is one of the most cited designations of him (Rorty R. , 1989). He has become one of “The Most Talked-About Philosopher” (Gottlieb, 1991). He was said to have “‘rescued philosophy from its analytic constraints’ and returned it ‘to core concerns of how we as a people, a country, and humanity live in a political community’” (Robbins J. W., 2011, p. vii). He did not lack commendation indeed: his influence was taken to be “the greatest on the rise of American Pragmatism” and the greatest since John Dewey (Guignon & Hiley, 2003, p. 1), (Zabala, 2017). His views were “one of the most exciting developments in philosophy today” and *PMN* is “a visionary work that

challenges us to rethink our understanding of the philosophical enterprise” (Williams, 2009, p. xiii). He were to be “invented even if he did not exist”, he was “a Socratic gadfly”, a “heroic prophet of new dawns” (Rorty R. , 2006, p. xi), and “a lightning rod for conflicting currents in recent philosophy” (Guignon & Hiley, 2003, p. 1).

Rorty himself can be quite humble in self-estimation but it must be noted that he was nevertheless appreciated by many of the notable contemporary philosophers such as Jurgen Habermas, Martha Nussbaum, Donald Davidson, Richard Bernstein, Stanley Fish, Gianni Vattimo, and Robert Brandom. Rorty developed a distinctive sound, which is more conversational than argumentative, valuing more of narrative than argument. Mark Edmundson reminds that Rorty began to be noticed, “in the early 1980s, it was the moment of high theory,” when “academic writers stood on their toes, or even went on stilts. To use Freud’s language, you could say that they talked from the super-ego, and not from the ego, the self,” and it was in such an atmosphere that Rorty “brought intellectual talk a step closer to the marketplace and the everyday push and toss of life” (Metcalf, 2007). Nevertheless, the intensity of the tone that exceeds professional moderateness in many commentators signifies how radical Rorty must sound to some ears.

5.14. Negative Side

The contents and attitude of his works have been marked by controversy besides sparking interest. Reactions were by no means all congratulatory. In fact, one of the distinct features of the name “Rorty” is its association with controversy. While

having been known as a noted scholar in the analytic tradition, PMN and CIS, besides giving him a worldwide name, caused enough stir to carry him to headlines such as “Thinker with no belief in truth” (The Telegraph, 1999), “The Man Who Killed Truth” (BBC, 2003), “The Provocateur’s Philosopher” (Sartwell, 2007), “The End of Philosophy?” (Skinner, 1981), and “The Anti-philosophy of Richard Rorty” (Scholle, 2000). An obituary article in *The Times* dubbed him the “iconoclastic” philosopher who “dismissed millennia of philosophical heritage, as well as den[ying] objective truth” (Richard Rorty, 2007). He was subjected to clobbering critiques, some of which reached to an antagonistic degree. Rumana underlines the fact that among two thousand entries in his secondary bibliography, “only a small percentage are friendly to Rorty” (Rumana, 2002, p. xi). The great deal of antagonistic responses from a wide environment notwithstanding, in their 2021 entry on Richard Rorty for the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Ramberg and Dieleman note that there is a growing interest in his work, given the continuing publications on him since his death, and the grim sound of his appraisals have been “softening” as his contribution to political thought for a better future gaining special appreciation (Ramberg & Dieleman, 2021).

Simon Blackburn categorizes Rorty under the same domain as Wittgenstein, Quine, Sellars, and Dewey, whom he labels as “licentious thinkers and cultists, abusers of their own minds and enemies of ‘ours’, who, he thinks, practice the same style of philosophy that he calls “anything goes” (Blackburn, 2005, p. 139). In his review of Robert Brandom’s *Rorty and His Critics* he claims that Rorty has way of “refusal to engage in argument” and an “extraordinary gift for ducking and weaving and laying

smoke” (Guignon & Hiley, 2003, p. 30). Susan Haack is an avid critic of Rorty, and reproaches him on a number of points: for “vulgar pragmatism,” which, she refers as “self-styled”, for denying “disinterested truth” and thus “intellectual integrity” and vainly following a “revolutionary” style (Haack, 2016), (Haack, 1995), (Haack, 1998), (Haack, 1998). Joseph Margolis refers to Rorty as the “architect of the deformation of American Philosophy,” i.e., that of Quine, Davidson, Sellars, and Goodman, with his ad hoc arguments (Margolis, 2000).

Rorty emphasized the fact that he was attacked from both sides of the political spectrum. The conservatives did not like him; he was found “nihilistic, relativistic, and deconstructing” and faced with a historically familiar charge: of “weakening the moral fiber of the young”. Journalist and writer Neal Kozody thought American youth would be led astray with his “cynical and nihilistic views”; Christian cleric and writer Richard Neuhaus thought his ironism was just ill-fitted for American values; and political philosopher Harvey Mansfield declared him to be a “bigger malefactor than Dewey” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 3). Sir Roger Scruton, who was described as “the greatest modern conservative thinker”, philosopher and also government advisor, is apparently disposed to take Rorty adversely as one of the other “unreliable” post-moderns (Scruton, 2007). George Will, conservative political commentator and journalist, finds *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth Century America*, “radiating contempt for the country,” and Rorty “knowing nothing about the real America” and “despising most Americans” (Will, 1998). This is, ironically, where Rorty criticized cultural Left for carrying a “semi-conscious anti-Americanism from the late sixties” (Rorty R. , 1998, pp. 98-99) and pointed out “national pride”

(Rorty R. , 1998, p. 38). A rightist foundation puts Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* in their list of the so called 50 Worst Books of the 20th Century (Guignon & Hiley, 2003, p. 29), along with John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1916), Theodor Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman's *After the Cataclysm* (1979), John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971), Bertrand Russell's *Why I Am Not a Christian* (1936) and *Christianity and Social Crisis* (1907) by Walter Rauschenbusch, (Henrie, Myers, & Nelson, 2014) one of the leaders of the Social Gospel movement with an ideal of social justice, and maternal grandfather of Rorty. Meanwhile on the left, political theorist Sheldon Wolin took him as an "elitist intellectual snob"; for the literary critic and "Britain's leading Marxist thinker" Terry Eagleton, he was "not taking socio-economic hardship of masses seriously with a belief in his ironism"; *Der Spiegel* proclaimed that he "attempted to look yuppie regression look good"; Jonathan Culler, literary theorist and "one of Derrida's chief disciples and expositors" claimed that he was "defending a version of pragmatism suitable to the age of Reagan" (Rorty R. , 1999, pp. 3-4). Steven Metcalf relates that "bien pensant left" finds him a "political quietist" and "an airy-fairy Proustian snob" (Metcalf, 2007).

5.15. Reactions against His Politics

In 2016, just after the election of Donald Trump to presidency on November 6, Rorty posthumously hit the headlines (Helmore, 2016), (Senior, 2016), (Mathis-Lilley, 2016), (Friedersdorf, 2017), (Illing, 2019) . A professor from Queens's University Law School posted a picture of three paragraphs from *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in the Twentieth-Century America*, which was published in 1998, on

Twitter⁵⁸ and set the wheels in motion to circulate and make Rorty sort of an internet sensation. He was greeted as the late philosopher who foresaw the rise of a strongman in the USA. His prediction of a future political situation in the extract is similar to Carl Schmitt's depiction of the election of an anti-democratic group in a democratic system and its "closing the door of legality through which it had entered" (Niesen, 2007, p. 5).

"[S]omething will crack" Rorty says, referring to an elected "strongman" who would, as a result of "populist movements... [which are] likely to overturn constitutional governments" (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 89), disturb the democratic and egalitarian culture acquired prior to him, in a way comparable to what happened in the Weimar Germany. According to Rorty, is the scariest upshot of the growing economic inequality in the US and old Western democracies that began after the nineteen-sixties and reached a peak with economic globalization. The autocrat's ego is inflated by the non-suburban electorate's illusion of him as a David against the Goliath of global financial powers. Nevertheless, soon, says Rorty, he will

make peace with the international super-rich, just as Hitler made his with the German industrialists. He will invoke the glorious memory of the Gulf War to provoke military adventures which will generate short-term prosperity. He will be a disaster for the country and the world. People will wonder why there was so little resistance to his evitable rise. Where, they will ask, was the American Left? Why was it only rightists like Buchanan who spoke to the workers about the consequences of globalization? Why could not the Left channel the mounting rage of the newly dispossessed? (Rorty R. , 1998, pp. 90-91)

⁵⁸ Lisa Kerr. Richard Rorty, Achieving our Country, 1998 pic.twitter.com/BV9cNSzovJ, lisa kerr (@coleenlisa) [November 9, 2016](#).

With this sudden excitement about him, *AOC* sold out and was reprinted for the first time since 2010 (Senior, 2016). Other pieces that similarly identify social knots are not really hard to find in *AOC* but before they are known, the excitement created by the passage soon waned.

Rorty's principal hope is "achieving" the US as a country of social and economic justice just as the "progressive" spirit was launched at the end of the nineteenth century, continued by the New Deal and established the leftist mood until the 1960s (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 8). He understands progress as "measured by the extent to which we have made ourselves better than we were in the past and a matter of solving problems rather than getting closer to something specifiable in advance" (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 28).

Rorty's political views were deemed "banal" by some, and he was called a "liberal absolutist" who poses a threat by laying claim on the definitions such as "goodness, justice, and truth (Linker, 2000). His Deweyan stress on the element of contingency in "our conscience and aesthetic taste" according to the "cultural environment" as place and time (Rorty R. , 1999, pp. 15,16) brings charges of "cultural relativism". He was an anti-communist supporting the reformist left and their achievements of the New Deal and the Progressive Movement (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 58). His defense of social democratic vista does not lead him to support socialist ends, moreover, he does not exclude a "national pride" of American culture. His attitude toward the Cold War and his anticommunism is a source of contention. His "leftmost students — who are also his favorite students", cannot take his "cold war liberalism" seriously; as if

they heard the name of a “particularly tasteless horror film” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 58). It is interpreted as a type of liberalism, by Richard Bernstein, his friend and colleague, which is close to “an apologia for the status quo” and despite his Deweyan bid, Bernstein says, it is discarded by his mentor as “irrelevant and doomed” (Bernstein R. J., 1987, p. 541). His conspicuous “avant-garde, ‘radical’ postmodern playfulness” and “old-fashioned cold war liberalism” are not usually deemed a good mixture (Bernstein R. J., 1987, p. 556), which makes his attribution of precedence to freedom over truth and democracy over philosophy. This attitude, for Bernstein, is “little more than an ideological apologia for an old-fashioned version of cold war liberalism dressed up in fashionable "post-modern" discourse (Bernstein R. J., 1987, p. 556). What Rorty concludes from such disparaging criticism is that the right cannot tolerate philosophical de-grounding of values like democracy or moral responsibilities from a permanent domain of truth and the left just does not take his bourgeois liberalism acceptable (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 5). So, he was “complacent” for the left and “irresponsible” for the right (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 4).

Despite liberalism having an association with hands-free capitalism, Cold War Liberalism of the USA holds more like European social democratic policies in terms of social welfare programs and individual freedom. Rorty’s political choices seem more related to his pragmatic convictions than for “frivolous reasons,” as he saw positive consequences of implementation of progressive movements such as the New Deal, which is leftist in character, and an economic interventionism for public good. Rorty’s liberalism is in the end loyal to one principle borrowed from Judith Shklar, that “cruelty is the worst thing we do” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. xv). But the question is

how would “getting rid of old dualisms” do this? These are “a set of philosophical distinctions (appearance-reality, matter-mind, made-found, sensible-intellectual, etc.), which Dewey called “a brood and nest of dualisms” that “dominate the history of Western philosophy, and can be traced back to one or another passage in Plato's writings.” What Rorty stresses on, following Dewey, is that “The vocabulary which centers on these traditional distinctions has become an obstacle to our social hopes” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. xii).

In *AOC* he surveys the role of American left in the cultural and economic progress of the country. The “left” as he uses it is inclusive of “liberals,” who “promote mostly the same causes and think about the problems of the US in pretty much the same terms” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 42). The blending at the same time reflects his reaction to Marxist imperative on the term and he proposes “reformist left”, instead of the “Old Left”, to call all those who had fought, between 1900 and 1964, for the social and democratic rights of the people (ibid., 43). Putting liberals and leftists together as such, though, have been controversial then and now. The New Left of the 60s and 70s rejected any association with liberalism and some even considered being “liberal” a “political epithet” (Isserman, 2001, p. 276) and currently under Trump presidency the split is still an issue in the Democratic Party, according to Pete Davis, left wingers think liberals remain within a larger rightist rhetoric and liberals charge the leftist side of not grasping how real politics works (Davis, 2017). Rorty uses “New Left” note very differently from its general description (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 43), as mainly a student based movement of the 60s and 70s, SDS, Students for a Democratic Society as the leading organization, and having an large role in changing

social outlook toward feminism, racial segregation, gender roles, and sexual orientation (Gosse, 2005, pp. 5-6). Lastly there is his contemporary “academic left” of the nineties, who he also refers as the “cultural left”, which has a more abstract vision as opposed to the more pragmatic reformist left (Rorty R. , 1998, pp. 78, 92-93).

In this frame of reference, Rorty’s political views seem to have been centered around his “teenage” cold war liberalism (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 58) regarding he was an anti-communist but certainly a leftist especially supporting the reformist left and their achievements of the New Deal and the Progressive Movement, he defended all the values of social democracy (ibid.) as he puts it himself. Although Rorty explains his philosophical position and what he means by being such a “liberal” as he is, it is still taken controversial. According to Richard Bernstein he defends a type of liberalism, which is “a little more than an apologia for the status quo” and despite Deweyan pragmatism is one of his main pillars, liberalism was already discarded by his mentor as “irrelevant and doomed” (Bernstein R. J., 1987, p. 541) . Historian A. Hartman thinks it is unusual for a thinker like Rorty, to be committed to both a “liberal cold warrior” and “post-modern” way of thinking, whose representatives are typically for a much radical left and would not really approve such a liberal attitude, which is similar to Bernstein charges: “little more than an ideological *apologia* for an old-fashioned version of Cold War liberalism dressed up in fashionable "post-modern" discourse' (Hartman & Haberski, 2017) .

Rorty points out a passive attitude with the new “academic left” that the “old school” did not fail to stand up to similar circumstances of economic injustice and political reactionary tendencies. However, he does not disregard contributions of the modern left in cultural and identity politics, such as gay rights, feminism, and ethnic equality by exposing what Rorty calls “socially accepted sadism” and making discriminations on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity socially and morally “unacceptable,” which the old school left missed back in the 40s and 50s. However, Rorty observes that the rhetoric of the American left has changed since they “broke alliance with the unions” in the sixties (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 14). He stresses on the risks of leftist intellectuals’ assuming a “spectatorial and retrospective” role and inability of affecting real politics. Involving “public debate” with cultural politics is, for Rorty, helping the rightist agenda by avoiding direct actions such as “proposing new laws,” or “building a consensus on the need for specific reforms” (Rorty R. , 1998, pp. 14-15). In this context he brings to notice what seems to be the popular conduct of the new, mostly academic left that leads to stagnation.

A group of socialist writers, poets, and critics known as the New York intellectuals has significance for Rorty as he grew up among them and they pose as an early example of his motives in philosophy; public concerns and private creative ambition. His parents, James and Winifred Rorty, were active members of this circle whose members are considered as “radicals” and who secured themselves a historical place especially in 30s and 40s American intellectual history and Rorty was a juvenile insider. The group was sometimes referred as the American Bloomsbury but they were also known with their prominent socialist political activism and a deep

commitment to the social betterment (Atlas, 1985) and almost became a reference point for the definition of the term “public intellectual” (Gewen, 2008). A notable number of these intellectuals were Jewish immigrants from Europe with “secular, radical, and universalist values” (Howe, 2014, pp. 84, 85): Lionel Trilling, Irving Howe, Hannah Arendt, and Susan Sontag being among them.

They were usually associated with anti-communism and Trotskyism after breaking ties with the Communist Party due largely to being disillusioned by the intervention of Moscow and Stalin’s policies. *Modern Monthly*, *Commentary*, *The Nation*, *Dissent*, (McLaughlin, 2009, p. 1157) and especially *Partisan Review* (Gross, 2008, p. 29) are the literary magazines they were mainly affiliated with they became an indispensable part of their history. Patrick Baert calls it a “positioning⁵⁹” medium, through which they settled as literary, social, and political critics of the pre-war US. In this respect it served like the journal *Les Temps modernes*, which Sartre, Camus, and Beauvoir used to “position” themselves (Baert, 2016, p. 166). Literature and politics being their working domain, Trilling portrays the group as advancing “the activity of politics ... with the imagination under the aspect of mind” (Atlas, 1985). One of their most valued contributions was that they introduced European Modernism in the US by their writings on poets and novelists like T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Franz Kafka without regarding their political views. The group continued their name in the cultural arena until they fade away through the 1980s.

⁵⁹ “Positioning theory” belongs to Patrick Baert, sociologist and social theorist, which refers to “process through which intellectuals, like other people, attribute characteristics to themselves” (Baert, 2016, p. 166).

The problematic of the “public - private” is one of the main motives for Rorty’s philosophy and being a “public philosopher” seems to be more than a coincidence for him. He evidently had concrete experience relating to cruelty and his understanding of social justice is frequently accompanied by his concern for “abuse of the weak by the strong” to an extent that he even advises American “cultural left” to “put a moratorium on theory” and “kick its philosophy habit” (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 91) for the sake of effecting positive changes in society. He urges the “reformist left” get over their spectatorial role and revive a role of active agency as they managed before the 1960s. His emphasis on social justice, which even bypasses philosophy, pertains to his dissociation of public and the private problematic and himself as a “public intellectual” rather like his parents and grandfather, and his tribute to them.

5.16. Controversy over His Construal of Philosophers

His construal of some philosophers integrated in his philosophy is another point of contention. It was almost deemed eisegesis and there are occasional critical essays assertively titled in a pattern, “save ... from Rorty.” Obviously these critics felt the urge to correct Rorty about his way of reading e.g. Heidegger (Caputo, 1983), (Guignon C. B., 1986); Wittgenstein (Crary, 2002); Dewey (Alexander, 1980), (Gouinlock, 1995), (Campbell, 1984), (Lavine, 1995); Dewey, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger to be reconcilable in any way (Janik, 1989); Nietzsche (Conway, 1991), Peirce (Haack, 1993), Gadamer (Mitscherling, 1989), (Mitscherling, 1987), or Orwell (Conant, 2000). Quine himself did not agree some of the views Rorty attributed to him, such as when he “overstated [his] negativity” in denying in any involvement of “matter of fact ... in attributions of meaning to utterances, beliefs to

people, and aspirations to cultures” (Quine, 1990). Davidson comes to terms with Rorty about “pragmatism” and “truth” (Davidson, 1990).

In a similar vein his interpretation of certain theories, methodologies, problematics, concepts, or doctrines that comprise his philosophy have been the object of disputation, for instance, historicism (Zammito, 2006), ethnocentrism (Visker, 1999), liberalism (Anderson, 1991), (Beiner, 1991) , hermeneutics (Dreyfus, 1980), irony (Conway, 1991), (Oleson, 2012), public-private split (Toro, 2013), (Bernstein R. J., 1987) (Bernstein J. M., 1992), (Guignon & Hiley, 1990), humanism (Ballacci, 2017), relativism (Allen J. G., 1992), eliminative materialism (Benjamin, *Alice through the Looking Glass: A Psychiatrist Reads Rorty's Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 1991) pragmatism (Bacchi, 'Pragmatism' Be Damned: Richard Rorty's Death Wish for Feminism, 1992), (Fraser, 2002) (Elshtain, 2003), and solidarity (Geras, 1995).

His turn toward literature in his proposed domain of philosophy as “conversation” is found irrelevant to literature (Fischer, 1984). His view of materialism and natural sciences bearing no better view of the world than other forms of intellectual or artistic disciplines is objected (Gutting, 1999), and similarly Rorty’s rejection of the notion of necessary truth is considered shallow and his materialism “crude or dogmatic” (Hartshorne, 1995). While Rorty presents his philosophy more like an “offer” or “taking a plunge” than a doctrine, it was viewed as a cul-de-sac since such an idea of philosophy was found unaffordable considering it only leads to “irrationalism” and would undermine a whole solid philosophical tradition and “prospects of democratic liberalism” (Johnsen, 1999). Anti-essentialism is another

Rortian characteristic conviction, but it is thought to be unable to discard the intuition of human uniqueness, which is considered to be basic in understanding ourselves (Letson, 1995). His edification-oriented philosophy proposal was even accounted to be a result of boredom with his life (Levi, 1981).

The conception of truth, as it appears, occupies a central place in Rorty on different accounts. His approach to the notion of truth, being possibly his most controversial side, correspondingly incites the most severe criticism. Truth as problematic is not only a segment of his views, but it also acts almost like a fulcrum through which he could lever up his metaphilosophy as well. His criticism of truth is also a historical criticism of philosophy, connecting to pragmatism, antirepresentationalism, and even his cold war liberalism. Nevertheless, his perception of Truth, with a capital T, an asset independent from any human factor, as an eliminable element from philosophical and other discourses, was found to be an impairer of coherent bodies of intellectual, ethical, scientific, or social edifices, besides philosophy. It is a common allegation against Rorty that he cannot escape from relativism, despite his direct contentions (Putnam H. , 2000), (Case, 1995), and (Gallagher, 1984).

His philosophy is believed to lead to nihilism due to its stress on “ethnocentrism”, “ridicule of rationality and truth”, and contingency of selfhood (Colapietro, 1987), (Isenbeg & Thursby, 1985). His understanding of philosophy as a way of “continuing the conversation of the West”, was rejected and his dismissal of “grounding” and preferring it over reason was believed to serve in the end to some power groups or even brute force to control the so-called conversation according to “the interests of

the status quo” who would determine the meaning of truth at their will (Comay, 1986), (Bontekoe, 1990). Like Simon Blackburn, Norman Geras takes Rorty advocating an “anything goes” attitude and maintains that a lack of belief at such extend in “truth” will inevitably spoil the belief in justice as well (Geras, 1995).

CHAPTER 6

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY GOOD FOR?

Rorty's criticisms concerning Analytical philosophy are different from those of any other postmodern philosopher in having an insider perspective. The situation is similar to Wittgenstein's criticisms of the doctrines of *Principia Mathematica* as Russell accepts that "it was another matter" with Wittgenstein than other attacks "from without," since the former was "from within" and "deserving of all respect" (Russell, 1959, p. 112). For Bertrand Russell the genuine Wittgenstein remains with his earlier period of *Tractatus*. The later Wittgenstein, who is the one of the three main influences of Rorty, is a result of "growing tired of serious thinking" and *Philosophical Investigations* through its "lazy consequences" reduces philosophy to "an unnecessary activity" which is "at best a slight help to lexicographers, and at worst, an idle tea-table amusement" (Russell, 1959, p. 217). In his opinion, "in common with all philosophers before the later Wittgenstein," Russell's "fundamental aim has been to understand the world as well as may be, and to separate what may count as knowledge from what must be rejected as unfounded opinion" (ibid.), and he does not see how the world to be understood would in fact be just "sentences."

A similar concern is expressed on another level by Locke when he said if "If knowledge consists in agreement of ideas, the enthusiast and the sober man are on a level", but "[n]ot so where ideas agree with things" (Russell, 2004, pp. 557-558).

Russell ridicules Hempel about the possible consequences of maintaining that “Sentences must not be confronted with fact” and “The system which we call true ‘may’ only be characterized by the historical fact, that it is the system which is actually adopted by mankind, and especially by the scientists of our culture circle” with a fable in which Hempel had to accept eating horse-flesh as beef because “the scientists of [the restaurateur’s] culture circle include the sentence ‘this is beef’ among those they accept” (Russell, 1959, p. 218). This retort is similar in its short cut way to Samuel Johnson’s refutation of Berkeley by kicking a stone and saying, “I refute it thus.” (Boswell, 2006), or in Rortian terms, a “table-thumping.” Although there is something crudely familiar with this kind of a “‘demonstration” addressing to our intuitions, with certain philosophers there is more reason to give an ear to them, as it is in the case of Berkeley and Rorty. According to Bertrand Russell the “merit” of Berkeley is not really his arguments against the existence of material objects, for “some are important and sound, others are confused or quibbling,” but “having shown that the existence of matter is capable of being denied without absurdity, and that if there are any things that exist independently of us they cannot be the immediate objects of our sensations” (Russell, 1967, p. 6). As for the “merit” of Rorty, it might be his attempt to reset values of philosophy according to historicist accounts.

Rorty’s historicist outlook and stress on historical track is one element that distinguishes him from analytic tradition, which is considered to be “unhistorical” and even “anti-historical” (Sorell, 2005). Rorty may look as if he is taking too much irrelevancy; personal and idiosyncratic ways of thinking into considerations

according to certain analytically minded philosophers who have a view of philosophers and philosophy similar to what scientists have been to science in the course of history. While it is a method that aspires for clarity, precision, rigor, argumentation, and formulation in philosophy, when Rorty questioned the philosophical merit of argument, rationality, or objectivity in his philosophical development later on with CIS, he induced his own disrepute within this tradition. In his dealing with metaphilosophy Rorty does not contend for better philosophical theorizing or normative principles as one of his main aversions is a way of thinking that appeals to a non-human truth. He puts forward contingency as a neglected force in understanding the world. Rorty's specific way of understanding historiography of philosophy is highly resonant with his metaphilosophical convictions. A different style of dealing with the history of philosophy is, he calls, *Geistesgeschichtlich* way, which "works at the level of problematics rather than of solutions to problems" (Rorty R., 1984, p. 57).

Rorty evaluates some criteria of a new philosophy should fulfill if it is of a genuine sort. One should expect, according to him, the new philosopher who questions the presuppositions of a tradition will not be convincing until "one can show that there exist genuine alternatives to these presuppositions". Whether these "purported alternatives are genuine" can be understood "showing, paradoxically enough, that the world is not radically changed by the new perspective that the adoption of such alternative involves" (Rorty R. , 2009, p. 407). That is, he adds, an action of "'naturalizing' of apparent paradoxes", which to mean "to show that we can still say everything that we want to say *within* the new perspective, and that it will be said

better than before by virtue of the gain in critical self-consciousness that this new perspective offers us” (Rorty R., 2009, p. 408). Whether these criteria can be defended and whether what Rorty defended in his philosophy over the years after his treatment of this topic in his “The philosopher as Expert”, 1961, could fulfill these conditions can be way to evaluate his seeming paradoxes.

In an essay in 1961, at the beginning of his career, *Philosopher as Expert*, Rorty describes how academic philosophy looks from outside, e.g., from an average intellectual’s point of view. The degree of an annual three-day meeting, for instance, of the Eastern Division of American Philosophical Association, of which, by the way, he was going to be the president of the 1979-1980 term, qualifies as news might be a “back-page squib of the New York Times” and what happens during those three days, seems to this intellectual pretty much to be, but “correctly” says Rorty, “people reading papers at each other”, however, he reminds, “Isn’t philosophy supposed to be the ‘queen of the sciences’ and ‘provide us with ultimate values’ to give direction to the whole movement of human thought?” (Rorty R. , *Philosopher as Expert*, 2009, p. 395). So, he poses two questions:

- (1) *Should the professional philosophers be doing something different from what they’re currently doing?*
- (2) *If not, should they be getting more attention than they do? (Rorty R. , 2009, p. 396)*

While he was aspiring to be a Platonist or working in the analytic philosophy of mind the question “What philosophy, if anything, is good for?” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. 11) haunts Rorty almost from the beginning of his career. His formulations of this question and how he interprets different philosophies in a way to yield a coherent

synthesis for a viable answer is also what leads him to his most known works of *PMN* and *CIS*. The question is by no means new though. Bertrand Russell refers to a story in Aristotle's *Politics* (1259a) according to which Thales was held in contempt by his fellow citizens because of his poverty. They think his occupation in philosophy is of no use to himself and neither to anyone. But he proves them wrong by making good profit using his astronomical skills. He predicts that the olive harvest that year would be good and takes some clever financial precautions beforehand by paying deposit for little price and then renting out olive-presses at a high rate in Chios and Miletus. Russell says that Thales wanted to prove that a philosopher could in fact be handy in practical matters but they do not choose doing it only because they "have something more important than wealth to think about" (Russell, 2004, pp. 35, 180). The "more important" mission of Thales was obviously finding out the essence of things.

Rorty would not doubt Thales' philosophical merit in his quest for essence; that was a contribution to human culture breaking hegemony of mythology in explaining the world, which proved itself by inciting a new way of thinking in the intellectual context of the 6th century BCE. It is about the terms and conditions of this quest. He is critical of the idea of objective truth independent from any perspective, in which certain aspects of the Ionian notion of an essential and governing principle still survive. He does not believe Truth of a special kind as such makes a difference for good independent of the conditions and context of its search. When Rorty notes that his "antagonism toward Platonism"—one of the clearest marks of his philosophy—is not toward "the (very complex, shifting, dubiously consistent) thoughts of the

genius who wrote the *Dialogues*”, but “a set of philosophical distinctions (appearance-reality, matter-mind, made-found, sensible-intellectual, etc.)” (Rorty R. , 1999, p. xii), he makes a similar metaphilosophical separation. What he objects to is not Plato but what he has been made of in a long line of tradition. Rorty makes a “diagnosis” in this sense, of a Western philosophical tradition to sort out some ideas ahead of their expiration date. So, the dispute about this matter has generally revolved around the question whether truth can fit into a context. Saying something “interesting” carries a special significance for Rorty since that signals a redescription in a novel way, which can lead a way of exit from stagnation. However, it should not mean an “anything goes” attitude and there should be a way to separate them.

6.1. *Quid est Veritas?* A Rhetorical Question

““What is truth?” said jesting Pilate and would not stay for an answer” (Bacon, 1985, p. 61)⁶⁰. Jesus is the martyr in Bacon’s essay “On Truth” from which this quote is taken. Pilate is the Rortian ironist, who “would not stay for an answer” neither hailing the embodiment of truth, nor arguing against him, but went on to say, he “find[s] no basis for a charge against....” Some accusations sound like to be of a similar “heresy” in Rorty’s attitude toward truth. Rorty seems to be such an “antichrist” standing against “truth” in his portrayal of it by construing the history of

⁶⁰ Context: John 18: 36, 37, 38.

³⁶ Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

³⁷“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

³⁸“What is truth?” Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him...”

Western philosophy in a way to lighten up shadowy corners of the frame of “truth is out there” without building counterarguments against it. Rorty contends that a “scientific” or “philosophical” claim on the “truth” of a statement has not yet shaken the “dogmatic” character of truth that it has in its religious sense unless it is used, as he suggests it, to mean “truth” in front of a certain audience at a certain time but not for once and all. Such a fundamental view of truth is what Rorty claims to bring out as the hidden assumption of philosophy under the guise of objective reasoning that hinders it from further innovation and progress. Rorty contends that evolution of scientific truth as objective being based on empirical evidence, thus getting rid of contingent elements like perspective, faith, opinion, or feelings that could blunder its neutrality could not shake the dogmatic character of truth unless it is used, as he suggests, to mean truth in front of a certain audience at a certain time but not for once and all.

In his essay “Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism,” Rorty finds a “useful analogy” between “the pragmatists’ criticism of the idea that truth is a matter of correspondence to the intrinsic nature of reality and the Enlightenment’s criticism of the idea that morality is a matter of correspondence to the will of a Divine Being” (Rorty R. , Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism, 1999, p. 7). Considering his views, it would be a useful analogy, too, to draw between “jesting” Pilate who “would not stay for an answer” before Jesus as the personification of truth and Rorty before the idea of truth with a whole history of theories, interpretations, claims, or remodelings. It is because he has so often been taken to assume a “jesting” attitude toward the idea of objectively knowable truth, he was carried to headlines as the “iconoclastic

philosopher” (Richard Rorty, 2007), who “killed the truth” (BBC, 2003), an antichrist to philosophy, who promulgated the end of philosophy, “dismissing millennia of philosophical heritage” (Richard Rorty, 2007).

Erich Fromm, agreeing to the Enlightenment critique, thinks that it should not be difficult to dismiss the idea that “ethical norms in order to be valid have to be ‘absolute’” (Fromm, 1947, p. 238). His conviction is based on the accomplishments of “scientific thought,” which could do without, and even better, without recognizing the existence of any “absolute truth”. He finds a “theistic premise” at the basis of the belief in such existence: that human being is “necessarily imperfect,” which means “relative”, and therefore there is a “perfect” or “absolute”. Despite Fromm could drop the notion of ultimate truth, he retains the idea that “there are objectively valid laws and principles” (Fromm, 1947, p. 238).

Scientific thought seems to be a good model as a solution to this dilemma since it has generated solid revolutionary accomplishments that no one could deny. With the Enlightenment not absolute but “universal values or principles” came into prominence. Fromm maintains that a scientific argument is a “rationally valid” one and it is “objective” because empirical data cannot be manipulated “for the sake of a desired result” (Fromm, 1947, p. 238). Now truth is not the special asset available to a clique but an open source that can be revealed by science. Truth is no more the “absolute” but “optimal”, as it is dubbed by Fromm. Democratization of truth is achieved under “universality”. It is laid at the end as the goal of scientific endeavor and not before it. Science becomes an ever-self-perfecting machine, in Fromm’s

words, “every new insight, it “recogni[zes] inadequacies of previous [scientific] propositions and offers a springboard for creating a more adequate formulation” (Fromm, 1947, p. 239).

According to Rorty’s metaphilosophical task, with another reference to Wittgenstein, of “deconstructing captivating pictures” of philosophy, which is, furthermore “supplemented by historical awareness” (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 12), it is time we left a ladder that has carried us through the Enlightenment. Because the required “objective reasoning” could hinder us from further innovation and progress while we look for foundations of democracy, justice, or natural rights as universally impartial convincing force. Should we believe that it was the truth discovered in, e.g., “*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*” that made the French Revolution possible or was it a complex interplay of contingent historical forces that justify acting in the name of these values?

In his answering a question about the possible effects of a Rortian pragmatist way of thinking on our decisions, he says

I don’t think there would be an enormous change but it would make us be weary of people who say logic demands, reason demands, the facts demand, and so on, as if they were somehow more rational than the rest of us are, more in touch with reality ... If everyone were a pragmatist, there would be less appeal to great big notions like reason, experience, logic, facts, and so on... I think our practices would change ... for the better. (Rorty, Putnam , & Conant, 2002)

One insistent disagreement seems to occur on the implications of such an attitude as Rorty displays in the example above. He identifies an arbitrary authoritarian attitude

in making claims, or judgments about the world on behalf of truth, etc., as if some can have a private recourse to it than others. It happens, as Rorty expressed it earlier, when some of the sciences are believed to be hierarchically more “rigorous” than others, and some are just aesthetics. Even if it may be plausible, this claim gives way to implications such as, if no one is better than others, then we can take astrology to be as good as astronomy. However, that does not follow. Astronomy may be claimed to be not in a special relation with truth as much as astrology is not but that does not mean that they are on equal grounds on every other aspect that makes them valuable and that is a matter of justification, in terms of being useful, having predictive or creative power, etc., which astronomy has already managed better than astrology so far. There are experts, who have more experience, information or skills in an area they should not be believed to have prophetic knowledge of essences. Rorty points out a case in politics:

Walter Lipmann and Richard Posner and other people with doubts about participatory democracy have suggested that in the end ... political decisions are going to have to be left up to experts, to people practiced in the science of politics ...—that was Lipman's term. Posner has doubts about what is now called deliberative democracy and in the 60s was called participatory democracy. I think the prevalence of pragmatism would say “look experts are just specialists but it isn't that the experts are in touch are people who have had more dealings with a certain small portion of what we're talking about than other people”. This isn't a difference that changes anything dramatically but it changes somewhat the tone in which we talk about the relation of expert opinion to public opinion. (Rorty, Putnam , & Conant, 2002)

James Conant claims that Rorty’s definition of justification, which he says, “comes to a matter of be able to convince your peers” includes a “condition of calculation”. He reminds that there were nevertheless sincere believers in civil rights battles, for instance, who “stood up for the truth of their beliefs” and did not calculate taking the

position they did when they think they convinced their peers and knowing that they would succeed.” However, he takes this claim understanding Rortian pragmatism as “an identification of truth and agreement”, or “identification of truth with justification in the long run”. Rorty rejects it as a misunderstanding and explains that

My view is Davidson's that the word true is indefinable. You can't identify it with justification in the long run or you can't identify with anything at all any more than you can define the word good. You can't define the word true, so leave it aside and just deal with justification. It's a perfectly good word just as good and right are. But the Platonic attempt to say hey we have got to have definitions of these terms turned out not to work. (Rorty, Putnam , & Conant, 2002)

Regarding this explanation, we can say that Rorty does not identify truth with justification if by “identification” you want to suggest that “truth is what appears when justification is achieved”. Nothing appears. That would be another definition for truth as something consummated with justification. The reason might be that we do not want to conjure up an aspect of metaphysical solidity in the notion of truth for that contradicts the element of contingency in justification with recourse to which we like to remind ourselves that we are not responsible to a non-human authority.

6.2. Some Changing Notions in History

German Idealists put sciences “in their place”; “as one more human activity, rather as the place at which human beings encounter a ‘hard,’ nonhuman reality”. Kant, he says, “wanted to consign science to the realm of second-rate truth—truth about a phenomenal world.” “Hegel”, he continues, “wanted to think of natural science as a description of spirit not yet fully conscious of its own spiritual nature, and thereby to elevate the sort of truth offered by the poet and the political revolutionary to first-rate

status.” However, Rorty holds that Kant and Hegel saw a timeless truth, and “intrinsic nature” in “mind, spirit, the depths of the human self”, and that was the subject matter of philosophy and “a matter of discovery rather than creation”. In that respect Rorty considers them as having gone “only halfway in their repudiation of the idea that truth is ‘out there’.” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 4). But the revolutionary glance at the end of the eighteenth century, Rorty maintains, was that “anything could be made to look good or bad, important or unimportant, useful or useless, by being redescribed.” He describes Hegel’s “process of spirit gradually becoming self-conscious if its intrinsic nature” as “more people offering more radical redescription of more things than ever before, ... young people going through half a dozen spiritual gestalt-switches before reaching adulthood” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 7). Nietzsche is also critical about the notion of “truth-as-correspondence-to-reality.” But Rorty claims he does not free himself out of representationalist vocabulary.

Nietzsche has caused a lot of confusion by inferring from “truth is not a matter of correspondence to reality” to “what we call ‘truth’ are just useful lies.” The same confusion is occasionally found in Derrida, in the inference from “there is no such reality as the metaphysicians have hoped to find” to “what we call ‘real’ is not really real.” Such confusions make Nietzsche and Derrida liable to charges of self-referential inconsistency—to claiming to know what they themselves claim cannot be known. (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 8)

Rorty observes that “ever since Hegel” steps were taken to get beyond, conceptions such as “‘human nature’ or the ‘deepest level of the self’” toward the idea that “there is nothing ‘beneath’ socialization or prior to history which is definitory of the human” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. xiii). Thus, they put “‘socialization” and “historical circumstances” against what is hidden deep in the core as the truth itself, independent from “time and chance.” French Revolution, Rorty holds, introduced the “idea that

truth was made rather than found”, when the whole spectrum of social institutions changed almost overnight. He observes another initiative in Romantic poets to change the definition of truth, when they “claimed for art the place in culture traditionally held by religion and philosophy the place which the Enlightenment had claimed for science.” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 4). That is to say that Rorty acclaims, saying that “imagination rather than reason, is the central human faculty was the realization that a talent for speaking differently, rather than arguing well, is the chief instrument of cultural change” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 7).

Rorty takes Quine and Sellars’s “criticism of traditional empiricism, as well, steps on the way “to render doubtful the assumptions behind most of modern philosophy”; Sellars with his Myth of the Given in his “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind” and Quine, with his doubts on language-fact distinction (Rorty R. , 1979, p. xiii). Likewise, he views “Quine-Davidson assault on the distinctions between analytic and synthetic judgments, conceptual questions and empirical questions” making “it difficult to ... think of the relation between sentences and the world as a representational one” (Rorty R. , The Linguistic Turn, 1992, pp. 371-372). Davidson, he holds, in his “On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme” urges that “we give up the ‘dualism of scheme and world’ and thus the idea that different languages represent the world from different perspectives” (Rorty R. , 1992, p. 372). Rorty considers Donald Davidson’s philosophy of language “as a manifestation of a willingness to drop the idea of ‘intrinsic nature,’ a willingness to face up to the *contingency*⁶¹ of conscience, and how both recognitions lead to a picture of

⁶¹ Rorty’s emphasis.

intellectual and moral progress as a history of increasingly useful metaphors rather than of increasing understanding of how things really are.” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. 9).

Medium of representation has a changing history in philosophy, as Rorty observes it. “Mind” was a medium thought to represent reality, as Rorty quotes Hacking, in the role of “interfacing” (Rorty R. , 1992, p. 371). “Experience” was thought of as another medium of reality. It was used, Rorty says, by Kant and Dewey, yet “ambiguous[ly] between ‘sense impression’ and ‘belief.’” Then, “language” was considered as the representative of reality. Thus, according to the “older” rationalist or empiricist views, to know what “truth” means require being able to “correlate utterances of” “truth” with its “definition,” or “situations in which ... [one] is aware of” truth. “But the “newer view” of linguistic approach, which is “largely due to Wittgenstein and his followers” overcomes rationalist vs. empiricist controversy over the existence of a priori concepts. To learn the use of “truth” becomes the same process as that of learning e.g., “white”; “without correlation. The only test, according to this view, “whether we are aware of ... [e.g., truth] is whether we are inclined to utter ... [truth].” Intuition is no more unique to humans as a kind of “mysterious operation” but “we can respond in much more various ways to a much greater variety of stimuli than [animals]” (Rorty R. , 1967).

However, he says, “the slogan that ‘the problems of philosophy are problems of language’” was already “quaint” as early as 1975. It also poses as a confusion for Rorty for reasons that he thinks neither philosophy or the problems of philosophy as a “natural kind” nor “language” as a resort to solve the problems of philosophy “by

detecting the ‘logic of our language’” (Rorty R. , 1992, p. 373). He neither thinks that a “linguistic method” in philosophy as a distinct method, although the thought was almost persuaded Rorty at the beginning of his career, in the 1960s, when linguistic philosophy was “the disciplinary matrix in which he happened to find himself”, “as opposed to a ‘phenomenological’ or ‘ontological’ procedure which distinguishes late Wittgenstein from early Heidegger, or Davidson’s *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* from Dewey’s *Experience and Nature*” (ibid.). So, he concludes, the contribution of linguistic philosophy is not a metaphilosophical one, but to have helped shift from talk about experience as a medium of representation to talk of language as such a medium (ibid.). In the end, this shift would lead to abolishing the notion of representation itself (ibid.).

All in all, Rorty surveys a “dialectic within analytic philosophy, which has carried philosophy of mind from Broad to Smart, philosophy of language from Frege to Davidson, epistemology from Russell to Sellars, and philosophy of science from Carnap to Kuhn”, which only “needs” for Rorty, “to be carried a few steps further.” (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 7). What Rorty expects there is “a position to criticize the very notion ‘analytic philosophy,’ and indeed of ‘philosophy’ itself as it has been understood since the time of Kant” (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 8).

However, what essentially changed in their views is for the most part essential to Rorty’s view of philosophy:

Each of the three came to see his earlier effort as self-deceptive, as an attempt to retain a certain conception of philosophy after the notions needed to flesh out that conception (the seventeenth-century notions of knowledge

and mind) had been discarded. Each of the three, in his later work, broke free of the Kantian conception of philosophy as foundational, and spent his time warning us against those very temptations to which he himself had once succumbed. Thus their later work is therapeutic rather than constructive, edifying rather than systematic, designed to make the reader question his own motives for philosophizing rather than to supply him with a new philosophical program. (Rorty R. , 1979, pp. 5-6)

Michael Williams maintains that it is Rorty's historicism that makes him "suspicious of intuition;" the intuitive character of the "perenniality" of "philosophical problems", which are supposed to be "available to anyone who reflects deeply on the human condition", even if "solutions ... may be highly theoretical". Williams holds that for Rorty "intuitiveness may indicate nothing more than familiarity with certain ways of talking" but "[h]istory can make the familiar strange again, revealing the contingency of supposedly ineluctable starting points for philosophical reflection." (Williams, 2009, p. xvii). Rorty holds a similar view about Heidegger when he talks about his "greatest contribution to the tradition", which is enabling "distance" between us and the tradition by providing a historical awareness to the problems of philosophy (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 12) such as mind and matter, objective and subjective, or contingency and reality.

Rorty relies on his observations in the history of modern western philosophy in maintaining his metaphilosophical claims. Rorty's metaphilosophical focus is on the matter of "philosophical questions." He observes that he can interpret "perennial" problems in a way to dislodge them from their traditionally "eternal" position, which are thought to "arise as soon as one reflects" (Rorty R. , 1979, p. 3), and show that they are not posed in a frame of *tabula rasa* but "a product of the unconscious

adoption of assumptions built into the vocabulary in which the problem was stated” (ibid., xiii). Assumptions and vocabulary are, for Rorty, what shape a philosophical question and they are generated by rather contingent factors, because of which these questions “appear, disappear, or change shape” (ibid.). In accordance with his view on philosophical questions, he sees history of philosophy, something he learned from his teachers, Richard McKeon and Richard Brumbaugh, as a series of “different set of problems,” and not “alternative solutions to the same problems” (ibid., xiii). Rorty should not be understood as offering solutions to textbook problems on truth theories. He describes his philosophy as a “bricolage” of different philosophies. He presents *PMN* as a “survey of some recent developments in [especially analytic] philosophy” (ibid., 7) and in this respect, it signifies what he made of the history of philosophy; more specifically, of the philosophers such as Richard McKeon, Robert Brumbaugh, Hartshorne, Carl Hempel, Paul Weiss, Wilfrid Sellars, Gilbert Ryle, Norman Malcolm, Carnap, Quine, Davidson, Kuhn, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey.

Rorty’s philosophy is, in a sense, offering a reading of the history of philosophy. It is a way of reading that he offered as the moral he drew from the history of philosophy. His vision appears to include changing pictures of concepts, waning backgrounds that could not support a concept to keep its significance, withering metaphors, and ways to restore vigor and hope in the relationship of human with other humans and herself. It is where he accentuates “historicism” that makes it an essential component of his philosophical attitude. As Rorty works out his own understanding and practice of historicism, it gives rise to disputes over whether it applies to Rorty’s case and he

is criticized for overinterpretation, not surprisingly perhaps among other similar criticisms about his way of presenting ideas and thinkers. His historicism, according to David Hall, exceeds “usable limits” and being rather a “poeticized one,” Rorty should “take full responsibility for [his] literary pretensions than to mask them by claims to historicist practice” (Hall, 1994, p. 63). Rorty avows historicism if it relates to notions like context, hermeneutics, contingency, non-reductionism, or critique of the notion of ahistorical truth. Historicism as a term is already an elusive one and in Rorty’s case, he should not be evaluated according to a classical definition. He has his common points with and difference from both classical and new historicism and that makes it even harder to identify Rorty properly with the movement.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

We can see that the picture of thinking I argued that Rorty put as an axis at the beginning, a picture that he wants us to give up as an ontological pattern of a hierarchical reality, is at the background from early on. In his argument for dropping mental talk as in the imaginary Antipodeans examples and the similar attitude is present in his Eliminative Materialist thesis in the earlier “Mind–Body Identity, Privacy, and Categories.” As he later stated in connection with Quine, the problem with mental-physical distinction is being another way that leads to realist ontological commitment.

Thinking in terms of hierarchical ontological opposites such as reality vs appearance, essential vs relational, rational vs irrational, or objective vs subjective could not be challenged and ontological commitment could not be denied. The only challenge accepted by Rorty came from within this picture, without an ontological orientation in Rortian terms. Ramberg’s arguments are in this sense strengthen, rather than weaken Rorty’s philosophy. Devitt’s arguments for a realist Rorty and semantics without correspondence theory and its ontological commitments seems to be defended within Ramberg’s terms. Alston’s claim on the sensation of a “crude fact” is not special to peripheral vision or babies’ reactions to different stimuli. As Rorty put it, that is a causal relation with the environment. To put it “causal” is what we

can see at most about an outer world and that does not assume a paradoxical viewpoint of a judgment about an outer existence Rorty explains causality without an ontological truth orientation. If a realist critic insisted on just the viability of this outside contact intuition without any judgments about it, either that would not keep them from falling into ontological chasm or they would have to discard it as nothing.

When an objective idea of truth is found essential in terms of its consequences for an ideal, egalitarian, democratic society as a building block of, e.g., Western Rationalistic Tradition, as defended by Searle, Rorty, reveals some confusions about truth and being truthful as in the case of Conant's similar argument for the necessity of objectivity in order not to fall prey to dictatorial regimes. The same attitude is present with Russell when he takes that past facts cannot be subject to pragmatist utilitarian truth view. However, as Rorty explains it, truth as the expression of an objective, changeless state, as it is in itself is an ontological status but truth as in telling the case in question without an intention of manipulation is a virtue of being truthful, as part of being sincere or honest.

Ramberg says he is one of "those [philosophers] who have had [their] thinking about philosophy shaped by Rorty" (Ramberg, 2000, p. 365). Questioning the plausibility of imagining a world where reality resides outside and drawing on conclusions of taking up a new intellectual attitude, Rorty made his difference by "shaping our thinking about philosophy". We can conclude that he made it in different ways.

Rorty's strategy of "mov[ing] everything over from epistemology and metaphysics to cultural politics, from claims to knowledge and appeals to self-evidence to suggestions about what we should try" for "escaping from [the relativist's] self-referential difficulties" (Rorty R. , 1998, p. 57) is his reference to the world. He not only saved his philosophy from swinging from foundationalist to relativist ends in a representationalist paradigm but enhanced its vista by referring it to its outside and as well as the critique of epistemology, election of a strongman concerns his philosophy. It is his performative answer to philosophy's drifting away from the world due to over professionalization by continuously referring to internal theoretical issues.

He suggested that outside Plato's cave we could think of nothing but another cave. Expecting an objective reality to govern our beliefs is also a waiting for waking up to reality. But we see that if the aim of inquiry is subduing contingency it means that we are able find better ways of dealing with our environment, and not because we are capturing reality. Inquiry becomes an all too human activity remaining in human side of the initial picture. Contribution to humanity can then be measured according to the new threads a person or a certain part of culture could put in weaving newer and better beliefs.

Russell takes notice of our attitudes "towards non-human environment" which, he says, "differed profoundly at different times": The Greeks were cautious in any "insolence towards the universe ... with their dread of hubris and their belief in a Necessity or Fate superior even to Zeus"; Middle Ages' "submission" was "humility

towards God [as] a Christian's first duty"; Renaissance's restoration of "human pride" was excessive, according to him, "to the point where it led to anarchy and disaster", which was "undone by the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation"; and finally "modern technique", he believes, by "reviving the sense of the collective power of human communities ... makes humans "think of [themselves] ... as almost God" (Russell, 2004, p. 737). He also mentions the related lack of progress and the fact that "great originality" which marked the ancient Greek culture, "was scarce" in the Middle Ages, because "[i]nitiative was cramped" by an attitude of excessive religious submission (ibid.). The Renaissance apparently restores the "great originality" with the "human pride".

In the closing paragraphs of the section on Dewey's pragmatism in his *History of Western Philosophy*, Russell pays special attention to the "'grave danger" of what he calls "cosmic impiety" caused by this "sense of the collective power of human communities" (ibid). He says that "philosophy has hitherto check[ed] upon this pride" by "inculcat[ing] the necessary element of humility" through the "concept of 'truth' as something dependent upon facts largely outside human control" (ibid). He closes by warning the reader that the danger is nevertheless alive:

When this check upon pride is removed, a further step is taken on the road towards a certain kind of madness—the intoxication of power which invaded philosophy with Fichte, and to which modern men, whether philosophers or not, are prone. I am persuaded that this intoxication is the greatest danger of our time, and that any philosophy which, however unintentionally, contributes to it is increasing the danger of vast social disaster. Such "an intoxication" which would be resulted by a "vast social disaster" (Russell, 2004, p. 737).

Russell assumes that our beliefs remain in a frame defined by realist and relativist ends. His concerns about “human pride, subjective madness, intoxication, or lack of humility” are remnants of the fear of sin. Rorty’s anti-representationalist pragmatist exit is a challenge to this framework in which the Renaissance people do not need to worry about a cosmic price of “great originality.” Rorty poses a reverse attitude by taking such a “collective power of human communities” as the way toward “maturation” and appealing to “truth” as a non-human authority as an impediment before progress. He says that

Only when the community decides to adopt one faith rather than another, or the court decides in favor of one side rather than another, or the scientific community in favor of one theory rather than another, does the idea of “authority” become applicable. The so-called “authority” of anything other than the community (or some person or thing or expert culture authorized by the community to make decisions in its name) can only be more table-thumping. (Rorty R. , 2007, p. 9)

While Russell rejects any authority beyond humanity as a threat to social stability leading to anarchy, he might express a similar self-doubt more explicitly behind some of the criticisms about the views Rorty expresses above. However, Rorty shows the possibility of a different viewpoint according to which taking truth as the goal of thinking is an expression of looking for a shelter in which time and chance will not disturb us. However, substituting freedom for truth as “the goal of thinking and of social progress” may give us a fresh breath by “help[ing] free us, gradually but steadily, from theology and metaphysics” (Rorty R. , 1989, p. xiii). He offers a new “vocabulary” which better serves for the ideal of a liberal society, a vocabulary which “revolves around notions of metaphor and self-creation rather than around

notions of truth, rationality and moral obligation” (ibid., 44). To Pilate’s jesting question *Quid est veritas?*⁶² [What is truth?] there is a jesting answer with an anagram within the question: *Est vir qui adest*, it is the man who is there. That is what Rorty thinks he could say about the truth: nothing. He finds nothing other than *homo mensura*, or “trail of human serpent.”

Rorty reads history of philosophy as the story of human, who witness the trail of the human serpent over everything” while hoping to reach “Truth” as the edifice of destination. However, it is not an expression of disappointment. He takes away the advantage of some who have the “privilege” of speaking in the name of the authority of truth and leaves them without the means to threaten others except for a mere table thumping. Just as he promises, his philosophy gives you hope for better and more exciting possibilities in defining things again. His philosophy offers you a perspective by which you can gain self-confidence in confronting challenges to be posed by false authorities. More than that, Rorty is a joy to read.

⁶² John 18:38

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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Korkut, Handan Hacer

[REDACTED]

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU Philosophy	2007
BS	METU English Language Teaching	1997

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2003- Present	Ministry of Education	English Teacher

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Basic German, French, Ancient Greek and Latin

PUBLICATIONS

Author

- (2009) *Ironical Attitude of Socrates: Irony as a Philosophical Attitude in Socrates*. Köln: Lambert Academic Publishing.
- (1998) "Geçer." *Amida*, Nisan 1998, p. 22.

Translator (from Turkish)

- (2007) Salman, Feray (ed.) *Always Disadvantaged: Discrimination Practices In Turkey: Victims and Professionals Share their Stories*. Ankara: Civil Society Development Center.

HOBBIES

Swimming, Painting, Literature, Science

B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Richard Rorty felsefedeki amacını, felsefi problemlerin arkasındaki varsayımları ortaya çıkarma ve bunların pratikte bir fark yaratıp yaratmadıklarına bakarak önemli olup olmadıklarını değerlendirme olarak tarif eder. Bizden bağımsız objektif bir gerçeğin var olduğu ve hakikatin de bu gerçeğin bir temsili olduğunu varsayan bir problemin sözde bir problem olduğunu, çünkü bunun metafizik bir yönelim anlamına geldiğini ileri sürer. Bu varsayımı, deneyimlerimizin ötesinde olanı bir amaç olarak ortaya koyan ve hakikat kavramında yoğunlaşan bir düşünce alışkanlığının resminde ortaya çıkarır. Bu resim ve burada resmedilen hakikat Rorty'nin eleştiri ve argümanlarının eksenini oluşturur. Bu ontolojik resme adanmışlık, Rorty'ye göre, hiç bir deneyim imkanımızın olmadığı bir alanla ilgili yargılamalarda bulunmamıza neden olur. Bir karşı-temelci olarak relativist çerçeveye düşmekten, olumsuzluğu vurgulayarak ve referanslarını sosyal kültürel politikada, pragmatizmine otoritercilik karşıtı bir rol bulduğu metafizik olmayan bir alanda bularak kurtulur. Bu resmin, olumsuzluk alanında etrafımızı saran ontolojik olarak üstün bir insan dışı düzlemi gösteren kısmını atabilmek, insanların inançlarını doğrulayacak hiçbir insan ötesi otoriteyi varsaymadıkları Aydınlanma idealine ulaşmanın başarılması demektir.

Çalışmalarının en başından beri “yeni varsayımlar ve yeni kelime hazneleri”nin tarihi olarak gördüğü felsefe tarihinden çıkardığı ders, bu problemlerin arkasındaki varsayımları ortaya çıkarma görevidir. Sellars ve Quine, bu bakımdan, “dil-gerçeklik farkı” ve geleneksel felsefede “verilmiş olanı” sorgulamalarından dolayı Rorty için

özellikle önemlidir. Açıkça ifade etmek gerekirse, onlar “modern felsefenin çoğunun arkasındaki varsayımları şüpheli kılar” ve bu durum onu bu eleştirileri “genelleme ve ilerletmeye” sevkeder. Rorty böylece “verilmiş olan” ile “iki dogma”nın arkasında kapsayıcı bir varsayıma işaret eder: hakikat orada bir yerde nosyonu. Geleneksel Anglo-Amerikan felsefesindeki bir dizi argümanın arkasında oluşunu hissettiği bu hakikat fikri Sellars ve Quine’in ortaya çıkardığından daha geniş bir çerçeveyi rahatsız eder ve Rorty bu durumla doğrultulu yoğun tepkiler alır.

Bu tezde aşağıdaki iddiaları savunuyorum:

1. Rorty’nin yazıları geniş bir skalada ilerlemesine rağmen bir nokta üzerinde diğer konuların döndüğü bir eksen noktasının olduğu görülebilir. Bu, kendimizi, daha üst bir süreklilik alanı tarafından çevrelendiğimiz bir dünyada yaşadığımızı hayal ettiğimiz entellektüel bir alışkanlıktır. Bu resimdeki sorun, deneyimimizin ötesinde bulunan bir alanla ilgili yargıda bulunmaktır. Bilebildiğimiz ve bilemeyeceğimizin arasında bir eşik ve birinden ötekine dair çıkarımlarda bulunduğumuz paradoksal bir bakış açısı var sayar. Objektif bir geçeklik, bir illüzyon veya şu an hayal edemediğimiz başka bir şey tarafından sınırlanıyor olabiliriz, ama ne olduğuna dair karar verme hakkımız yoktur. Bu nedenle, bu alanla ilgili tartışmalar anlamlı olmayacaktır. Bu resimleme en çok Rorty’nin, gerçekliğin bir ifadesi olarak hakikat eleştirisinde yoğunlaşmaktadır. Hakikat bu bakımdan Rorty eserlerinin merkezinde bulunmakla birlikte, ancak metafizik bir alanı referans aldığı sürece onu ilgilendirir ve böylece bu anlayışı “görsel algı ile çağrışımlı olan o özel türden kesinlik arayışı” (Rorty R., 1979, p. 181) olarak tanımlar.

2. 1. argümandaki resmi Rorty'nin eleştirisi ve iddialarını değerlendirmede göz önüne almak bizi argümanların yolundan ayırmayacak ve Rorty'de "birşeylerin birbiri ile nasıl bağlı olduğunu" görmemize yardım edecektir. Rorty, demokrasi, zihin, ironi, veya felsefe gibi farklı konulardaki tartışmalarında sıklıkla bu merkezi noktaya, "sürekli nötr matris" (Rorty R., s. 179), "fiziksel olmayanın şeyleştirilmesi", ya da "nötr zemin" (ibid., 181) gibi tanımlamalarla atıfta bulunur. Böylece, koşulsuzluk, rasyonalite, akıl, evrensellik, içkin doğa, ve nötr prensipler gibi kavramları savunan argümanlara, aynı ontolojik adanmışlığa işaret ettikleri nedeniyle karşı çıkar.

3. "İnançlarımız ve dilimiz" ile objektif gerçeklik arasındaki bağdaştırılamaz ontolojik bir uçurumu aşmaları gerektiği için, Realist çizgideki itirazların bu metafizik adanmışlık resminin ikna ediciliğine meydan okumaları gerekmektedir. Bu da, ontolojik statü ile ilgili yardıda bulunmanın mümkün olduğunun inanılır olduğu anlamına gelecektir. 1'de verilen perspektif, Rorty'ye yapılan eleştirilerin uygunluk ve itiraz edilebilirliğini değerlendirmede yardımcı olacaktır ve Rorty'nin resminin inanılırlığına meydan okuyabilecek gibi görünmemektedirler.

4. Rorty, Platonik yansımaları zorluyor ve yukardaki gib kavramların rolünü hakettiklerinden daha az varsayıyor olabilir. Rorty'nin bir şablonu mu zorladığı yoksa gerçek bir durumu mu ortaya çıkardığı bu kavramların bir geleneğin literatürünü oluşturmadaki ciddi rolüne bağlı olmadığı gibi, Rorty'nin ontolojik adanmışlık iddiaları da onların önemini azaltmaz. Pek çok itiraz Rorty'nin felsefesinde böyle bir inkar olduğunu varsayar.

5. Rorty'nin argümanları, kendimize ve dünyaya baktığımız içgüdüsel-içgörüsöl bir düzeyde hareket eder, bu da kendi iddia ve itirazları için geçerli şartlar ve koşulların farklı olabileceğine işaret eder. Kendinin varsayım olarak adlandırdığı şey bir eleştirmen için varsayılan ayar olabilir. Rorty ile aynı ya da farklı fikirde olmak bu yüzden tartışılarda zaten önceden belirlenmiş olabilir. Yine de, hiçbir şekilde hakikat adanmışlığı taşımayan Rorty'nin bu sözkonusu tekrar tanımlama şablonunu farklı durumlar için de kullanabilirsek onun önerilerinin çalıştığını görebiliriz.

Rorty'nin, "hakikate olan evrensel arzu" inancına karşı en ikna edici ve "temel prensibi" şudur: Bulduğunuzda ne olduğunu anlayamayacağınız bir şeyi amaç edinemez, ona ulaşmak için çabalayamazsınız" (Rorty R., 2021, s. 48). Burada hakikati "tanınmaz" ve gerekçelendirmeyi "tanınabilir" yapan şey birincisinin, Platon'un mağarasının dışına benzeyen uçurumun öteki tarafında bulunmasıdır. Rorty, modern felsefede belli bir gelenekte bir dizi benzer problemde, dışarda bir yerde duran ve bir gerçek olarak deneyimimize verilen bir varlığın ontolojik anlamına bağlı olan dikkat edilmemiş ve örtük bir hakikat nosyonu varsayımını edinmesinden dolayı, meta-düzeyde bir sorun görmektedir. Bizim erişebileceğimiz alanda olması nedeniyle gerekçelendirmenin bekleyebileceğimiz tek şey olduğunu, ve bu bakımdan evrensel hakikat arzusu dediğimiz şeyin gerekçelendirilme arzusu demek olduğunu savunarak kavramları insana ve insan olmayan dair yetileri bakımından yerlerine koyar. Hakikat, diğer metafizik ve dolayısıyla insan erişiminde olmayan diğer parçaları koşulsuzluk, bağlamsızlık, veya zamansızlık tarafından desteklenir. Bu bakımdan, hakikati bir dilek ifadesi olarak yorumlayabiliriz: tıpkı erişimimizin ötesinde olanla ilgilenmesini istediğimiz bir Tanrı gibi sağlam bir

duvara yaslanmak istiyoruz. Bu dilek o kadar güçlü hissedilebilir ki başka türlü bir durum düşünülemez gibi gelebilir ama yine de bunu olumlayacak bir pozisyonda değiliz.

Hakikat fikir bu bakımdan Rorty'nin felsefesinde, sadece zihin ve bilgiye değil, felsefenin kendisi ve ötesinde sosyo-politik dünya görüşüne dair geniş çaplı eleştirilerinin yörüngesini belirleyen bir kuvvet olarak bir tür çekim alanı oluşturur. Hakikati bir problem olarak ele almanın problemi aynı varsayımsal alan için farklı bir isim bulma çabasıdır. Öyle görülüyor ki aynı yer bir zamanlar Tanrı'ya atfedilmişti ama bilim ile çatışmasından sonra objektif gerçekliğe yerini bıraktı. Rorty'ye göre bu varsayım ile ilgili sorular tarihte faydasını ispatladı ama şu an için durum pek öyle değil çünkü yenilik kaynaklarını tüketmiş görünüyor. Neden daha fazla sonuç vermediği, Rorty terimleriyle şöyle ifade edilebilir: o zaman başvuru alanı yeni kelime hazinesi, metaforlar, veya varsayımlar şimdi yeni değil, yıprandıklar çünkü, örneğin Bilim veya Fransız Devrimi'ni başaran yeni anlayış, neredeyse herkes tarafından benimsenerek, baş dini otorite dahil, rakiplerine karşı çoktan zaferini ilan etti. Bu bakımdan Rorty'nin bu çorak araziye aştığı görünen yol bizi bu çerçeveden çıkarabilecek bir yenilik ilkesi, ve yeniliği yaratan şey aritmetik işlemlere benzer görünmüyor ve bu nedenle hayalgücü felsefede kıymetli bir varlıktır. Hakikat fikrini felsefi anlamda eşeleyerek hakikate karşı bu tavır Rorty'nin elinde, bizi kendi tebeşir dairemizden çıkabileceğimize inandıran otorite karşıtı bir silaha dönüşmüştür.

Kaçınılmaz bir katı gerçeklik olarak hakikat Rorty'nin felsefesinde, pragmatizmini buna karşı aldığı tavırla belirleyecek derecede merkezi bir öneme sahiptir. Felsefe tarihini de bu tavırla okuması, aynı zamanda Heidegger, Wittgenstein, ve Dewey'i üç temel ilham kaynağı yapar ve bu bakımdan Nietzsche, Freud, ve Darwin çığır açıcıdır. Karşılıklı bir destekleme içinde, bu tavir filozoflardan ve doğalcılık, tarihselcilik, ve nominalizm gibi benimsemiş olduğu öğretilerden öğrendikleri aynı zamanda onlara da yansıttıklarıdır. Bu tavırla epistemoloji temelli bir felsefe geleneğini eleştirir. Hakikat problemini tartışmak Rorty için "metafizik bir inanç meselesini" tartışmak kadar sonuç verebilir. Hakikate olan bu güven, eğer Theseus'un gemisinin yolda bütün parçaları tek tek değiştirilirse yolun sonunda aynı gemi olark mı kalır? sorusundaki "kimlik, aynılık" kavramına olan inanç gibidir. Bu bakımdan hakikat kavramına tutunmak Munchausen durumunda ifade edilen türden bir -gibi davranmaktır. Rorty epistemolojik temelcilik eleştirisinde bu trilemmanın üç biçimine de, dogmatic, geri yönlendirici, ve dairesel problemler olarak işaret eder. En tipik görüşü hakikat için, örneğin, "retorik bir sırt sıvazlama", "onaylanmış iddia edilebilirlik", veya aşkın bir anlam içermeyen diğer benzetmeler dışında pek söyleyecek bir şey olmadığıdır.

Rorty, felsefesinin, neyin temel olarak alınamayacağı ya da felsefenin ne yapamayacağı gibi iddialarla belirlenen çoğunlukla negatif bir görüş olduğunu söylese de *Felsefe ve Doğanın Aynası*'ndan sonra, *Olumsuzluk, ironi, ve dayanışma*'da farklı bir stratejiye yönelmiştir. Temel, baz, veya kuramın arandığı yerde zaman, şans, ve değişim gibi kavramların üzerinde durarak görüşlerini daha

pozitif ifadelerle ortaya koyar. Böylece olumsuzluğu dil, kendilik, ve topluluk gibi insan edimlerinde tanınması gereken bir yön olarak savunur.

Hakikatin iyilik ve düzen, huzur, garanti, ya da güvenlik gibi olumlu değerlerle yakından bağdaştırıldığı bir görüş çerçevesinde yer aldığına bakarak, şans, değişim, veya olumsuzluğu öne çıkarmanın kaza, kaos, risk, veya rastgelelik gibi durumları çağırıldığı sonucunun çıkarılması beklenebilir. Hakikate saldırırsanız onunla ilgili iyi her şeye de saldırmış sayılabilirsiniz. Rorty'nin liberal ironist olarak resmettiği entellektüel, kendininki gibi bir hakikat fikrine sahiptir. Rorty, bu ironist entellektüelin muhtemelen, temel bir hakikat inancına kendini adanmış büyük bir entellektüel kitle ile sarılı olacağını ve onlar için, “sadece demokrasiye değil, insan dayanışmasına—insan kitlesi ile dayanışma, böylesi bir düzenin var olması gerektiğine inanmış tüm o insanlarla—da varoluşsal bir düşmanlık besliyor gibi görünecektir. Ama öyle değil. Belli bir tarihsel olarak yönlendirilmiş ve bir ihtimalle geçici bir dayanışma biçimine düşmanlık dayanışmanın kendine düşmanlık değildir” (Rorty R., 1989, p. xv).

Konuşma hakkımızın olduğu alan gerekçelendirilmez ve inançlarımız bunun ötesine gidemez. Rorty bekleneceği üzere relativizm suçlamaları ile karşı karşıya kalır. Oysa, o her hangi bir şeyin gerekçelendirme sayılacağını söylememektedir. Bazen entellektüel sorumsuzluk derecesinde suçlansa da, bir inancın gerekçelendirilme koşulları bakımından geçerliliğini tanımlaması aynı şeye hakikat diyebilmekten daha az ciddi değildir. Ona göre, “eğer inancınızı geçmiş, gelecek, ve şimdide tüm katılımcılara ideal iletişim durumunda maksimum kanıt eşliğinde

gerekçelendirebiliyorsanız, inancınızın gerçeklikle örtüşüp örtüşmediği konusunda endişe etmenize gerek yoktur” (Rorty, Putnam, & Conant, Pragmatism and Truth, 2002). Bunu söyleyebilmek, Rorty’ye göre “Pragmatizm’in en önemli yanıdır” (ibid.). Bu aynı zamanda, anti-temelciliği savunurken şüpheciliğe teslim olmadan temsilci çerçeveden çıkabilmenin bir yoludur.

Değişmezlik, kendiliğinden var olma, veya koşulsuzluk gibi anlamları hakikat kavramına onu tüm araştırmaların amacı yapmaya değer kılıyor gibi görünüyor. Aynı şekilde, öz, doğa, veya özsel özellik olumsuzluk dışı olmaları ile daha açıkça şeyleştirilmiş hakikat referanslarıdır. Bu fikir, bir terimin diğeri üzerinden var olduğu, görünüş ve gerçeklik, madde ve zihin, veya bilgi ve fikir gibi Platonist ayrımlarda da ortaya çıkar. Rorty böyle bir bilinçsiz Platonist metafizik imanını izlerini, doğa bilimlerinin, özellikle fiziğin, bizi gerçekliğe diğerlerinden daha fazla yaklaştırdıklarına inanarak kültürün diğer parçalarından daha yüksek bir değere sahip olduğu düşüncesinde bulur. Görünen üzerinde yeterince çalışırsak gerçeklikle karşılaşacağımıza inanıyoruz. Görünüş ve gerçeklik arasında, bir atomun daha küçük parçalarına doğru içeri giden ya da daha geniş bir evren resmine doğru dışarı giden gibi katedilmesi gereken bir mesafe olduğunu var saymak istiyoruz. Böyle bir hakikat fikrine açıkça ya da ima ederek herhangi bir başvuru, Rorty için, temsilci paradigmanın içine girmektir. Bu tür bir hareketi, felsefenin gittikçe daha fazla epistemoloji temelli olduğu, Descartes, Locke, ve Kant’tan Russell yoluyla analitik zihin felsefesinde bulur. Bu bakımdan, ne deneyciliğin, ne Dewey’nin Pragmatizminin ne de Dil Dönüşünün, “temsilci bir bilgi resmini temsilci olmayanla değiştiremedikleri” için bu paradigmadan çıkamadıklarını ileri sürer (Rorty R., 1992,

s.373), tek yapılan temsil için, önce deneyim, sonra da dil olarak farklı araçlar önermek olmuştur.

Bir felsefi geleneğin arkasındaki objektif bir hakikat varsayımı teşhis etmek Rorty'nin eleştirisinin yarı kısmıdır. Böyle bir varsayıma, inaçları şekillendirmede opsiyonel bir araç olarak yaklaşarak, örneğin demokrasi, adalet, bilim veya dilin tekrar tanımlanabildiği tamamen farklı bir kavram düzlemine doğru ilerleyebilmiştir. Rorty'nin tartışmaları, onun temel statüsüne olan inaçlarımızı sarsacak bir etki ile bu pragmatik tavır etrafında hareket eder. Sonraki aşama, bunun “opsiyonel olduğunu” göstermek der *Felsefe ve Doğanın Aynası*'nda, ki bunun için teolojik yansımalar taşıdığını savunmak yeterli olmayacaktır. Böylesi geniş çaplı bir iddiayı başarmak için Rorty, örneğin realist veya örtüşümcü kuramların metafizik projelerine karşı bir alternatif kuram, pragmatist bile olsa, oluşturmayı bir yol olarak görmez. Pragmatist bir görüşü savunur ama hakikat ile ilgili hiç bir olumlayıcı iddiası olmadığı için bu kavramı bir kuram içinde toplamak için yapıcı bir tavır yoktur. Bu onu diğer pragmatist düşünürlerden ayıran taraftır. Sonuç olarak, felsefenin, bilginin veya herhangi bir diğer kavramın temellerini oluşturabileceğine dair görüşleri reddeder ve bu yüzden felsefenin “bilgiye dair iddiaları” ve bunların kültüre katkıları yargıladığı bir mahkeme olduğu fikri boştur.

Bir varsayımı teşhis etmek ona bağlanan argümanların çerçevesini görmek iddiasıdır ve bu yüzden bu durumu aynı çerçeve içinde çözülebilecek bir problem olarak ele almaz. Bu, felsefi çalışmalarının en başında felsefe tarihinden felsefe problemi ile ilgili çıkardığı bir derse, “problemin ifade edildiği kelime haznesinin içine inşa

edilmiş varsayımların bilişsiz bir benimsenmesinin ifadesi” (Rorty R. , 1979, s. xiii) olduğuna, bağlı olan bir harekete benziyor. Rorty’nin ele aldığı durumun bir meta-problem, yani, bir problemin problem olduğunu düşünmek yanlış olmaz. Bu, Rorty için bir problemi çözme değil ortadan kaldırma işidir. Diğer bir deyişle, varsayımlarını reddederek probleme onun çerçevesinin dışından yaklaşmaktadır. Bu tür bir tavır onun, yapıcı olana göre öncelik verdiği terapik yaklaşımıdır. Bu bakımdan terapik bir problem çözümü problemi ortadan kaldırmaktır. Benzer bir sözde problem ortadan kaldırma Theseus’un Gemisi için söz konusu olabilir. Bu düşünce deneyi için aranan cevabın kimlik ve aynılık sorusuna, yani temel olarak material, niteleyici veya fonksiyonel bir durum olup olmadığı gibi, bir açıklık getirmesi beklenir. Bu problem ile ilgili Rortici problem, bunun, ortaya değişmez bir özellik çıkaran belli bir yönetici prensip veya varlığın olduğu varsayımdır. Oysa, hiçbir cevap pratikte fark yaratmazsa problem bizi kendi gölgemizi kovalamamıza neden olan sorunun kendisinde olabilir.

Rorty’nin felsefesinde, hakikat problemini çürütebildiğini gerekçelendiren üç farklı yol ve safha olduğu görülüyor. Bu safhaları görmek, aynı zamanda, önceki, ve zihin felsefesinin analitik çizgisinden, daha kıtacı ilgileri için vazgeçen, sonraki bir Rorty olduğunu var sayan onun felsefesi ile ilgili bir yanlış anlamayı da ortadan kaldırmaya yardımcı olacaktır. Bu safhalarda değişen şeyin perspektiften daha çok bir ilüstrasyon olduğu görülüyor. İlk safha, zihin ve bilgiyi ilgilendiren tartışmalarındaki erken dönem eserlerinde görülebilir. Temsilci hakikat görüşüne karşı geliştirdiği tavrın bazı izleri zihin, bilgi ve metafelsefe ile ilgili olan ilk makalelerinde, *Dilsel Dönüş*’ün “Giriş” ve iki “Sonsöz”ünde ve en belirgin olarak *Felsefe ve Doğanın*

Aynası'nda görülebilir. Bu safhada cevabı pratikte bir fark yaratmayan bir sorunun reddi olarak eleştirileri temel olarak olumsuzdur. İlk etki yaratan kitabı Felsefe ve Doğanın Aynası'nda modern felsedeki kendinden var olan hakikat fikrini teşhis eder ve kendisinin dünyaya ilk tanıtıldığı alan olan analitik zihin felsefesi dilinde tartışır. Bu alanda çalışan ve saygı duyulan bir filozof olarak zihin ve bilgi arasında, biri ile ilgili bir şey keşfetmenin diğeri ile de ilgili bir şey keşfetmek anlamına geldiği ve bu şeylerin birlikte insanın benzersiz özel bir varlık olmasına ilişkin bize bir ipucu vereceğinin düşünüldüğü sıkı bir varsayım ilişkisinin haritasını çıkarır. Felsefe böylece “bilgiye olan iddiaların, bunları düşürerek veya onaylarak yargıçlığını üstlenen kurucu bir disiplin” (Rorty R. , 1989, s. 73) olma rolünü benimseyebildi. Bu anlayışa göre bilgi zihinsel süreçler tarafından bir temsil etkinliği olarak şekillendirilir ve insana bilen olmayı, zihne onun aracısı olmayı ve felsefeye de onun doğasını anlayabilme uzmanlığını bahşeder.

Sadece iki elemanın değil bir hiyerarşinin de resmi olmasından dolayı, temsil etkinliği Rorty'nin şüphelerine en çok neden olan varsayımların kaynağıdır. Temsil edilen dışardadır ve bu orjinal varlığın mümkün olan en iyi şekilde içeri aktarılması beklenir. Zihin bir araçtır, diyelim ki bir ressam gibi. Zihnin ürünü bir resim stiline adlandırıldığı şekilde, realist bir tablonun orjinale en yakın—diğer ekoller, ressamın niyeti doğrultusunda bir şekil bozma anlamında, doğanın sadece yorumlanmaları iken—biçimi olduğu gibi, kabul edilir. Eğer zihin bir ressam gibi ortaya konulabiliyorsa, ressam tarafından izleyiciye yansıtılan bir model gibi orjinal bir parça varsayıyoruz ama zihnin yansıtılmaları durumunda, hakikat olarak bu orjinal modeli hakikat olarak göremeyiz ve onunla ilgili başka bir deneyim sahibi değiliz.

Rorty bu, hakkında hiç bir fikrimizin olmadığı bir şeyi yansıtma gibi tuhaf bir durumu, gerçekten görseniz bile tanıyamayacağınız bir şeyi yansıtmayı iddia etmek gibi, diyerek özetler. Bu bakımdan, gerçekten gelse bile, eğer çoktan gelmediyse, onun nasıl tanınacağını bilmeden İkinci Geliş'e inanmaya benzer. Onun, hakikatin epistemolojik arayışına eleştirisi ve bunu bir kenara bırakma önerisi, hakikat hakkında ne söyleyip ne söyleyemeyeceğimiz demek olup, bilginin tanımı ve felsefenin işlevi ile ilgili sorulara yönelir. Öyle görülüyor ki felsefi olarak ilginç olmaya değer pek bir şey bulmamaktadır. Sorgulamalarımızın amacı olarak haklı kılmanın ötesinde bir şeyi amaç edinmek boştur.

İkinci safha, hakikat görüşünü *Doğa ve Felsefenin Aynası*'ndaki analitik terimler olmadan, örnekle uyguladığı eserleri olarak düşünüşebilir. Bazı şeylerin, ontojik uçurumun diğer tarafında kalan gerçeklik varsayımı olmadan nasıl görüneceğini göstermeye çalışır. Bu durum *Olumsuzluk, ironi, ve dayanışma*'da en belirgin hale gelir. Böylece geleneksel hakikat peşinde koşan bakış açısı tarafından değer verilenlerden başka kavramların daha kıymetli olduğunu öne sürer. Örneğin, olumsuzluğun öze, özgürlüğün hakikate, dayanışmanın tarafsızlığa ya da hayal gücünün araştırmaya göre daha tercih makbul adaylar olarak öne sürer. Bu safhada Rorty analitik dilini değiştirince eleştiriler de şüphecilikten, alçaltıcı anlamdaki post-modernizme ve entellektüel ciddiyetsizliğe kadar varan derecelere kayar. Analitik meslektaşlarının gözünden bu radikal bir il değiştirme olduğundan o aynı zamanda boş bir post-modern trendi ile uğraş içindeymiş gibi görünür. Rorty'nin en yakın duruşlu eleştirmenlerinden olan Davidson, bu gibi şeylerin 1990larda yaygın bir pratik olduğuna ve edebiyat dergilerinin hakikat ile ilgili her şeyi "çöpe attığını"

gördüğüne dikkat çeker (Donald Davidson and Richard Rorty in Conversation, 1997). Rorty'nin bu anlamda çöpe attığı şey, dikkat etmeliyiz ki, her şey değil, içindeki insan-dışı kısıtlayıcı bir özelliktir. Rorty, ciddiyetsizlik suçlamalarına karşı, özgeçmişsel gerçekler bakımından 40lardan itibaren iyiye ya da kötüye doğru giden neler olduğunu göstermek için kendini açıklama ihtiyacı duyar.

Rorty, gerçekliğe yaklaşmanın dünyayı tahmin etme ve control etmede bizi daha avantajlı bir pozisyona taşımadan farklı olduğu fikrini vurgular. Söylemek istediği şey, hakikat dediğimiz bu durumda ona göre, “retorik bir sırt sıvazlamadır”. James'in hakikati “inanç yolunda amaca uygunluk” ve Dewey'nin “onaylanmış iddia edilebilirlik” tanımlamalarına dikkat çeker. Bu safhada Rorty için en önem arzeden şey, hakikati gerçeklikle örtüşme midir yoksa belli bir kitle için gerçekleştirilmiş inanç mıdır sorusunun cevabını sosyal etkilerin belirlemesidir. Bu, kültürel elementleri gerçekliğe öyle olduğu varsayılan yakınlıklarına göre sınıflandıran ve buna göre insanlık üzerinde otorite sahibi yapan eğilimden farklıdır. Hakikate karşı bu duruş, Rorty'yi zihin ve bilgi ile ilgili tartışmalardan anti-otoriterci bir politik pozisyona taşır. Bu Rorty felsefesinin öne çıkan özelliğidir; bunu kendinin de değerli kabul ettiği, Ramberg tarafından yazılmış, onun felsefesi ile ilgili en etkin makalelerden birinde görebiliriz. Makale Rorty'nin Davidson'cı semantiği yorumlaması üzerine bir değerlendirme ile başlar ve sonuç paragraflarında yazar Rorty'ci bir fikir olan demokrasinin felsefeye olan önceliği konusuna gelir. Rorty, objektif gerçekliğin bir ifadesi olarak hakikate başvurmadan yeni ve daha iyi inançlar örgüsü oluşturmak için yeni bir malzeme veren tüm girişimlerin hiyerarşik olmayan

bir şekilde bir araya getirilmesi olasılığını göstermenin bir yolu olarak gittikçe daha sosyolojik ve politik yönde ilerler.

Üçüncü bir safha, pragmatizmi anti-otoritercilik olarak adlandırdığı politik bir tavır olarak yorumlamasıdır. Robert Brandom bunu Rorty'nin felsefesinde, “temsilci semantic modeli gayrimeşrulaştırmak için” bir strateji değişikliği olarak görür (Brandom R., 2022). Brandom, bunun nedenini Rorty'nin “temsilci modeli kabul edenlerin şüphecilik ve temelcilik arasındaki ölüm-kalım savaşını çoğunlukla kaygısızlık içinde umursamamasının bir sosyolojik gerçek meselesi olduğu” (ibid.) gerçeğini fark etmesinde bulur. Brandom'a göre, yaklaşık olarak hayatının son on yılına denk gelen bir zamanda gerçekleşen bu “açık bir şekilde politik çizgi, onun düşünce evriminden hem beslenir hem de bunu mantıksal bir sonuca götürür (ibid.).” Bu Rorty'nin hakikate olan tavrı bakımından pragmatizm yorumunu Aydınlanma idealinin tamamlanması olarak ortaya koyduğu yerdir. Bu, insanlığın olgunluğa erişmede, kelimenin düz anlamı ile kararlarını insan-dışı bir otoritenin iznine başvurmadan neyin yanlış neyin doğru olduğuna kendi verebilen erişkin bir ırk olma idealidir. Brandom bunu “Rorty'nin, insan olmayan bir otoriteden pratik konularda kurtulma olan ilk Aydınlanma başarısının, bu temel dersi kuramsal anlayışsal konularda ki insan olmayan otoriteden kurtulmamıza uygulayarak genişletilmesini önerdiği şeklinde yorumlamaktadır” (ibid.).

Rorty'nin anti-temelci olarak anti-otoriter pozisyonu felsefesine yapılan relativist iddialar için de bir cevap niteliği taşır. Bu pozisyonu belli ahlaki, ideolojik, ya da sosyal amaçlar için kullanması, herhangi bir kuramsal temel için ikna edici bir neden

olmamasının herhangi bir amaç ya da değeri savunmak için neden olmaması anlamına geldiği inancını benimsemediğini gösterir. Bu, relativizmin, hiç bir temel olmamasını kendine temel aldığını var sayan kendi tutarsızlığı anlamına gelir. Rorty ve relativist düşünce bu anti temelci inancı paylaşır ama bundan ne çıkardıkları konusunda ayrılırlar. Rorty relativizmden temel eksikliğine pragmatist ele alma ile müdahale ettiği noktada ayrılır. “Relativistin kendini sürekli düşürdüğü öz-refereans zorluklarından kurtulmak için stratejisini, her şeyi epistemoloji ve metafizik alanından kültürel politikaya, bilgi iddilarından ve öz-kanıt başvurularından ne denememiz gerektiği ile ilgili önerilere taşımak” (Rorty R., 1998 s. 57) olarak açıkça ifade eder. Önerileri için çıkardığı derslerde, inançlarımız için gerekçeleri bir metafizik yüküleme itmektense, ““tarihsel bir farkındalığa” dayanır.

Rorty'nin kendi deneyimleri sosyal kaygılarına ve neden dayanışmanın adaletin temellerinden daha önemli bir amaç olduğuna dair bazı referanslar barındırır. Sürekli dayak yeme korkusu yaşadığı okul bahçesindeki erken büyümüş oğlan çocuğu olduğu yaşlarda, yetiştirildiği, kendi deyimi ile politik din, devrim gelir gelmez herşeyin, o zorba çocuklar dahil, nasıl düzeltileceğine dair umut vermiştir. Troçki'yi Alman casusu olma suçlamasından aklayan komiteden bahseder ama, der ki, komünist Rusya'nın yeni lideri Stalin yerine o olsaydı bile sonuç çok değışmezdi. Sonra, kendi büyükbabası Rauschenbusch'un öncülerinden biri olduğu, Tanrının Krallığını bu dünyada kurmak için sosyal adaleti tesis etme amacı ile etkin bir biçimde çalışan bir Protestan organizasyonu olan Gospel Hareketi gelir. Rorty, onu “önceki kuşağın sosyalisti”, anne-babasını da “onun sosyalizmini sürdürenler” olarak nitelendirir (Rorty R., 1995, p. 66). Kuramsal temellere ve pratikte fark yaratma

ölçütüne Rorty’ci bir bakış mülteci bir Alman Baptist görevliyi sosyalist devrimci, ve Marksist Sovyet devrimci lideri bir bağınaz yapar. Rauschenbusch Tanrı ve hakikat adına hareket etmiş olsa bile bu organizyonu haklı kılan bunlar değil dünya yararına oluşturulan değerdir, sadece sosyal adalet adına davranmak zulmü gerekçelendiremeyeceği gibi. Aynı nedenlerle Nazi benzeri ideolojilerin temelden yanlış olduğunu kanıtlayacak araçlara sahip değiliz bu durum onları haklı da çıkarmaz. Vahşet halihazırda relativist bir dünya görüşüne dayanmaktansa hakikat adına daha kolay gerçekleştiriliyor.

Rorty, meta-felsefi şüphelerini sık sık alıntılanan “kırk yıldır felsefenin, eğer varsa, ne işe yaradığını aradığı” sorusu ile ifade eder. Aynı zamanda, “en çok hayranlık duyduğu filozofların katkısının şeylerin birbirine nasıl bağlandığı dair önerileri olduğunu söyler ve kendi yazılarında da bu önerilerden bazılarının bir diğeri ile nasıl ilgili olduğuna dair önerilerde bulunmuştur ((Auxier & Hahn, 2010, s.4). Felsefenin, aşırı profesyonelleşme ve sosyal değişimde fark yaratma konusunda edilgen kalmak şikayetleri aldığı bir dönemde Rorty kavramsal düzlemimizi tekrar çizerek felsefede bir nabız yakalamıştır.

Bu tezde, 1. Bölüm, Rorty felsefesinin genel bir taslağı ve kendinin entellektüel özgeçmişidir. 2. Bölüm, en eski dönemi ile ilgilidir ve Rorty’nin zihin, dil, bilgi ve temsil ile felsefe hakkındaki görüşlerini içerir. Bu bölümde, zihin felsefesi üzerine en eski makalelerinde Rorty’nin daha sonra açıkça sorguladığı düşünce çerçevesi ile ilgili izler bulabileceğimizi göstermek istiyorum. Aynı zamanda realist karşıtları olan Michael Devitt ve William Alston’ın Rorty’nin vurguladığı bu ontolojik adanmışlık

resmine hitap edemediklerini iddia ediyorum. Devitt ve Alston'ın başaramadığı şeyi Bjørn Ramberg 'in Rorty'nin hakikat kavramı ile ilgili tartışmasında bulduğu bir eksiklikte yakaladığına dikkat çekmek istiyorum. 3. Bölüm, hakikat kavramı ve metafizik, bilimsel, sağduyu, anlam, Platon'un rolü ve etimolojisi bakımından genel algısı üzerine. Bu bölümde Rorty'nin dini bir anlayışa sık sık benzeterek hakikat kavramının dogmatic bir karakter niteliği olduğuna işaret ettiğini göstermek istiyorum. Hakikatin kullanımı ve anlamı konusunda, dini bağlamda nasıl mutlak bir anlam içinde kabul edildiği, bilimsel hakikatin bundan nasıl ayrıldığı, ve genel kanıda nasıl bir yeri olduğuna dair örnekler sunuyorum. Aynı zamanda, farklı his ve diğer kavramlarla çağrışımlarına bağlı olarak anlamından, ve bunu kavramları resimleştirerek düşünme biçimine nasıl alışkın olduğumuzla bağdaştırabileceğimizi umarak, edinebileceğimiz bir sezgiye sahip olabileceğimize inanıyorum. Daha sonra bu kullanımları Platon'un hakikatin görmekle çağrışımına bağdaştırmak istiyorum. Hakikatin etimolojisindeki bazı nosyonları, yakın çağrışımlı değerlerin, örneğin, gerçeklikle bağlantıda olmak, gerçeği söylemek, dürüstlük, doğruluk, bütünlük veya ciddiyet gibi, nasıl yanlış anlamalara neden olduğu bakımından Rorty'ye karşı bazı argümanlarla bağdaştırmak amacı ile sunuyorum. 4. Bölüm, Rorty'nin analitik-sonrası kaygıları ile ilgilidir. Bu, bir kenara bırakmayı önerdiği baştaki felsefi düşünce teşhisinin devamı niteliğinde bir pratiktir. Bu bölümde Rorty'nin ironi, adaleti sadakat bakımından değerlendirme, Searle ve Batı Rasyonalist Gelenek, argümantasyon, felsefi temeller, felsefenin Batı Rasyonalist Geleneği'ndeki rolü, ve insanlığın olgunlaşmasına yaklaşımının, dünyaya karşı yeni bir tavır olarak bir düşünce değişiminin sunumu olduğunu ve bunun da gerçek ile ilgili metafizik kaygıları, ontolojik bir uçurumun diğer tarafı ile nasıl ilişki

kurulacağını, veya nötr bir matris arayışını bir kenara bırakmak olduğunu göstermek istiyorum. Aynı doğrultuda, onun politik görüşleri ve diğer filozofları yorumlama biçimi de dahil olmak üzere, rasyonalist ve realist kaygılarla görüşlerine karşı eleştirilerin, ciddiyetsizlik suçlamaları dahil nasıl görüldüğünün de aynı zamanda bizi yönlendiren bir daha üst ontojik düzen inancından vazgeçme korkusunun bir ifadesi olduğunu göstermek niyetindeyim. 5. Bölüm, hakikat ile ilgisinde felsefenin işlevi ile ilgilidir. Entellektüel alışkanlıkları yönlendiren hakikat orada bir yerde resminin başlağıçtaki ifşasını göz önünde bulundurarak, Rorty'nin, nasıl "felsefenin büyüleyici resmini, tarihsel bir farkındalık yardımı ile bozduğı" göstermeye çalışacağım.

Rorty'nin yarattığı etki özellikle modern Batı Felsefesinin bazı kavramlarını sorgulaması ve eleştirmesi dolayısı ile olmuştur ve bu eleştirel açıklama onu zamanının en ihtilafli düşünürlerinden biri de yapmıştır. Dahası, argüman, ve kuram gibi bazı temel dialektik araçların yerini sorgular ve yerine, metafor, anlatım, tekrar tanımlama gibi, felsefi olmaktan çok genellikle edebi kabul edilen başkalarını felsefi diskurda bulundurulması için öner sürer. Biliçli bir şekilde eklektiktir; Dewey, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, ve Sellars gibi farklı geleneklerden gelen filozoflardan beslenir. Onların yoluyla anlamlı bir felsefi bir işleme ulaşma iddiası şüpheyile karşılanmış ve bazen onları yanlış yansıtmakla suçlanmıştır. Hakkındaki ihtilaf çoğunlukla, bilimsel ya da felsefi araştırmanın en yüksek amacı olarak herhangi bir koşullu olma durumundan bağımsız olarak dışarda bir yerde keşfedilmeyi bekliyor olarak var sayıldığını düşündüğü hakikat fikrine eleştirilerinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bunun relativist bir tavır olduğunu reddedip, felsefi konumunu ikisine de başvurmadan

savunmuştur. Objektivite sunduğu hizmetlerden çıkınca hakikat büyüsünü kaybeder ve ironi, olumsuzluğun burkulmaları ile rezonans halinde bir duruş olarak devreye girer. Bazı kavramları vurgulamayı bırakıp başkalarını üzerinde yeni bir vurgu önermek, felsefede gelişme olarak düşünülebilecek, Rorty'nin eski ve yeniyi birbiriyle çarpıştırmak dediği durumun bir parçasıdır.

Modern felsefe eleştirisi göz önüne alındığında, Rorty ile ilgili bir başka tartışma çıkarıcı konu, onun felsefi ve politik görüşleri arasındaki iddia edilen tutarsızlıktır. Modern felsefeyi değerlendirme ve olası alternatifleri önerme şekli oldukça postmodern görünebilir fakat bu nedenle, politik olarak, Foucault, Baudrillard ve Lyotard gibi uygun bir radikal sol politika değil de soğuk savaş liberalizmini benimsediğinde bir paradoksa yakalandığına inanıldı. Rorty ile ilgili anlaşmazlıklar, modern felsefenin varsayımlarını sorguladıkça tırmanır, çünkü bu kavramlar hem bununla ilgili, felsefenin bilgi iddialarına temel oluşturan kurucu bir disiplin olarak anlaşılmasını destekler hem de böyle bir felsefe nosyonu bu epistemolojik geleneği pekiştirir. Rorty modern felsefenin böylesi kurucu ilkelerini sorgulayıp oldukça sezgi dışı bulunan seçenekler öne sürdüğünde felsefenin sonu için iddialarda bulunduğu bile inanılmıştır. Bu iddiaları, pragmatizminin bazı pragmatist düşünürler tarafından reddedilmesine de neden olmuştur. Felsefesi, eleştirdiği noktalarda postmodern olarak alındığında, politik olarak soğuk savaş liberalizmini benimsemesi, Foucault, Baudrillard, ve Lyotard gibi yeterince sol bulunmadığından bir çelişki olarak görüldü.

Bir fikre katılıp katılmadığımızı bunların hakikat ya da şeylerin esasen ne oluşuna uyumlarına bakarak değil, sosyal umut, bir şeyleri yaratıcı biçimde tekrar tanımlama, ya da zümü azaltmaya hizmet etme gibi yarattıkları değere göre ifade edebileceğimizi savunmakla kalmayıp, felsefi, politik ve hatta bilimsel meselelere, metafor, kelime haznesi, karşılıklı konuşma, seyirci, ve yeniden tanımlama gibi bir takım edebi terimlerle yaklaştı. *Olumsuzluk, ironi, ve dayanışma*'da argümanlar yerine anlatımı amaçlarına ulaşmada daha iyi bir yol olarak benimsedi.

Rorty'nin çizdiği liberal ironist, kamu ve özeli ayrıldığı ama bir diğerine üstünlük kurmadığı kendi felsefi ve politik görüşlerinin vücut bulmuş halidir. Kierkegaard ve Socrates gibi diğer ironist filozoflardan farklı olarak, kavramdan çok personayı öne çıkarır. Dikkat çektiği ironi değil ironisttir. Öyle görülüyor ki, bir sistem inşası yerine aydınlatma ve terapik bir yaklaşım için ironik bir konumda olmak gerekiyor. Böyle bir ironik duruş, bir diğer konuma, gerçekte sahip olduğumuz mesafenin tersini koymak gibi görünüyor: eğer yakınsa ve kör noktalar yüzünden bir şeyler kaçırılabilirse, onu bağlamı içinde görebilecek kadar uzak bir mesafeye; ya da, uzaktan göremediklerimizi görebilmek için yeterince yakına koymak gibi. Bu da alışlagelenden daha farklı bir tavır ve varsayımlarımızla ilgili tetikte olmayı gerektirir.

Hakikat sağduyuya derinden işlemiş ve sonucunda bu hakikat fikrini bırakma önerisi de sağduyuya karşı durmak gibi anlaşılmaktadır. Rorty'nin dogmaya karşı tavrı bir başlangıç noktasıdır ama beklenildiği gibi ve bazen iddia edildiği gibi felsefi sarkacın relativist ucuna doğru savrulmaz. Onun eleştirisi felsefe tarihinden aldığı derstir.

Gerçeğin esas olarak kedi içinde olduğu şey olarak hakikat nosyonuna karşı alternatif bir hakikat kuramı için karşı argümanlar üretmez, o daha çok, felsefedeki günümüz hakikat fikrinin arkasındaki varsayımları aydınlatıp hakikat düşüncesinin bir dogma haline geldiğini göstermektedir. Rorty'nin devirmek istediği, büyük harfle başlaması gereken böyle bir nosyondur. Araştırmanın amacı olarak objektif hakikat, ona göre, Aydınlanma ilerleme idealine zarar vermediyse bile ona katkıda bulunmayı bırakmıştır. Görüntü ve gerçek kavramları da, şeylerin gerçekten ne olduklarına yaklaşmak ya da ulaşmayı, kültürel, bilimsel ya da ahlaki alanlarda bir amaç olarak ortaya konmasında ilerleme anlayışının yönün işaret eder. Bilim ve ahlak alanlarında ayrı ilerleme açıklamaları yapmak Rorty'ye karşı temsilcilik önerilerinin yeni bir entelektüel boyutudur. Böyle bir ahlaki ilerleme diğer varlıklara ahlaki sorumluluk artışı olarak onların farklı gerçeklerini tanımadan mümkün değildir. Objektif hakikat fikri yeni gestalt değişimlerinde bir engel teşkil eder ama, ona göre, “felsefe tarihi araştırma programlarının meşakkatle yürütülmesinin değil Gestalt değişimlerinin tarihidir” (Rorty., 1998, p.11). Felsefenin ilerleme için görevi, çoğunlukla, “geçmişte kültürümüzün tırmandığı vazgeçilmez merdivenleri atmak” için artık kullanılmayan düşünce tavırlarını görerek “daha önce kavranmayan bir olasılığın işaretlerini yakalamak” (ibid., 8.) ve böylece “yeni problemler çözmektir (ibid., 6).

Rorty, bilgi ve hakikat hakkında değişmeyen sorular üzerine alternatif bir kuram inşa etmeye inanmaz ama, metafelsefi düzeyde işleyen bir tutarlı bir programa sahip diyebiliriz. Rorty'nin soru ve eleştirelini, felsefenin belli bir kendi-imgesine cevap ve başka bir perspektif önerisi olarak metafelsefi bir çerçevede ele almak bazı görüşlerinin görünürdeki bağdaşmazlığını ortadan kaldırabilir ve bunları onun

felsefe kavramına katkısı olarak sunabilir. Rorty, kendine has tarihsel tavrı içinde felsefenin ne işe yaradığı ve filozofun görevi ile ilgili sorularla felsefenin şu anki durumunu problem edinir. Tarif ettiği görünen durum o ki, “felsefe tek bir şey değildir” ve farklı ekoller ve programlar felsefe adı altında çeşitlilik gösterebilir. İstenilen sonuçlara cevap vermemeye başladıklarında birer “alet” olarak bir kenara bırakılmaları gerektiğini gösteren bir son kullanma tarihi vardır. Rorty’nin hakikat eleştirisinin olumsuzluğun önemini kabul etmesinin doğrudan bir sonucu olduğu ortaya çıkıyor.

Pragmatizm Rorty’nin olgun felsefesinin temel dayanaklarından biridir. Çoğunlukla Dewey’den ve daha az ölçüde James’ten miras aldığı Pragmatizmi kendine has bir şekilde yorumlar, öyle ki, kendi versiyonu gelenek içinde genelde Neo-pragmatizm adı ile bir ayrışmaya neden olmuştur. Rorty’nin felsefesinde hakikatin yerini göz önünde bulundurarak Russell’ın pragmatizm için “James’te görüldüğü gibi, bir hakikat tanımıdır” (Russell, 2004, p. 724) teşhisini düşündüğümüzde Pragmatizmin onun düşüncesindeki önemini anlamamızı sağlayabilir. Pragmatist hakikat kavramını bir önermenin doğruluğunu pratikteki etkilerine göre tartmak olarak alarak Rorty, *Pragmatizmin Sonuçları*, 1982, adlı eserinde, Pragmatizmi, hakikatin “iyilik”ten daha fazla felsefi olarak ilginç bir sonuç getireceğini beklemememiz gerektiğini söyleyen bir tavır olarak yorumlar. Buradaki “ilginç” sözcüğü, “kapı gibi argümanlar”, basmakalıp sözler veya *theoria*’dan çok “şiiysel yetenek” sahibi olan yazarların eserlerinde bulabileceğimiz, yenilik, yeni tanımlar, yeni metaforlar veya yeni bir kelime haznesine işaret ederek önem arzeder.

Rorty, felsefeye karşı, hakikati ortaya çıkarmada insanlık kültürünün en yüksek başarılarından bir olarak görmeye karşı felsefeye yüceltici olmayan bir tavır içindedir. Edebiyat ve diğer sanat alanlarında toplumu dönüştürmek için daha fazla olasılıklar görmesi, aynı zamanda onun metafizik umutlardan oldukça “düş kırıklığına uğramış” (Habermas., 2000, s. 32) ve rasyonel entellektüel standartları bırakıp bir “subjektif çılgınlığı”⁶³ yükseltmek isteyen bir filozof imgesine katkıda bulunan başka bir etken olmuştur. Bu tür düşünce dayanaklarını sorgulamak, Rorty’nin, farklı soruların yüksek bir profile erişmesi ve bunu kaybetmesi olarak gördüğü modern felsefe tarihi ile olan ilgisine dayanan metafelsefi teşhisinin bir parçasıdır.

⁶³ Russell, William James’in pragmatizminden bahsederken (Russell, 2004, s. 723-737).

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YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Korkut
Adı / Name : Handan Hacer
Bölümü / Department : Felsefe / Philosophy

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