Apories of essentialism – Rorty’s critique of essentialism

Kelmendi, Labinot

Doctoral thesis / Disertacija

2025

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Filozofski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:711755

Rights / Prava: In copyright / Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2025-03-23**

Sveučilište u Zagrebu
Filozofski fakultet
University of Zagreb
Faculty of Humanities
and Social Sciences

Repository / Repozitorij:

ODRAZ - open repository of the University of Zagreb
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

DIGITALNI AKADEMSKI ARHIVI I REPOZITORIJI

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Labinot Kelmendi

APORIES OF ESSENTIALISM – RORTY'S CRITIQUE OF ESSENTIALISM

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Supervisors: Professor Lino Veljak, PHD

Associate Professor Astrit Salihu, PHD

Zagreb, 2025.

Filozofski fakultet

Labinot Kelmendi

APORIJE ESENCIJALIZMA – RORTYJEVA KRITIKA ESENCIJALIZMA

DOKTORSKI RAD

Mentori: prof. dr. sc. Lino Veljak

izv. prof. dr. sc. Astrit Salihu

Zagreb, 2025.

Information about the supervisor Professor Lino Veljak, PHD

Lino Veljak was born in 1950 in Rijeka. He earned his bachelor's degree (1973), master's degree (1976, *Philosophical Foundations of the Theory of Reflection*), and doctoral degree (1982, *The Philosophy of Praxis in Antonio Gramsci*) at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb.

From 1974 to 1976, he worked as a philosophy and logic teacher at the Second Gymnasium in Zagreb. In 1976, he became an assistant at the Institute of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb (from 1978, the Department of the History of Philosophy at the Center for Historical Sciences), where he attained the academic rank of Research Assistant in 1978. In 1979, he continued in the same position at the Department of Theoretical Philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. He was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1983, Associate Professor in 1990, and Full Professor in 2002. Since 1992, he has served as the Head of the Department of Ontology. He temporarily held the position of Head of the Philosophy Department in the academic year 1982/83. Additionally, he was the Department Chair from 1992 to 1994 and from 2006 to 2010, after which he served as Deputy Chair.

During the 1990/91 academic year, he was a Humboldt Fellow at the University of Frankfurt. He has lectured at numerous universities in Croatia and abroad. From 2001 to 2008, he taught the *Philosophy of History* at the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka. Between the academic years 2005/06 and 2009, he also taught the same course at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split. Following this, he taught the course for two years at the Department of Philosophy, University of Zadar.

Prof. Veljak has led several scientific research projects, served as a member of various editorial boards and advisory councils of philosophical journals, and was a member of the Executive Board of the Croatian Philosophical Society on multiple occasions. From 2009 to 2011, he served as the President of the Croatian Philosophical Society. He has also been a long-standing member of the National Committee for Philosophy and Theology and has served as its Chair since 2017. Since 2005, he has been the Director of the Doctoral Program in Philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb.

Podatci o mentoru prof. dr. sc. Lino Veljaku

Rođen 1950. u Rijeci, diplomirao (1973), magistrirao (1976: „Filozofijske osnove teorije odraza“) i doktorirao (1982: „Filozofija prakse Antonija Gramscija“) na Filozofskom fakultetu u Zagrebu. Od 1974. do 1976. bio je nastavnik filozofije i logike na Drugoj gimnaziji u Zagrebu. Godine 1976. postaje asistent u Institutu za filozofiju Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (od 1978. Odjel za povijest filozofije Centra za povijesne znanosti), gdje je 1978. stekao suradničko zvanje znanstvenog asistenta. U istom zvanju radi od 1979. na Katedri za teorijsku filozofiju Odsjeka za filozofiju na Filozofskom fakultetu u Zagrebu. Godine 1983. izabran je u zvanje docenta, 1990. u zvanje izvanrednog profesora, a 2002. u zvanje redovitog profesora. Od 1992. predstojnik je Katedre za ontologiju. Dužnost pročelnika Odsjeka privremeno je obavljao 1982./83. Od 1992. do 1994. te od 2006. do 2010. bio je pročelnik Odsjeka, a nakon toga zamjenik pročelnika.

Akad. godine 1990/91. boravio je kao Humboldtov stipendist na Sveučilištu u Frankfurtu. Gostovao je na većem broju domaćih i inozemnih sveučilišta. Od 2001. do 2008. dopunski je predavao filozofiju povijesti na Odsjeku za filozofiju Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci, a od akad. godine 2005/06. do 2009. i na Filozofskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Splitu. Nakon toga predavao je dvije godine spomenuti kolegij na Odjelu za filozofiju Sveučilišta u Zadru.

Bio je voditelj nekoliko znanstveno-istraživačkih projekata, član raznih uredništava i savjeta filozofskih časopisa te u više navrata član Upravnog odbora Hrvatskog filozofskog društva, a od 2009. do 2011. bio je predsjednik HFD-a. U više mandata bio je član Matičnog odbora za filozofiju i teologiju, a predsjednik tog odbora je od 2017. Od 2005. također je voditelj poslijediplomskog doktorskog studija filozofije na Filozofskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.

Information about the supervisor Associate Professor Astrit Salihu, PHD

Astrit Salihu is a professor of philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Pristina. He teaches Ancient Philosophy, Media Philosophy, Philosophy of History, and Philosophy of the Subject. Additionally, he has taught Philosophy of Architecture at the Faculty of Architecture and currently teaches Philosophy of Art and Culture at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Pristina.

He has also lectured at international universities as a visiting professor, including University College London, the University of Ljubljana, and the University of Zagreb.

From 1997 to 2002, he served as the Director of the Gani Bobi Center for Humanities in Pristina, and from 2002 to 2005, he was the Deputy General Director of Radio Television of Kosovo. He completed his doctoral studies in philosophy in Zagreb in 2008.

Podatci o drugom mentoru izv. prof. dr. sc. Astrit Salihu

Astrit Salihu je profesor filozofije na Filozofskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Prištini. Predaje antičku filozofiju, filozofiju medija, filozofiju povijesti i filozofiju subjekta. Također, predavao je na Fakultetu arhitekture, filozofiju arhitekture, a trenutno na Fakultetu likovnih umjetnosti na UP predaje filozofiju umjetnosti i kulture. Predavao je i na međunarodnim sveučilištima kao gostujući predavač na University College London, Sveučilištu u Ljubljani i Sveučilištu u Zagrebu.

Od 1997. do 2002. bio je direktor Centra za humanističke studije Gani Bobi u Prištini, a od 2002. do 2005. zamjenik generalnog direktora Radiotelevizije Kosova. Poslijediplomski doktorski studij filozofije završio je u Zagrebu 2008.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Professor Astrit Salihu, whose philosophical inspiration has shaped my endeavors

ZAHVALE

Posvećeno profesoru Astritu Salihuu, čiji su filozofski uvidi i inspiracija duboko oblikovali moja intelektualna nastojanja.

STRUCTURAL SUMMARY

The purpose of this work is to outline the constitutive elements of the views of the American philosopher Richard Rorty (1931-2007). His entire philosophy is marked by a trope known as "anti-essentialism." Anti-essentialism, simply put, is a radical critique of traditional philosophy that sought to be grounded in ahistorical and intelligible essences. Essentialism begins with a pivotal moment in the history of philosophy, specifically Plato's epistemological framework, reaching its zenith with the Kantian system. Anti-philosophers (Groys 2012), such as Nietzsche and later Heidegger, are among the first anti-essentialists. Essentialism finds its support in academic thermos-topes, where its status is seldom questioned. In this paper, we will address the radical critique of essences through Rorty's views, whether they derive from a theoretical-centric provenance, such as epistemology (in the analytical tradition), or arise from a more practical realm, as seen in certain ideologies. For Rorty, epistemological totalitarianism is not fundamentally different from ideological totalitarianism, as both are constructed upon the yearning for an unquestionable and monomaniacal essence.

The trajectory of Richard Rorty's intellectual development coincides with the intensification of his critique. In his first *magnum opus*, "*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*", he provides a radical critique of philosophy centered on epistemology. This critique encompasses both the historical dimension and contemporary thematizations in the philosophy of language, mind, and science, all of which are closely related to representationalism—a mode of thought around which essentialism gravitates within the analytical philosophy circles. This critique corresponds with the first part of this dissertation, which elaborates on the concept of the mirror of nature and Rorty's 'edifying' alternative. In the first section, Rorty's critique is examined against what he refers to as Glassy Essences and the Eye of Mind, which, when reduced, relate to the extension of Descartes' philosophy into analytical philosophy. This extension initially permeates current debates surrounding the problem of consciousness and mind—a debate between cognitivism and philosophy of mind. Both positions, while differing, are derivatives of the marking of the 'mental' or 'mentalism', which is a legacy of Descartes. Rorty observes these impulses in the philosophy of language as well. The central aspect, according to Rorty, is the critique of the Kantian derivative in the Anglo-Saxon reflective tradition. This Kantian derivative is facilitated through a conceptual tool that Kant calls "*Erkenntnistheorie.*" This conceptual tool will undergo a

metamorphosis, emerging in current philosophical trends as epistemology or theory of knowledge. Through this theory, representationalism is established, which implies the "secure path of philosophy to science.' Representationalism, via the theory of knowledge, creates a dictation surrounding the problem of knowledge—this dictation is conveyed through discursive extensions: 1) privileged representations and 2) accurate representations. Representationalism aims to establish [Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft] (Heidegger), thus positioning philosophy as a rigorous science that engages with specific problems and themes related to logic, truth, language, and mind—a kind of attempt to detach philosophy from social dynamics. Yet, within this essentialist framework, certain sparks emerge, attempting to create new paths outside the rigid worldviews of the analytical tradition. This turn is known as 'behaviorism' or 'psychological nominalism' and is represented by a dynamic quartet: Nelson Goodman, W.V.O. Quine, Wilfrid Sellars, and Donald Davidson. These thinkers disrupt the analytical worldview by creating new forms of expression. The influence of these thinkers renders Rorty's pragmatism a 'linguistic pragmatism.'

The alternative to this philosophical approach can be found in what may be termed "Rorty's pragmatic hermeneutics." As a framework that can temporarily withstand epistemological domination, Rorty proposes hermeneutics. The variant he embraces combines several tropes of classical hermeneutics, such as historicity and horizon, with the historical approach of the philosophy of science (Kuhn, Feyerabend, Lakatos). Pragmatic hermeneutics serves as a viable means to engage with the interpretative community and democratize science. This democratization seeks a shift from cognitans to sur-cognitans, as Bachelard posits. The truths of science are not the creations of an individual but are part of the flow of the scientific interpretative community within a specific temporal context, a notion that Fleck refers to as 'mutual attunement.' We will conclude this first part by presenting the antidote to representationalism: 'edifying' philosophy. For Richard Rorty, edifying philosophy means: "I shall use 'edification' to stand for this project of finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking. The attempt to edify (ourselves or others) may consist in the hermeneutic activity of making connections between our own culture and some exotic culture or historical period, or between our own discipline and another discipline which seems to pursue incommensurable aims in an incommensurable vocabulary" (Rorty 1979: 360). Edifying philosophy encompasses not only Rorty's philosophical 'heroes'—Heidegger, Dewey, and Wittgenstein—but also continental philosophers like Nietzsche, Foucault, and Derrida.

Edifying philosophy will serve as a gateway to consolidating his pragmatic variant, as well as the notion that is both debatable and polemical: the concept of post-philosophical culture.

In the second part, we will outline Rorty's neo-pragmatism. Rorty's neo-pragmatism is based on discourse rather than experience, as is the case with classical pragmatism. Considering this, we may refer to this redesign of pragmatism as linguistic pragmatism. In this section, alongside elaborating on linguistic pragmatism as a radical critique of two theories of truth—those of correspondence and coherence—we will focus on the concept of post-philosophical culture. We will dissect post-philosophical culture by making comparisons and drawing tangents with the concept of anti-philosophy. Post-philosophical culture is part of the context created by post-metaphysical thought. Thus, it is democratic, plural, and marked by the moment of the decline of sovereign registers, both in epistemology and other dimensions of social dynamics. From this juncture, Rorty's entire academic career will be characterized by his confrontations with thinkers of both provenances regarding the idiosyncratic reading of pragmatism.

In the third part, we will focus on the elaboration of the problem of contingency. Rorty's philosophy cannot be fully understood without examining contingency. In fact, Calcaterra refers to Rorty's reflections on contingency as "contingentism" (Calcaterra 2019). Rorty's contingentism is constituted by two main elements: 1) contingency and 2) nominalism. In Rorty's contingentism, contingency and nominalism achieve harmony, as both are situated within history. In this section, we will dissect the concept of contingency in Rorty across its three dimensions: 1) as contingency in language, viewing language not as something ahistorical or intelligible, but as a product of historical contingencies; 2) the contingency of selfhood, which can be interpreted as a critique of subject-centrism, yet also as an affirmation of the creative potential expressed through contingency; and 3) the contingency of community, which represents the neuralgic point of Rorty's reflection, as he attempts to link his anti-foundationalism and anti-essentialism with his political worldviews. Through community, he emphasizes the primacy of democracy over philosophy. Rorty's democratic community consists of an inseparable triptych that includes democracy, solidarity, and freedom.

In the fourth part, we will elaborate on what we term 'authentic liberality' and Rorty's non-theoretical solidarity. Rorty's authentic liberality will initially be analyzed through a historical lens, examining how liberalism as an idea has been constructed in political philosophy. This historical

analysis leads to the conclusion that there is no precise definition of liberalism, except for certain postulates that, depending on different thinkers and periods, have held various meanings and connotations. At this juncture, Rorty's authentic liberality represents a combination of the egalitarian root and the freedom inherent in liberalism with the American democratic principles of Whitman and Dewey, which emphasize brotherhood, solidarity, and an ethical/radical democracy. These values are essential for understanding the emancipatory anthropo-poetic vision that Rorty endeavors to present. His vision, at first glance, may seem romantic, but it embodies a 'romanticism of everyday life' (Critchley 1999).

After elaborating on authentic liberalism, we will focus on dissecting the concept of the liberal ironist. Initially, we will analyze his critique of "agelasts" (people who do not laugh), based on reflections by writer Milan Kundera. Then we will conduct a historical introspection regarding the problem of irony, starting from a philological aspect and moving to the philosophical dimension, and ultimately to literature and literary criticism, where irony finds significant application in both reflection and creativity within the literary process. The conclusion of this section will attempt to synthesize a narrative through the lens of the political turn in Rorty's thought. In this section, we will also analyze the concept of hope, which in Rorty does not have messianic overtones. Perhaps the best way to understand hope, in the context of Richard Rorty's philosophy, is through Havel's expression that 'hope is not a preorganization.' After analyzing the concept of hope, we will turn to the concept of 'non-theoretical solidarity,' one of the most important concepts in Rorty's work. 'Non-theoretical solidarity' has three main components: a) it is historical, b) it is contextual, and c) it is not subjected to any theoretical or ideological projection. These two conceptual tools—hope and non-theoretical solidarity—create what Rorty calls 'social poetry.' Social poetry allows us to maintain a manifesto for improvement, with the aim of reducing institutional cruelty and social denigration. According to Rorty, through social poetry we make the world less cruel.

In the final section, we will delve into the context of constructing essentialism through the urging of philosophers towards the truth. At this point, we will conduct a genealogy of the concept of truth, examining how it becomes a crucial part of thinking within the metaphysics-epistemology binomial. In this chapter, we will present Rorty's critique of this mode of philosophical thought and truth. At the same time, in this section, we will also outline his position regarding truth, which

is constructed, contextual, and should be based on events and actuality. This vision of truth could also be freely referred to as ‘minimal truth’ (Davidson).

In conclusion, we will offer a turn towards narrative as a poetic and human-too-human way of constructing our hopes. Perhaps the conclusion encapsulates the very phrase as follows: ‘A *poiesis* as a creative act for a human-all-too-human *praxis.*’

SAŽETAK

Svrha ovog rada je prikazati konstitutivne elemente pogleda američkog filozofa Richarda Rortyja (1931.–2007.). Njegova filozofija obilježena je tropom poznatim kao „anti-esencijalizam“. Anti-esencijalizam, pojednostavljeno rečeno, predstavlja radikalnu kritiku tradicionalne filozofije koja se nastojala temeljiti na ahistorijskim i razumljivim esencijama. Esencijalizam ima svoje ishodište u ključnom trenutku povijesti filozofije, konkretno u Platonovom epistemološkom okviru, dosežući svoj vrhunac u Kantovom sustavu. Anti-filozofi (Groys 2012.), poput Nietzschea i kasnije Heideggera, ubrajaju se među prve anti-esencijaliste. Esencijalizam pronalazi uporište u akademskim termotopima, gdje je njegov status rijetko dovođen u pitanje. U ovom radu razmatrat ćemo radikalnu kritiku esencija kroz Rortyjeve stavove, bilo da proizlaze iz teorijsko-centrične provenijencije, poput epistemologije (u analitičkoj tradiciji), ili izviru iz praktičnijeg područja, kao što je slučaj s određenim ideologijama. Za Rortyja, epistemološki totalitarizam nije bitno različit od ideološkog totalitarizma, budući da su oba izgrađena na težnji za neupitnom i monomaničnom esencijom.

Razvoj intelektualne putanje Richarda Rortyja podudara se s intenziviranjem njegove kritike. U svom prvom magnum opusu, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty nudi radikalnu kritiku filozofije usmjerene na epistemologiju. Ta kritika obuhvaća i povijesnu dimenziju i suvremene tematizacije u filozofiji jezika, uma i znanosti, koje su usko povezane s reprezentacionalizmom—načinom mišljenja oko kojega se esencijalizam okuplja unutar krugova analitičke filozofije. Ključni aspekt, prema Rortyju, jest kritika kantovskog derivata u anglosaksonskoj refleksivnoj tradiciji. Taj kantovski derivat ostvaruje se kroz konceptualni alat koji Kant naziva „Erkenntnistheorie“. Taj konceptualni alat prolazi metamorfozu, pojavljujući se u suvremenim filozofskim tendencijama kao epistemologija ili teorija spoznaje. Kroz ovu teoriju, uspostavlja se reprezentacionalizam, koji podrazumijeva „sigurni put filozofije prema znanosti“. Reprezentacionalizam, putem teorije spoznaje, diktira problematiku znanja—ta diktatura se provodi kroz diskurzivne ekstenzije: 1) privilegirane reprezentacije i 2) točne reprezentacije. Reprezentacionalizam nastoji uspostaviti *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft* (Husserl), pozicionirajući filozofiju kao rigoroznu znanost koja se bavi specifičnim problemima i temama vezanim uz logiku, istinu, jezik i um—vrsta pokušaja odvajanja filozofije od društvene dinamike.

U drugom dijelu prikazat ćemo Rortyjev neo-pragmatizam. Rortyjev neo-pragmatizam temelji se na diskursu, a ne na iskustvu, kao što je to bio slučaj s klasičnim pragmatizmom. S obzirom na to, ovaj redizajn pragmatizma možemo nazvati jezičnim pragmatizmom. U ovom ćemo dijelu, uz razradu jezičnog pragmatizma kao radikalne kritike dviju teorija istine—one korespondencije i koherentnosti—posebno obraditi koncept post-filozofske kulture. Post-filozofsku kulturu analizirat ćemo usporedbom i povlačenjem paralela s konceptom anti-filozofije.

U trećem dijelu fokusirat ćemo se na razradu problema kontingencije. Rortyjevu filozofiju nije moguće u potpunosti razumjeti bez sagledavanja kontingencije. Calcaterra čak Rortyjeve refleksije o kontingenciji naziva „kontingentizmom" (Calcaterra 2019.). Rortyjev kontingentizam sastoji se od dva glavna elementa: 1) kontingencije i 2) nominalizma. U Rortyjevom kontingentizmu, kontingencija i nominalizam dolaze u sklad, budući da su oba smještena unutar povijesti. U ovom ćemo dijelu analizirati koncept kontingencije kod Rortyja u tri dimenzije: 1) kao kontingenciju jezika, koji se ne shvaća kao nešto ahistorijsko ili razumljivo, već kao proizvod povijesnih kontingencija; 2) kontingenciju sebstva, koja se može interpretirati kao kritika subjekt-centričnosti, ali i kao afirmacija kreativnog potencijala izraženog kroz kontingenciju; i 3) kontingenciju zajednice, koja predstavlja neuralgičnu točku Rortyjeve refleksije, jer pokušava povezati svoj anti-fundacionalizam i anti-esencijalizam sa svojim političkim svjetonazorima.

U četvrtom dijelu razradit ćemo ono što nazivamo „autentičnom liberalnošću" i Rortyjevom ne-teorijskom solidarnošću. Autentičnu liberalnost najprije ćemo analizirati kroz povijesnu prizmu, istražujući kako je liberalizam kao ideja konstruiran u političkoj filozofiji. Povijesna analiza dovodi do zaključka da ne postoji precizna definicija liberalizma, osim određenih postulata koji, ovisno o različitim misliocima i razdobljima, imaju različita značenja i konotacije.

Nakon elaboracije autentične liberalnosti, usmjerit ćemo se na analizu koncepta liberalnog ironika. Prvotno ćemo analizirati njegovu kritiku „agelasta" (ljudi koji se ne smiju), oslanjajući se na refleksije pisca Milana Kundere. Zatim ćemo provesti povijesnu introspekciju problema ironije, počevši od filološkog aspekta i prelazeći na filozofsku dimenziju, a potom na književnost i književnu kritiku, gdje ironija pronalazi značajnu primjenu i u refleksiji i u kreativnosti unutar književnog procesa. Možda je najbolji način za razumijevanje nade u kontekstu filozofije Richarda Rortyja kroz Havelov izraz da „nada nije preorganizacija". Nakon analize koncepta nade, prelazimo na koncept „ne-teorijske solidarnosti", jednog od najvažnijih koncepata u Rortyjevom

djelu. „Ne-teorijska solidarnost“ ima tri glavne komponente: a) povijesna je, b) kontekstualna je i c) nije podvrgnuta nikakvoj teorijskoj ili ideološkoj projekciji. Ta dva konceptualna alata—nada i ne-teorijska solidarnost—čine ono što Rorty naziva „socijalna poezija“. Socijalna poezija omogućuje održavanje manifesta za unapređenje, s ciljem smanjenja institucionalne okrutnosti i društvenog poniženja.

U završnom dijelu ulazimo u kontekst izgradnje esencijalizma kroz težnju filozofa prema istini. Na ovoj točki provodimo genealogiju koncepta istine, istražujući kako ona postajeključnim dijelom mišljenja unutar binoma metafizike-epistemologije. U ovom ćemo poglavlju predstaviti Rortyjevu kritiku tog načina filozofskog mišljenja i istine.

Na kraju, nudimo zaokret prema naraciji kao poetskom i ljudski-previše-ljudskom načinu izgradnje naših nada. Zaključak se možda najbolje sažima u frazi: “Poiesis kao kreativan čin za ljudski-previše-ljudsku praxis“

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

pragmatizam. antiesencializam, postfilozofija, autentični liberalitet, neteoretski solidarnost

KEY WORDS

Pragmatism, Anti-Essentialism, Post-Philosophy, Authentic Liberality, Non-theoretical Solidarity

Table of Contents

1. Introduction: A Space Beyond Logic……..1

2. MIRROR OF NATURE.....3

2.1 Prelude (A Diagnosis of Philosophy as Mirror of Nature).....3

2.1.1 Welcome to the Eye of the Mind.....24

2.1.3 Representationalism as Miror of Nature.....37

2.1.4 Pathway Nominalist Conversations: Quine and Sellars.....45

2.1.5 Endgame of Mirror of Nature.....57

2.1.6 The Pragmatic Hermeneutics and Democratization of Science.....60

2.1.7 Edifying Philosophy.....68

3. PRAGMATISM.....74

3.1 Redesigning Pragmatism.....74

3.1.1. Neo-Pragmatism: Linguistic Pragmatism.....84

3.2 An Anti-Fondancionalist Perspective.....91

3.3 Post-Philosophical Insight.....102

4. CONTINGENCY.....113

4.1 Contingency: Break On Through (To Contingency).....113

4.2 The Contingency of Language.....118

4.3 The De-Divinized Poem: Contingency and Selfhood.....131

4.4 Literalizing Liberalism: The Contingency of Liberal Community.....140

4.4.1 Community and its Discontents.....142

4.4.2 Toward the Democratic Community.....146

4.4.3 The Parliament of Literature.....153

5. LIBERALISM AND SOLIDARITY.....158

5.1 Rorty: Liberality as the Pathway for Authetic Liberal.....158

5.2 Against the Agelasts: Irony as an Ethical Alternative.....169

5.2.1 The Bricolage of Irony: A Brief Reflective History.....172

5.2.2 Rorty's Liberal Irony.....178

5.3 Revitalizing Hope.....182

5.3.1 Social Poetry: Non-theoretical Solidarity.....186

6. CODA: TRUTH WITHOUT ESSENCE.....191

6.1 Truth in a Theoretical Desert.....191

6.1.1 Fractures in the Post-Metaphysical Concept of Truth.....195

6.1.2 Rorty's Pragmatist Conception of Truth.....197

7. Instead of a Conclusion: A World History of Narratives 199
BIBLIOGRAPHY 201
AUTHORS BIOGRAPHY 227

1. Introduction: A Space Beyond Logic

The introduction serves as a heuristic guide within the broader framework of this discourse. It is here that the theoretical foundation of the author's enterprise must be articulated. This introduction adheres to that scholarly imperative, while also seeking to explore paths beyond conventional scholastic structures. The inquiry begins with a fundamental question: why focus on Rorty? The answer is embedded within the ensuing pages of this thesis. Rorty was a key figure during a period of intensified critique of meta-narratives, providing a creative voice within the dichotomous landscape of philosophical thought. To further contextualize this inquiry, a particular biographical moment is illuminating: Richard Rorty's name emerged initially in the classroom of Professor Astrit Salihu, who employed Rorty's conceptual frameworks to critically assess my 'Euro-Marxist' perspectives. Consequently, this engagement with Rorty's philosophy originated within a polemical context, a fitting entry point given Rorty's inclination to continuously reassess his theoretical positions. As Hilary Putnam observes in a documentary on American philosophy: "Rorty has read everyone."

Given the extensive thematic scope, reflections, and discursive trajectories within Rorty's corpus, anti-essentialism emerges as its central axis. If Rorty's oeuvre were to be titled, *The Anti-Essentialist Treatise* would be an apt designation. His intellectual project focused on dismantling notions of essence across both epistemological and ideological domains. Rorty sought to establish a realm beyond the confines of conceptual intelligibility, proposing an alternative approach, which sociologist Pierre Bourdieu aptly labels a "practical logic." Through this lens, Rorty underscores the primacy of practice over theory, directly challenging the traditional privileging of theoretical over practical engagement in the history of thought. This orientation is emblematic of American pragmatism, a tradition rooted in the interplay of *pragma*, *praxis*, and *practicality*, each carrying distinct nuances that collectively offer an in-depth critique of any intelligible essence presumed to be necessary for discovery.

In this context, Rorty reinvigorates pragmatism within the philosophical discourse, advancing a form of linguistic pragmatism influenced by thinkers from Derrida to Davidson and centrally by Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey. His pragmatism critiques the Eurocentric interpretation that reduces it to mere empiricism, instead embracing a Hegelian-inflected Darwinism that rejects strict divisions among reflection, practice, and aesthetics. Through this framework, Rorty resists the

authority of epistemico-metaphysical constructs and eschatological visions, advocating a tripartite foundation of liberty, solidarity, and pluralism as essential to radical democracy.

This dissertation's methodology unfolds along two dimensions: (1) a historical approach, charting the progression of Rorty's philosophical development, and (2) a thematic analysis, tracing the evolution of his discursive orientations and key philosophical themes. Here, methodology deviates from strictly scientific connotations, adopting instead the concept of *Holzwege*—pathways that open new trails for reflective inquiry. Rorty did not regard philosophy as a fixed repository of ideas, avoiding the static treatment often applied to renowned thinkers. Throughout his career, he celebrated the interplay of *poiesis* and *praxis*, striving to craft new vocabularies responsive to the challenges posed by emergent forms of life. Despite any reservations, Rorty's thought provides a means of envisioning a profoundly human-all-to-human[1] world. His unconventional humanism remains an inspiring beacon within the "wilderness of the Tartars"—a landscape marked by brutal nihilism, bureaucratic cynicism, and the extremisms of a new era of barbarism.

[1] Note: I am aware that Nietzsche's concepts are always at risk of misinterpretation due to their polysemous nature. The concept of the "human, all-too-human" is often understood by many of Nietzsche's commentators as carrying a negative or pejorative connotation. The only context in which Nietzsche employs this phrase positively is in his discussions on art. In this context, he views the 'all-too-human' as an element of creativity and the idiosyncratic productive forces within human endeavors. This is the perspective from which we will reconstruct this concept—that is, as it relates to the development, enhancement, and production of human creative expressions. In this reading, which we may call an affirmative interpretation of the concept, we approach it as an antidote to essentialist humanism. Thus, the "human, all-too-human" concept, as we are reconstructing it, serves as a sign of an apocryphal humanism. Within this concept lies an effort toward ontological/anthropological and anthropo-poetic emancipation—a social poetics that is reshaped and reconfigured through this new interpretation within the scope of this study.

2. MIRROR OF NATURE

2.1 Prelude (A Diagnosis of Philosophy as Mirror of Nature)

"*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*" is not just the title of Richard Rorty's (1931-2007) first book; it is also a marker of what he sees as the *peccatum originale* (original sin) of the epistemological tradition. The consequence of this sin is an event—using Heidegger's term—that enables a pluralistic and liberal opening to think the impossible, beyond the strict logical and dichotomous space of traditional philosophy. This book can also be seen as a kind of prelude to his broader contributions to philosophy, where Rorty attempts to see philosophy outside of the established frameworks and canons of Western thought. "*Philosophy as Mirror of Nature*" should be read as a propaedeutic to Rorty's narrative of liberating philosophy from foundationalism, and consequently from the epistemological orientation that is fundamentally situated in essentialism. Rorty's Archimedean point of critique at the time of the book's publication, and throughout the three following decades of his philosophical reflection, was centered on how philosophy became professionalized under the rigor of analytic philosophy, transforming into an ultimate determinant of culture. Rorty cynically states: "[philosophy] knows about the ultimate context" (Rorty 1979: 317-318). A legitimate question to ask, in deepening the meta-critique (Habermas 2013) of Rorty's critique of philosophy as a mirror of nature, would be: What does it mean for philosophy to become professionalized? The professionalization of philosophy is closely linked to the turn taken by those now known as analytic philosophers. They sought to distance their approach from the humanities, aspiring for their philosophy to be scientific. In Rorty's discourse, they would dream of belonging to the departments of physics or mathematics. Posing a question akin to the title of Hemingway's work, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, in this context, the answer would be: the bells toll for those thinkers who once sought to be called scientists because their thought would be systematic, solving not only speculative problems of *philosophia perennis* but also systematizing the practical elements of life. Among those most content with this bell's ringing was the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, whose project of philosophy as a "secure path to science" was being realized after initially suffering a blow from Hegel (who did not fully surpass Kant because he remained within systematic thinking) as well as from various other reflective impulses from other movements, which today are dismissed by the analytic school as irrelevant and unserious.

Perhaps the best way to grasp this conceptual configuration of analytic/professionalized philosophy is through the form known after the 1960s as *know-how* (Rorty 1990). This configuration implies rigorous argumentation, whether concerning linguistic entities or mental states, where a privileged set of claims has exclusive access to correspond to extra-linguistic entities. Like any attempt at systematization, this approach, in the context discussed here, naturally draws critics who reject the autonomous nature of the technical vocabulary of analytic philosophy. For these critics, such technical vocabularies attempt to determine the totality of experience, akin to Kant's *omnitudo realitatis*. Rorty divides the understanding of philosophy into two main perspectives: 1) The first is the analytic and traditional view, which Rorty finds narrow because it aims to create technical forms that only philosophers understand, using them to determine every relation with the world. This approach is best described by a passage from one of the central figures of this tradition, David Lewis:

"*One comes to philosophy already endowed with a stock of existing opinions. It is not the business of philosophy either to undermine or to justify these preexisting opinions, to any great extent, but only to try to discover ways of expanding them into an orderly system. A metaphysician's analysis of mind is an attempt at systematizing our opinions about it. It succeeds to the extent that (1) it is systematic, and (2) it respects those of our prephilosophic opinions to which we are firmly attached*" (Lewis 1973: 88).

From this, it follows that the philosopher is nothing more than a specialist in a set of technical vocabularies, such as the 'nature of linguistic reference' or 'consciousness and brain processes.' This version of the philosopher becomes narrowed, turning into a conceptual "techno-bureaucrat" who, through discursive mechanisms, claims exclusive access to infallible truths. This narrow worldview of philosophy can be defined as the attempt or effort to improve the quantity and quality of knowledge by privileging a select set of statements. Consequently, it proclaims that these statements possess certain special properties that correspond to extra-linguistic entities, and attempts to extend this special connection to as many statements as possible. This restrictive approach is bound by its limited perspective on knowledge, viewing it solely through the lens of applicability. Such an approach, in an attempt to avoid dialogue, imposes a methodological dictate of meanings (Rorty 2021: 146). 2) The broader approach to philosophical understanding, which Rorty himself aligns with, can only arise from negative philosophy or the tradition of negation in philosophy. This negative tradition is expressed in a lucid passage by Foucault, where he asserts: "*There is something always ludicrous in philosophical discourse when it tries, from outside, to*

dictate others, to tell them where their truth is and how to find it" (Foucault 1990: 9). Here, Foucault highlights the *ad nauseam* tendency of specialist philosophical discourse to dictate truths and prescribe the path of discovery, a tendency he finds laughable. The hubris of the philosopher is evident throughout the history of philosophy, starting with the privileged position of the contemplative figure in Pythagoras's agora, continuing through Plato's exclusive *no-man's-land* of the horizon, which situates philosophers between gods and ordinary people, extending to Kant's esoteric fortress, and culminating in the analytic philosopher's "laboratory of objective calculus." But these towering heights, during their ascent, have always been accompanied by the 'modest skeptics' (Marquard 1991), from Diogenes to Montaigne and Hume, from Nietzsche's critique to Heidegger and Wittgenstein. The history of thought will not be explored in detail here, but at this stage, it is essential to define the broader concept of philosophical understanding. Rorty defines it with Wilfrid Sellars' phrase: "*seeing how things, in the largest sense of the term, hang together, in the largest sense of the term*" (Sellars 1963: 1). Here, this does not involve any special transcendent apparatus that provides intelligible meaning, rather, it concerns relationships built within specific contexts, demonstrating how things are (inter)connected through continuous dialogue. In this context, philosophy aligns with the idea of a 'new culture' (Rorty 2021:147). In the foundation of knowledge, this implies enabling what Habermas calls 'undistorted communication' for all guaranteed claims. Rorty's interpreters, such as W.P. Malecki and Chris Voparil, share these conclusions:

"*This is the Rorty who stopped arguing like a professional philosopher and who thought that philosophy, as traditionally practiced in the West, had outlived its usefulness. This is the Rorty who advocated for a new philosophy with a different goal and method. The goal was to assist with existing projects of strengthening democratic attachments and to offer new visions of what such communal projects might look like*" (Malecki Voprail, 2021: 4).

The radical democrat's vision sees new philosophy or post-philosophy as the only viable alternative, given the conceptual and practical aporias created by the privileged epigones in an attempt to establish new philosophical specialists. Throughout his reflective career, Rorty remains loyal to democracy over philosophy. This position is succinctly and stylistically explained by Gianni Vattimo, who states: "*The end of metaphysics and the advent of democracy in thought signifies*" (Vattimo 2011: 44). Democracy is the key to plurality, making possible the experience of multiple truths, which require neither the religious version of Saint Paul's 'truth seeker' nor the secularized version of the 'truth maker.' The epochal event of democracy is the moment that

prevents the abandonment of the desire for forms of life. The apocalyptic bells heard in recent times, signaling the demise of the individual, society, and being, are synchronized in such a way as to preserve a nostalgia for the sovereignty of the metaphysical philosopher. Perhaps the feeling of this 'fictional vacuum' stems from the inability to adapt to the new context of the collapse of sovereignty. Vattimo is right when he writes about the end of the philosopher's sovereignty: "*The Sovereign rule of the philosopher came to an end because sovereigns have come to an end*" (Vattimo 2011:17). The risk of replacing the metaphysical philosopher with a kind of 'techno-bureaucratic charlatanism' is evident, yet this should not deter the critical engagement of surrounding phenomena. The democracy Rorty envisions is active, and applying Foucault's dictum, 'freedom is an unfinished project,' requires becoming athletes of democracy who uphold plurality, even when it is threatened by those claiming to defend it. This necessitates a shift from passive spectators, living in abstraction and adept only to what Sloterdijk describes as the "virtuosity of lamentation" (Sloterdijk 2016: 35), to active participants in preserving the values that transform society. Although this may at times seem contradictory or evoke the utopian visions often met with apprehension. However, this vision differs drastically from eschatological visions because it is built on three central components: pluralism, dialogue, and ethical democracy, topics that will be explored in greater depth in the context of this work. Eschatological visions, by contrast, are based on transcendent metaphysical consolations or immanent transcendence in the form of ideology. Ultimately, any projection that claims an indisputable final truth inherently carries violence, as Hannah Arendt observes in her writings on the Eichmann trial: "*Whoever, in a difference of opinion, claims to possess the truth, is attempting to establish domination.*"[2] Being thrown into the world is a kind of anticipation of the forms of life. This state of being does not promise happiness [*promesse de bonheur*], as utopian or "optimistic cosmologies" (Petrič, 1990) might suggest. This thrown existence, requires preparedness to resist perceiving the other as hell, and instead embrace the responsibility for the other. This can only be realized through affirming of a multiplicity of solidarity, which, through democracy and plurality, fosters the care for the otherness encountered. The initial premise of all that has been said is to see difference as a virtue and to embrace it. These 'different voices' should not create vacuums but serve as tools for the

[2] Cited in: Vattimo, Gianni, *A Farwell to Truth*, translated by William McCuaig, Columbia University Press, Columbia, 2011.

fulfillment of freedom in the form of a human, all-too-human democracy. The voice of the democratic community must be the experience of freedom, not a patronage over it. In its clearing, *Dasein* does not articulate its exposure through any determinist ownership of freedom; rather, through its exposure to social existence, it articulates itself in relation to others. The experience of freedom, or the facticity of freedom, can be expressed in what Nancy calls the "difference of voices" [*partage des voix*]. In other words, this "difference of voices" infers both the ecstasy and existence of community. The facticity of the community's existence depends on having different voices, which should be the immanent effort of democracy. Democracy moves away from the paradigm of the promise of happiness, which resides in the register of the infallible, toward registers that allow for error and readiness to confront life's challenges. The democratic reflective instance, through the boundless experience of freedom, may sometimes lead to *anarchos* (the final place for the wanderer), whereas epistemological rigor is destined toward dogma, as it is inscribed with the limitations and finitude of self-evident universal presuppositions. These 'disciplinary matrices' can be interpreted within the framework of two myths: the first is the myth of Orpheus, which is linked to self-denial and whose sacrifice embodies linearity, system, security, and ultimately submission to the metaphysics of presence; the second is the myth of Ulysses, which is tied to wandering, contingency, processuality, polyvalence, decentering, and ultimately surrender to indeterminacy, linked to the ontology of actuality. While the first myth aligns with the linear logical argumentation, the second provides *Ariadne's thread* in a rhizomatic form. This confrontation between these two worldviews can be seen as a clash between *logos* combined with *ethos* and *pathos* combined with *ethos*. All current strategies, whether reflective or discursive, are built upon this confrontation.

***

Ab initio (from the very beginning) Rorty launches a direct and apostatic attack on the tradition he once belonged to, seeking to view creative potential as a tool to demystify the delirious aura of philosophical rigor. In the opening pages of "*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*", he marks a clear line of demarcation from professionalized philosophy. This boundary is crystallized in a long passage that serves as both an anamnesis of the neuralgic points where professionalized philosophy is situated and a window into the milieu of Rorty's own discourse. As a point of introspection, he suggests that the history of philosophy, up to the present day, has obliterated the entirety of culture

within its apodictic registers, and how, with *hubris*, philosophers arrogantly viewed the rest of culture as merely serving their function. The following passage illustrates this:

"*Philosophers usually think of their discipline as one which discusses perennial, eternal problems – problems which arise as soon as one reflects. Some of these concern the difference between human beings and other beings, and are crystallized in questions concerning the relation between the mind and the body. Other problems concern the legitimation of claims to know, and are crystallized in questions concerning the "foundations" of knowledge. To discover these foundations is to discover something about the mind, and conversely. Philosophy as a discipline thus sees itself as the attempt to underwrite or debunk claims to knowledge made by science, morality, art, or religion. It purports to do this on the basis of its special understanding of the nature of knowledge and mind. Philosophy can be foundational in respect to the rest of culture because culture is an assemblage of claims to knowledge, and philosophy adjudicates such claims*" (Rorty 1979: 3).

The roots of this triptych—Knowledge, Truth, and the Good—can be traced to the foundational points where philosophy was built. These foundations provide a platform for objective, ahistorical, and intelligible truth, which must pass through the universal Good, and Knowledge, which, through the arsenal of cognition, constructs the special nature of understanding. The legitimate question at this point is: what is the source of this twenty-five-century-old enterprise, which, using Rorty's cynicism, is concretized in what is called "Philosophy"? Allowing for a playful intervention, as Rorty often does, it could be said that this *cathexis* is built on Plato's global epistemological platform[3] (Sloterdijk 1989), or on what is known as the *chorismos* (χωρισμός) divide (Patocka 2020: 36). In a simplified version within the analytic framework of thought, this is 'truth as correspondence with objective reality' or positivistic Platonism. On the other side, there is the '*egocentric predicament*' (Russell 2009), or as Ludwig Wittgenstein calls it, the "self-given "I""[4] (Wittgenstein 2002:178). This attitude of self-givenness ties into a grandiose narcissism,

[3] Alexander Nehamas, in a paper that at first glance appears to be a kind of conceptual anamnesis of Rorty's early *oeuvre*, offers a highly instructive observation regarding the Platonic legacy throughout the history of philosophy. This legacy is the inseparable apparatus linking the philosopher and philosophy to the pursuit of truth. Nehamas writes: "*Whether we know it or not, we are all engaged in the one continuous search for the final truth*" (Nehamas 1982: 398). See: (Nehamas 1982).

[4] Note: Wittgenstein refers to the entire stature of the subject in its 'godlike' Cartesian immanence as nothing more than an abstract imaginary authority over the lived world. He unpacks this idea as a kind of metaphysical mirage, where the method seeks to apply a universal representation of the world through theoretical apparatuses. This, as philosopher James Edwards also points out, is the terrain of seeing the world without concern, *sub specie aeternitatis*,

manifesting in the metaphysical apparatuses of the self (Edwards 1990: 218), which in modernity is associated with the 'metaphysics of presence' (Heidegger) or Kant's metaphysical ego and transcendental subject. Here, *a priori* knowledge and apodictic truth become the apotheosis of epistemology-oriented philosophy. As Rorty outlines, all of Western philosophy derives from Kant's three critiques (Rorty, 1979), which are fundamentally part of the numinous narrative of rationalism and, subsequently, the Enlightenment itself, as observed by Horkheimer and Adorno.[5]

The maxim of philosophy as "the secure path to science" from the canon (Plato-Kant) provides the foundation for the analytic school. This foundation lies in the formation of the equiprimordial vision of the True and the Good. To place the aforementioned canon in context, it evolves, as noted, within the analytic school. This school, with many of the disciplines that emerge or derive from these canons, behaves as if they are its own domain. These disciplines include the philosophy of science, epistemology, and the philosophy of language. Consequently, there is a greater valorization of Kant in the analytic school, as it does not see mental representations as either empirical concepts reduced to generalized ideas about intuition, nor from the rationalist perspective that seeks to reduce intuition to concepts. For Kant, these mental representations are divided into intuitions and concepts. As Markus Gabriel emphasizes: "*Kant here shows us how we might distinguish between the world as unified horizon and the world as object of our knowledge*" (Gabriel 2020: 5). This shift, brought about by Kant, established philosophy as an autonomous and privileged within the fortress of knowledge. This position implies that, for Kant, every other form of knowledge presupposes conceptual truths (analytic and synthetic *a priori*), with philosophy alone holding the key to unlock this safe (Gutting 2003: 42-43). This marks foundational point

---

or, as Wittgenstein describes it in his *Tractatus*, "*the godhead of the independent I*" (Edwards 1990: 199). See: (Wittgenstein 1961); (Edwards 1990).

[5] Note: One of the most representative critiques of the Enlightenment's problems can be found in the works of Adorno and Horkheimer, who attempt to deconstruct the narrative of rationalism and the subject as the cornerstones of foundation and legitimacy in the modern era. A similar but more radical sentiment can be seen in one of Rorty's heroes (as he mentions in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*), Wittgenstein. As James Edwards observes, 'for Wittgenstein, the Enlightenment man is a grammatical fiction' (Edwards, 1990). This thesis is expressed in a more nihilistic/anarchist form by Peter Sloterdijk, where *humanitas* is seen as a sort of substitute or fictional creation intended to soften our animalistic aspects. Sloterdijk argues that the constitution of the human is closely linked to literacy and grammar, whose etymological root can be traced to the word *glamour*. See: (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002); (Sloterdijk 2017); (Edwards 1990).

and the neuralgic moment at which epistemology-oriented philosophy is established. To clarify Rorty's pragmatist critique, the following question needs to be addressed: what does epistemology-oriented philosophy mean, and how is it defined? Epistemology-oriented philosophy refers to the dominant philosophy in American academia, particularly in the post-World War II era, influenced by the boom of the "Vienna Circle" and its derivatives in theories of knowledge.[6] Placed within a historical trajectory, this approach has its roots in Descartes, reached its peak with Kant, and apex in contemporary epistemology. A lucid presentation of this conceptual network is provided by Charles Guignon and David R. Hiley, who assert that:

" *This conception of philosophy, inherited from Descartes and given its clearest formulation by Kant, holds that before philosophers begin to speculate about what is and what ought to be, they should first get clear about what they can know and what they can't know. For this standard conception of philosophy, theory of knowledge is "first philosophy," and all other areas of philosophy should accede to its judgments about the limits of knowledge.(...) Epistemology-centered philosophy assumes that our primary goal as philosophers is to find a set of representations that are known in such a way as to be beyond the pale of doubt. Once such privileged representations are identified, they can serve as the basis for the foundationalist project of justifying beliefs that make a claim to being knowledge. The representations that have been taken to be inherently and automatically accurate have been of two sorts. First, there are beliefs based solely on the meanings of the terms they contain, analytic sentences such as "A doe is a female deer." Second, there are beliefs that immediately register the deliverances of sensory experience, beliefs such as "Red here now" or "Ouch! Pain!" The ideal of foundationalism is to ground our entire system of beliefs on the basis of such bedrock representations*" (Guingon, Hiley 2003: 7).

This approach to philosophy has two major flaws and bears signs of totalitarianism. It is responsible for creating a one-dimensional mindset that inhibits engagement with the plurality of truth, while simultaneously suppressing the practical experience of freedom. Yeats' phrase, "hold reality and justice in a single vision" (Rorty 1999: 7), an extension of Platonism in poetic form, clearly illustrates a notion that is ultimately ineffective. As the final product of this encapsulation of knowledge by traditional philosophy, Rorty argues, it has led to "dehumanized human beings" (Rorty 1979: 22). This opposes the pragmatic plurality that allows individuals to face the world without the surveillance of external authority imposed under the dictate of the "will to truth" (Foucault 2009: 31). This mixed approach, combining the pluralism of James and Nietzsche,

[6] Note: For more on the history and development of analytic philosophy, see (Dummett 1994). For a more critical approach and an exploration of the hidden corners and labyrinths of this philosophical tradition, see (Rorty, 1990).

represents the moment where living within the life-world and conceptual *chaosmos*[7] strives to create a pragmatic homeostasis between the social, Apollonian will and the ironic, Dionysian individualism. In spaces where essentialist theorizing does not dominate, a processual *agon* in the form of *becoming* is attainable, allowing these impulses, intertwined with life, to coexist within the constant tension of existential ecstasy. Even though this balancing act of maintaining opposing wills in a [*Gestell*] might seem impossible from the lens of rigid epistemic or political positions, Rorty's neo-pragmatism affirms the possibility of thought where these opposing impulses coexist. This purification of Rorty's thought can only be understood within the "unbearable lightness of liberalism" (Elshtain 2003: 139). In pragmatist worldviews, the life-world cannot be determined by the "myth of the given"[8] (Sellars), since all starting points are the result of contingency and

[7] Note: The use of the term *Chaosmos* marks the new context of contemporary life. The significant developmental leaps, whether in the theoretical or discursive realms, and the increasing complexity of everyday life are forcing us ever more deeply into unexplored territories. This moment is reflected in trends in contemporary philosophy and developments in quantum physics, where the totality of deterministic theories is leading us toward an organized chaos of indeterminate particles and unthought forms. Therefore, James Joyce's *Chaosmos* is the only neologism capable of capturing and encompassing the contingent and wandering nature of dispersed contemporary life. Firstly, it responds to the traditional dichotomy between chaos and cosmos, or, in the language of the ancient Greeks, to Anaximander's notion of origin, which begins in the indeterminate (*apeiron*, απειρον), transitions to the determinate (*peiron*, πειρον), and eventually returns to the indeterminate (*apeiron*, απειρον). Secondly, this conceptual 'knot' resists the fetishization of totality, a characteristic of German thought, especially in the *Philosophy of Anthropology*, exemplified by Max Scheler's *The Position of Man in the Cosmos*. The fusion of chaos and cosmos is the only creative way to describe our complex and contingent present. *Chaosmos* is the marker of contemporaneity. This notion also traces the history of ontological development: from ancient univalence to modern bivalence, culminating in contemporary polyvalence. As Umberto Eco notes in the context of Joyce's work: "*We will attempt to follow the process of the young artist who conserves and repudiates the mental forms that preside over the ordered cosmos proposed by the medieval Christian tradition and who, still thinking as a medieval, dissolves the ordered Cosmos into the polyvalent form of the Chaosmos*" (Eco 1989: 11). The same neologism is used by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who, influenced by Whitehead's cosmology, attempt to see philosophy, science, and art as 'a celestial vault that plunges into chaos.' *Chaosmos* once again becomes the only way we can feel comfortable in the dispersed homeostasis of decentralized networks. For more, see: (Joyce 1992); (Guthrie 1997); (Salihu 2009); (Scheler 2020); (Marquard 1991); (Eco 1989); (Deleuze and Guattari 2008); (Whitehead 2010).

[8] Note: The critique of the "Myth of the Given" is one of the pivotal moments in analytic philosophy because it entirely disarms Ayer's naive verificationism and the suffocating operationalism of foundationalism. This critique marks the first moment of rethinking perceptual conceptualism, or as Rorty expresses in the preface to Sellars's book: "*Sellars's*

flux. In Rorty's discourse, these contingent starting points are decentralized networks of beliefs and truths. These mental networks aim for a plurality of values, perspectives, and forms. They function as tools to minimize institutional and everyday cruelty in confronting the forms of life. Through an elliptical interplay, points between the pragmatic approach to and the Eurocentric approach to science, as seen in French philosophers like Bachelard, Canguilhem, and Cavaillès, can be identified.[9] This approach to the philosophy of science, which diverges from the German reading of philosophy as the 'secure path to science,' questions the linear and universalist character of the rationalist discourse, and consequently, epistemology. In support of this claim, Michel Foucault can be referenced, who, in an interview elaborating on this period of French thought, asserts: '*to a rationality that claims to be universal even when it develops in a contingent manner*' (Foucault 1983). Consequently, the claim for universal rationalism in established approaches is regarded as an idyll, with all of its development resting on contingency. From these theoretical insights, several conclusions can be drawn: pragmatists operate on an inclusive plane, not an exclusive one, regarding defining knowledge or truth. Pragmatism, in its epistemic plurality, views

attack on the Myth of the Given was a decisive move in turning analytic philosophy away from the foundationalist motives of the logical empiricists. It raised doubts about the very idea of "epistemology, "about the reality of the problems which philosophers had discussed under that heading" (Rorty, 1997). See: (Sellars, 1997). A similar view, though expressed in a more subtle tone, is shared by James Tartaglia when interpreting Richard Rorty's relationship with the philosophy of consciousness, noting: "*epistemological concerns by Sellars's "Myth of the Given" idea, which showed that nothing we talk about has epistemic privilege. And the idea that we have privileged access to subjective states was undermined by realizing that we have come to think this way only because of a special linguistic practice, namely that of according incorrigible status to the non-inferential and automatic reports we have trained ourselves to make on some of our internal states; this status was accorded because such reports are reliable, but was metaphysically blown out of all proportion*" (Tartaglia 2020: 48). See: (Tartaglia 2020).

[9] Note: The philosopher Gary Gutting, known for his expertise in both the analytic and continental traditions, draws an interesting connection between philosophers from these traditions within the philosophy of science. He identifies conceptual convergence points between figures such as Bachelard, Canguilhem, and Cavaillès from the continental tradition, and analytic philosophers like Kuhn, Feyerabend, and Lakatos. The discussions focus on forms of rationality, the non-linear development of science, and similarities between Bachelard's concept of the *episteme* and Kuhn's paradigm, as well as the issue of normality and abnormality in science. See: (Gutting, 1989), with a particular focus on the chapter about Gaston Bachelard and Georges Canguilhem; (Gutting, 2008).

philosophers and knowledge as inclusive, but not as an epistemic monad where the 'Philosopher King' has privileged access, which is merely an excess of his privilege.

Rorty does not confine himself to deconstructing epistemology-oriented philosophy but attempts to offer a reconstruction within his 'edifying' alternative (a term to be unpacked in this chapter) for philosophy outside the rigor of epistemology or 'academic Stalinism' (Harold Bloom). For Rorty, philosophy, on the level of knowledge, does not *discover* truths but *creates* them,[10] with a focus on nominalism rather than realist scientism. In simple terms, this implies that truth exists within the "socio-centric predicament" (Vision 1991: 81), where truth is the creation of an agreement within *societas*, produced by actors within society, as outlined by Quine, or, more radically, it belongs to what Stanley Fish calls "interpretive communities."[11] A brief excursion to expand the scope of this investigation reveals a similar correlation in the community of scientific knowledge in the work of the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard. He proposes a shift from the substantiated *cogito*, which exists in isolation, to a communal *cogitamus*, moving from individual existence to social sur-existence (Gutting 1989: 26). This marks a transition from the privileged truths of internalized rationalism, based on simplified ideas, to a truth that is constructed through co-rationalization, which is nominal and belongs to the complex truths of the community.[12] Using Peter Sloterdijk's dictum, these truths are co-immunized. Bachelard's approach to differences in nuance is similar to Rorty's, and perhaps even to Sellars, when he asserts: "*personal knowledge acquires a certain security by becoming knowledge of scientific community*."[13] While Bachelard

[10] For more, see: (Adorno 2013); (Cavaillès 2021); (Feyerabend 1993); (Deleuze and Guattari 2008).

[11] For more, see: (Fish 1980).

[12] Note: In one of the most important books in continental philosophy of science, *The New Scientific Spirit* by Gaston Bachelard, a radical critique of Cartesianism in science and the use of intuition is outlined. Bachelard argues that Descartes' intuition and simplified ideas, by failing to engage with the complex spectrum of scientific ideas, have been delegitimized by science itself, particularly in light of developments in chemistry and quantum physics, as he himself highlights. In a particularly instructive passage summarizing his argument, Bachelard states: "*Simple ideas are working hypotheses or concepts, which must undergo revisions before they assume their proper epistemological role. Simple ideas are not the ultimate basis of knowledge; after a complete theory is available, it will be apparent that simple ideas are simplifications of more complex truths*" (Bachelard 1984: 148). See: (Bachelard 1984).

[13] Cited in: (Gutting 1989).

and Rorty have distinct differences in their approaches, they also share common ground, which will often complement each other throughout this work. The focus is that these shared intellectual networks enable the delegitimization of the foundation upon which realist scientism, realist metaphysics, and realist ontology are constructed, grouped together in the conceptual vortex referred to as "epistemology-oriented philosophy." In Bachelard's stringent critique of this approach to science and reason, it would be categorized as nothing more than an "epistemological obstacle." [14]

When discussing community, it is necessary to avoid the trap of viewing Rorty's project through the lenses of essentialism regarding community as a 'communitarian ghost' (Sloterdijk) within the economy of *episteme* and *praxis* nor within a Marxist vision. For Rorty, the community may resemble the French philosopher Maurice Blanchot's conception of the "unavowable community"

---

[14] Note: Gaston Bachelard views the shift in scientific models and scientific progress within certain epistemological categories, such as 'epistemological breaks,' 'epistemological obstacles,' 'epistemological profiles,' and 'epistemological acts.' An *epistemological obstacle*, in a more simplified reading, implies something that prevents an *epistemological break* (which has similarities to Kuhn's paradigm and Foucault's *episteme*) because obstacles act as residual elements that attempt to halt the development of scientific inquiry. In his analysis of Bachelard's scientific work, Gary Gutting identifies three main types of obstacles: 1) *Common sense* as a simplified way of grappling with the complex network of scientific development. While common sense may offer some heuristic value in science, it lacks explanatory power for the complex network of scientific manifestations. Therefore, it always provides an incomplete and reductive interpretation of scientific phenomena, becoming an obstacle to the progress of inquiry. 2) Successful past scientific findings that have outlived their value. Many discursive forms, principles, and theoretical concepts try to present new findings as absurd, heretical, or insignificant. These rigid forms act as an obstacle to the development of creative potential, which serves as a safeguard against science sliding into secular dogma. An example of this second obstacle is seen in the relationship between classical determinism in physics and quantum physics. 3) Relevant to the discourse and context of this work, are the canonizing tendencies of traditional philosophy, which insists on necessary truths and imposes apodictic dictates over the contingent features of a given historical period of thought. We could say that the veil of objectivity, constructed within an abstract mode known in the history of thought as *philosophia perennis*, attempts to dismiss, as irrelevant, absurd, or relative in epistemological judgment, the discursive multitudes, polyvalent efforts, and experimental axes.

This will be the primary epistemic obstacle formed within the program known as epistemology-oriented philosophy. For more on epistemological breaks and epistemological obstacles, see: (Bachelard 2002); (Gutting 2008). For the connection between *epistemological breaks*, *paradigms* (Kuhn), and *epistemes* (Foucault), see: (Merquior 1985).

or a community without community. Rorty's approach to community can be summarized as follows: this community is composed of singularities that are in the process of individuation—each singularity is in [*mitsein*] being with with other singularities, and their *munitas* lies in their coexistence within plurality, where dialogue is ongoing and open-ended. This vision may sound romantic, but Rorty, like Wittgenstein, is a spiritualist without faith (Edwards 1990: 235-236), with all his thought aimed at realizing his utopian vision of liberalism. The consequence of epistemology-oriented philosophy is seen precisely in its tendency to abstract and theorize the problems of everyday life. This abstraction offers only theoretical solutions and appears to disconnect from *praxis* and life itself. Hence, totalitarian ideologies are analogous to epistemology-oriented philosophy (Guignon and Hiley 2003: 29), as they are grounded in a one-dimensional vision of solving problems, which unfortunately remain purely speculative. As a result, Rorty's vision of liberation from one-dimensionality—whether ideological or epistemological—is encapsulated in the phrase of the *Partisan Review* editor, the renowned critic Lionel Trilling, on the 'Liberal Imagination.[15]

***

An *aperçu* to grasp the core of the critique in "*Philosophy as the Mirror of Nature*" against the analytic tradition of philosophy can be found in the biographical archives of Richard Rorty. It is through the "archaeology" of his personal history that the origins of his criticism of epistemology-oriented philosophy as uncovered. It is in these biographical sequences that the context emerges for his heretical gesture toward what Niklas Luhmann calls the 'rigor of analytics' (Luhmann 1985: 182). This root, as a sequential life history, points to the year 1979. The year of the book's publication is not coincidental—it corresponds with another significant event in the philosopher's life. In the same year, Rorty also became president of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association.[16] As Bernard Williams noted, he became something of an *auto-da-fé*

[15] For more, see: (Trilling 2008)

[16] For more, see: (Rorty, 2010); (Gross, 2008)

figure for the tradition he led,[17] while simultaneously serving as a bridge where both the conservative analytic and traditional canonical conceptions prevailed.

The opening phrase for any reading of the apostasy in *Philosophy as a Mirror of Nature* would be: '*a one-time 'true believer' who has lost his faith*' (Rumana 2000). Based on this phrase alone, one could rewrite the entire effort to view the world outside the artificial epistemic-logical space that aims to 'construct the final, adequate vocabulary for what it calls the real world.' A historical reading of this epistemology-oriented philosophical orientation, viewed through the lens of analytic provenance, inevitably leads back to Russell's postulate: "logic as the essence of philosophy" (Russell 2009) and the apotheosis of Gustav Bergmann's "Linguistic Turn."[18] These postulates outline a historic moment marking the shift from the tyranny of the mind to the dictatorship of language. In this way, language replaces the mind—not by surpassing it, but by encapsulating within itself the remnants and dust left over from its reign. The foundation of any analytic philosophy lies in language as a tool of epistemology, constructing a pedagogy of language and knowledge as rigor. Rorty sees philosophy as a game played with language; therefore, for him, truth is not situated in the realm of apodictic, epistemological contemplation, but rather on the

[17] Note: In one of his works with the same title, the philosopher Bernard Williams refers to Rorty as an *Auto-da-Fé*, a term that, in its simplified form, would refer to a heretic during the Spanish Inquisition. However, Williams seems to draw the metaphor of *Auto-da-Fé* from a literary work, using it as a form of characterological precision in describing Rorty as a philosopher. That novel is by Elias Canetti and bears the same title. Discussing Rorty's treatment of the problem of language in analytic philosophy and the horizons that Rorty's philosophy aims to open, Williams states: "...we shall find that the brightness of language on the horizon turns out to be that of the fire in which the supremely bookish hero of Canetti's *Auto-da-Fé* immolated himself in his library" (Williams 1991: 26). Thus, Rorty's endeavor in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, and especially in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, can be seen as a form of heresy against the analytic tradition of thought. Bernard Williams himself remarks: "Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is an original and sustained attack on our idea that it can be the aim of philosophy, or even of science, to represent the world accurately. Neither activity can reveal, as he sometimes puts it, a vocabulary in which the world demands to be described" (Williams 1991:36). The strength of Rorty's philosophy lies in its refusal to submit to rigorous philosophical formations, but instead, through the 'creative act' (Bergson 2022), opens up myriad possibilities for viewing language and, as a result, thought itself. See: (Williams 1991); (Bergson 2022).

[18] Note: Rorty is often associated with the "linguistic turn" because he compiled an anthology of texts under the same name. However, in fact, the term "linguistic turn" originates from Gustav Bergmann. Rorty defines the linguistic turn as follows: "This is the linguistic turn, the fundamental gambit as to method, on which ordinary and ideal language philosophers (OLP, ILP) agree" (Rorty 1992: 8) See: (Rorty, 1992).

stage of immanence and linguistic games. This aligns with Heidegger's dictum of viewing the world as the dialectical unfolding of a selected set of metaphors.'[19]

[19] Note: It is highly significant for this work to trace the roots of the approach that views the world as a set of metaphors, as all paths lead back to Nietzsche's deconstructive hammer. His claim about truth states: "Truths are... a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms; in short, truths are a sum of human relations that have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, translated, and adorned; truths are illusions we have forgotten are illusions—metaphors that have become worn out and senseless from frequent use... Yet we still do not know where the impulse for truth comes from, for what we have heard thus far is only the obligation to be truthful, which is imposed on us by society as a condition for survival" (Nietzsche 2010: 29). This leads us to conclude that one of the primary impulses of our existence is the creation of metaphors. Following this interpretation of Nietzsche is Keith Ansell Pearson, who argues: "Everything that distinguishes humans from animals depends on this ability to dissolve perceptual metaphors into a scheme and thereby dissolve an image into a concept" (Pearson-Large 2006). Thus, *animal rationale* primarily functions by creating metaphors in the form of infallible truths to sustain an abstract regime that begins perhaps with Plato and, as Pearson notes in line with Rorty, ends with Kant. This implies that creation, when emphasized as the 'primordial order of things,' is fundamental. Nietzsche's conceptual use of metaphor is linked to its German meaning as [*Übertragung*], which denotes a kind of "transfer." In the philosophy of a deconstructive Dionysus, knowledge is merely a transfer of content. Therefore, the world as we know it is nothing more than the use of metaphors that are favorable to us. As Daniel Breazeale explains in his introduction to *Philosophy and Truth: Selected Writings from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, the labyrinthine connection between knowledge and metaphor is suggested by Nietzsche's etymological adventures, where the meaning of the word metaphor is "to carry something," "to convey," in the sense of "transferring." Hence, the Greek meaning of the word is the same as the German usage. Continuing along this line of explanation, one reason why all our knowledge is metaphorical, according to Nietzsche, is because it represents the adequate expression of an object in the subject. Due to the philosophical assumption constantly present in discourse that the subject and object are autonomous, independent from each other, and when translated into knowledge and knower, knowledge always entails a transfer from one sphere to another, as Breazeale points out. In the same worldview, Heidegger's approach, following in Nietzsche's footsteps, sees the "world as a set of metaphors." This relates to his radical critique of scientism as the modus operandi of life and the "deconstruction of metaphysics" as a *modus vivendi*. Viewing these rigorous axes as metaphorical constructs may free us from the linear vision in which philosophy has been trapped for the last twenty-five centuries, continuing to produce its epigones. This metaphorological assumption, initiated by Nietzsche and extended by Heidegger, disrupts the entire foundation of *scientia more certa method* [science as a secure method], leading us to view knowledge more as a "scientistic linguistic painting" or "mirror" of epistemological scientism. The rupture and gap between subject and object resemble the formation of metaphor far more than the epistemological operations traditionally used, such as the mirror and painting. Thus, Rorty's attempt in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is to deconstruct these two forms: first, the positivist vision of the world as a linguistic painting, and second, the tyranny of the mind, which, through the

As Jürgen Habermas remarked in his book "*Postmetaphysical Thinking*", while attempting to argue for the emergence of post-metaphysical thought, he characterized Rorty's effort as "the contextualism of a post-analytic philosophy of language" (Habermas 1992; 5). Habermas's observation points to the impossibility of metaphysical thinking and its dead-end in legitimizing itself within new reflective discourses and wills. This leads Rorty to abandon the atemporality of analytic conceptual thought and instead to guide philosophical inquiry towards new contextual linguistic forms within the framework of language games. The analysis of the scene of language games allows for the coexistence of two or more sentences being true, without the need to worry about what *makes* them true. The scene of language games is always intertwined with the processual nature of life games. Thus, in Rorty and his pragmatism, a symbiosis emerges between Nietzschean and Whiteheadian processuality—at its core, an ontology of process that shadows the entire neo-pragmatist school, as well as post-Nietzschean thought. By accepting the polysemous nature of language games, a closer alignment to the forms of perspectivism (Nietzsche) is achieved,

---

signification of the mental, becomes the undisputed authority of thought and vision over the world. In tracing this metaphorological shift, we should also highlight the radical effort of Heidegger's student and post-WWII Germany's most eccentric philosopher, Hans Blumenberg. Through his metaphorological paradigm, particularly the concept of the "absolute metaphor," Blumenberg radicalizes the demarcation with epistemology-oriented philosophy. According to him, it is essential in maintaining our connection with reality, but functionally, it is not analytic and refuses to be subjected to the systematic machinery of truth. An illustrative example is Blumenberg's deconstruction of the systematic aletheiological discourse (as Sloterdijk puts it), which we inherit from the Greeks in philosophy, where truth is understood as *aletheia* (unconcealment). This undergoes a linguistic and material metamorphosis in the Latin variant as "naked truth of nature" or *natura nuda veritas*. Thus, from the mythical power of the river Lethe, which composes the notion of *aletheia* (unconcealment), to the naked truth stripped of clothing, Western culture—including its modern extension—is nothing more than a metaphorization of life forms meant to guarantee an abstract-transcendental kind of security for our contingent existence. The entire reflective tradition of contemplation and doubt, as Hegel observes in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, is grounded in the Greek-Latin exchange. And this tradition, as Sloterdijk emphasizes, has not freed itself from concealment. From natural metaphors to metaphors of clothing, we have arrived in modernity with perceptual or visual metaphors, ultimately realizing that epistemology is the source of this metaphorological illusion, governed by the eye (from the mind's eye to the eye of power). According to Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Blumenberg, our culture and world are nothing but a metaphorological exchange. Rorty uses these modes as the only way out of the rigid configurations of the epistemological program. For more, see: (Nietzsche 2010); (Breazeale 1979) ; (Rorty 1979); (Ricoeur 1977); (Blumenberg 2010);(Sloterdijk 2017); (Hegel 1995);(Pearson-Large 2006).

allowing for the opening toward a multiplicity of truths once through critical engagement with metaphysics. The hermeneutic view of knowledge is promising for Rorty because it avoids the dichotomous formulas such as 'cognitivism vs. non-cognitivism'—a trap often set by epistemology. Language games do not need the conceptual imaginary companion of epistemology-oriented philosophy, often sympathetically referred to as the "truth-maker." Post-Nietzschean philosophy, especially that associated with figures like Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, and Blanchot, through their perspectivism, has offered truths without truth-makers. However, any philosophy centered on the truth-maker and the metaphysics of presence must clearly distinguish between two claims: a) that there are no such things as truth-makers, and b) that *societas* is the only approval of the truth-maker (Rorty 2021:151-152). In the axiological intertwining of these perspectives lies Rorty's idiosyncratic pragmatism.

To delve into the issues of "*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*", Alexander Nehamas identifies three central problems that Rorty stresses in his discourse on philosophy as a mirror of nature. They are as follows: 1) The first issue concerns the conception of the mind as an object in itself, something possessed only by human beings, which distinguishes them from the rest of the world. These modeled mirrors lead to the idea of the mind as something capable of containing within itself the representation of the external world. 2) The second issue deals with knowledge being manifested through the tribunal of the mind, which, as an interlocutor, engages in "representification," appearing as a systematic structure of a unique set of foundations. Charles Taylor elaborates on this point, stating: "...our culture has been in thrall to a picture of our thinking as entirely representational" (Taylor 2003:159). These foundations offer a final justification for all knowledge, as they consist of representations of the "pure mind," which serves as the grand contemplative guarantee of their correspondence with objective reality. This results in the militaristic rigor of one-dimensional epistemology. 3) The third issue centers on the view that philosophy is detached from the natural sciences and is characterized by a distinctive "negative dogmatism"[20] in the realm of knowledge. The consequence of this is the rejection of empirical and

[20] Note: If we take into account Markus Gabriel's discourse, which distinguishes between nihilism and negative dogma, it provides an apt explanation for the latter. While nihilism, for Gabriel, contests the reality of a system of claims, negative dogmatism questions the formal possibility of knowledge itself. Thus, the discursive formula of negative dogmatism would be: "that we know that we can know nothing about some X" (Gabriel 2008: 18). If we

corrigible knowledge. This implies that, through transcendental lenses, not only is current experience described, but also all possible forms that experience might take, thereby offering a description of the totality of existence (Nehamas 1982: 398).

This section should avoid taking on the tone of a litany, but it is crucial to reinforce Nehamas's brilliant elaboration with some converging insights from Habermas and Gutting. Like Nehamas, they work within the same lens of detecting the central issues, yet articulate them with a gesture of *differance* (Derrida). Habermas's reflection on Rorty's pragmatic turn begins by examining how

---

refer to the history of philosophy, we encounter two moments of this skeptical approach, if we may mark them as such: first, the academic skepticism observed by Sextus Empiricus, and second, Kantian skepticism, as highlighted by James Conant. We will focus on the latter, as it is the subject of this work, and it raises the legitimate question: why should we refer to Kant's critical philosophy as negative dogma? As Gabriel points out, the *sine qua non* of Kant's approach is not doubt in the possibility of knowledge but rather a focus on the question of "how" rather than "if" we can know. Kant's critical turn, by not contesting knowledge *in se*, leads us toward the view that he sees the world as a presupposition of inquiry rather than a revelation of objectivity. As Gabriel explains, the world is the ultimate condition for the possibility of the objective reality of our representations. Therefore, the drive for knowledge points to the need to articulate the contrast of objectivity only if we reference something that allows them to transcend mere appearance. For Kant, the world *in se* is a vast object that exists "out there," and the concept of it only becomes useful when we make judgments. Without judgments, as Gabriel emphasizes, there is no world. Hence, Kant reduces the represented world to "its function within the epistemological economy of finite beings" (Gabriel 2008: 38), once and for all dismissing ontological independence, as all epistemological claims are subordinated to their ontological basis. We only need to recall figures such as Russell from the analytic tradition or Husserl from the continental tradition to see how "being as truth" condemns the "truth of being" to silence and isolation. Based on these observations, we might ask: who coined the term "negative dogma" for Kant's philosophy? The straightforward answer is Fichte. Fichte coined this term to describe Kant's effort to move beyond Hume's skepticism as "negative dogma." This arose because Fichte's project of absolute idealism could not be built on Kant's transcendental unity of the *ego cogito*. The consciousness of the self as freedom cannot be constrained by the *thing-in-itself* [*Ding an sich*] as necessity. As Fichte asserts: 'Dogmatism starts from some being as an absolute, and for this reason, its system never rises above being. Idealism recognizes no being as something that exists for itself. In other words, dogmatism begins with necessity, while idealism begins with freedom' (Fichte). If we recap Kantian negative dogma, it contains an element of "integrative anti-skepticism" (Heidemann), which later manifests in the philosophical economy of thought as realist scientism and anti-realist metaphysics. Its variations within the epistemological spectrum do not accept the contextual and local skeptical conclusions. These latter approaches are oriented toward epistemology as *theoria* rather than pragmatism as *phronesis*. For more, see: (Gabriel 2020); (Salihu, 2009).

the privilege of *esprit de corps*, as an epistemological sphere, is afforded to mentalist epistemology in its articulation of life forms and, consequently, the world. This approach, according to Habermas, does not focus on the experience of the object but on the representation of the object. Through the representation of representations—what Kant refers to as *concept*—it creates the linguistic metaphor of the "mirror of nature." Thus, according to Habermas, this "mentalist epistemology" (his term for epistemology-oriented philosophy) is structured around three main points: 1) Individuals have a clearer understanding of their own mental states than of anything else, 2) Knowledge occurs essentially within the state of representing the object, 3) The truth of judgment is based on evidence that guarantees its certainty. These three foundational forms give rise to their own myths, which, according to Habermas, are: the myth of the given, the myth of thought as representation, and the myth of truth as certainty (Habermas 1998: 349). These are merely linguistic expressions of the medium of representation, by which knowledge is communicated in an infallible, theoretical, and certain way. If the world or reality can only be grasped and touched through transcendental apparatuses, then its operation takes place within an illusory realm. For Rorty, contact with reality means anticipation through the human community. As Habermas also expresses when he states:

"*On Rorty's view, "being in touch with reality" has to be translated into the jargon of "being in touch with a human community" in such a way that the realist intuition, to which mentalism wanted to do justice with its Mirror of Nature and its correspondence between representation and represented object, disappears completely. For Rorty, every kind of representation of something in the objective world is a dangerous illusion"* (Habermas 1998: 351).

For Rorty, who seeks to abolish the idea of a world that "exists out there" this is due to a simple fact: he aims to discard the syndrome of epistemology-oriented philosophy, which leans on secure forms of representation through mental states grounded in the metaphysics of presence. As Markus Gabriel states: "*It is not a representation that forms of itself but, rather, the representing activity which brings all representations into an inferentially articulated whole through subjecting them to conceptual determination*" (Gabriel 2020: 23). This representational approach, the exchange of conceptual determinisms creates a trap, leaving only one solution: a kind of *epoche*.

Gary Gutting, on the other hand, takes a more archival approach, as Rorty and the issues he highlights in philosophy feature prominently in many of his works. In one of his most representative essays on Rorty's philosophy, Gutting claims that "Rorty's critique targets naive

foundationalism" (Gutting 2003: 43). By this, he means that naive foundationalism, discursive rationalism, and epistemology as representation are equiprimordial. They are equiprimordial in the sense that they hold a privileged place within philosophy as a reflective/cognitive authority (Taylor 1995: 2-3). Through his therapeutic approach, Gutting focuses on three key assumptions of epistemic thought that Rorty attempts to challenge: 1) That truth is a matter of a special relationship of representation between the mind and the world; 2) That justification is a matter of a special experience normatively grounded in representation; 3) That philosophy is necessary because only it can satisfactorily explain the special relationship that determines truth and specifies what kinds of experiences justify claims to truth (Gutting 2003: 43-44). All of these assumptions, in Habermas's terms, are nothing more than the *raison d'être* of the "linguistified reason" (Habermas, 1998: 345) of analytic philosophy. According to Gutting, however, Rorty also provides answers to these questions: 1) Rorty holds that there is no (non-trivial) interesting theory of truth and, as a result, there is no need to offer or pursue one, because if humanity is doing well, truth can take care of itself; 2) Within the framework of nominalist discourse, he maintains that justification has nothing to do with perceptual experience (not even phenomenological anticipation) but is simply a matter of intra-subjective consensus; 3) He follows the line—to use the metaphor of athletics in the context of the writer Walt Whitman—that he is an athlete of radical democracy and seeks to demystify how philosophy has been understood by the Western tradition, particularly the effort to know the world (Gutting 2003: 43-44). For Rorty, this world is not the conceptual world of Kant's objective reality, but rather a *being-in-the-world* as a form of openness that anticipates a plurality of horizons and perspectives. For him, the world signifies the ecstasy of finitude and temporality.

A brilliant analysis of the 'possibility' of the 'impossibility' of epistemology-oriented philosophy is offered by philosopher Markus Gabriel. He explains that any effort to harvest the fruits of knowledge from the metaphysical tree of modernity, inherited from Descartes' attempt to mark a clear line of demarcation with antiquity, is inherently a trap. This is because "every possibility of knowledge implies its impossibility" (Gabriel 2020: 135). Any epistemological effort, if framed in Aristotelian terms, would fall within the simple formula: knowledge *qua* knowledge. Epistemological projects are auto-referential, which, in medical discourse, would translate to "auto-immune," consequently seeking, through analytic rigor, immunization against opinion (Nietzsche), the ordinary (Cavell), or the everyday (Heidegger). This rupture from contextual reality turns humans into automatons sterilized by the puritanism of contemplative

epistemological systematics. In confrontation with the fallibility and contingency of practical life, it destroys the metabolism of the ecstasy of existence within the life-world. This makes epistemology, as an auto-referential project, destined to end in the aporia of finitude, with its limit inscribed within it.

Philosophy as epistemology, under the banner of rationalism, sought to catapult thought into an ahistorical framework, asking what it means to be human within a gnoseological hierarchy and upon what foundation this constitution rests. Nehamas beautifully interprets this, writing: "*They have established themselves as timelessly constitutive of rationality and so of the very essence of what it is to be human*" (Nehamas 1982: 398). Considering the thoughts of the liberal skeptic Odo Marquard, modernity—from the replacement of theodicy with Leibniz's monads to Descartes' subject-centered philosophy culminating in the philosophy of anthropology (defining humanity as a whole)—positions humans, through rationalist apparatuses, as both judge and judged in a court created by themselves, in the absence of divine transcendence. The limitations that arise in the history of philosophy, driven by epistemico-metaphysical projects, have hindered *narrare necesse est* (the necessity of narration). Narration is the only tool that allows confronting epistemological structures and the practical barbarism that ideology produces. Once humans become aware of the creative power of narration, they no longer need theoretical compensations. One-dimensional platforms—whether epistemological or ideological—drive toward the impossibility of telling one's own story, offering instead a foreign narrative that is another's compensation. Immersion in these foreign narratives has a clear logical consequence: the inability to experience the original, vital impulse to engage with the plurality of stories and narratives.

The epistemological limit in theological discourse within pragmatism is deconstructed in this phrase: "the only sin is limitation"[21] (Emerson). Thus, every effort of pragmatism regarding knowledge is not to oppose or confront these limitations but to remove the inherent limit by simply disregarding it. This mirrors an ancient form of skepticism that does not adopt the soteriological dimension of the latter, combined with a moderate dose of sociological epistemology.

[21] Cited in: (Rorty 1998: 34).

2.1.1 Welcome to the Eye of the Mind

The spectacle inherits the weakness of the Western philosophical project, which attempted to understand activity by means of the categories of vision

(Guy Debord 2005: 11).

Earlier, the importance of history as a narrative for Rorty was briefly addressed, or as Foucault would call it, "the history of the present."[22] This approach immerses one in specific contexts where discursive apparatuses are constructed, and where assemblages (Deleuze) of certain problems are formed, manifesting as extensions throughout various periods of human reflection. One "ocular metaphor" that has marked the history of philosophy from antiquity to the present is the "Eye of the Mind."[23] Perhaps many contemporary issues revolve around how to transcend or explore this

[22] Note: When I speak here of history as a narrative through Rorty's lens, I am referring to a fusion between history as contingency and moments in the history of philosophy. This fusion serves the function of Rorty's critique of current epistemological registers. Thus, 'history as narrative' is employed to affirm his position, functioning as a form of conceptual archaeology aimed at deconstructing those 'postulates set in stone' of traditional philosophy. This approach is not exclusive to Rorty but is also present in many contemporary thinkers. For instance, Heidegger's interpretation of Plato or Foucault's *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, which sparked much debate about how historical facts are interwoven with his readings of the history of philosophy. In this regard, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is no exception. Perhaps these creative explosions are necessary to sustain philosophy's regenerative potential. Therefore, the French phrase "*du côté de la créativité*," as a form of *esprit de finesse,* encapsulates this stance—'on the side of creativity.' See: (Heidegger 2002); (Foucault 2002) ; (Rorty, 1979).

[23] Note: The repercussions of this 'metaphor' can be found on the other side of Bacon's dictum "Knowledge is Power." While *Mind* represents one side, *Power* represents the other. From Rorty's *Eye of the Mind*, we encounter Foucault's variation in *The Eye of Power* in an interview of the same name. Foucault situates this optical metaphor within the framework of the social body and the "society of control," as Deleuze would call it. The ongoing illumination of the mind has implications for the manifestation of surveillance in space, leading us to the Panopticon as the ultimate machinery of philosophical monomania regarding opticality. Both Rorty and Foucault trace this tangent, albeit from different perspectives. For Rorty, the *Eye of the Mind* serves to illuminate and reveal essences, operating in the realm of transparency and objectivity, where all knowledge is segregated from epistemology. For Foucault, however, this metaphor is rooted in the immanent extension of surveillance into every capillary of the social body, through absolute transparency. Power no longer has a fixed identity or locus; it is everywhere and nowhere at once. As Foucault puts it: 'Power is no longer substantially identified with an individual who possesses or exercises it by right of birth; it becomes a machinery that no one owns.' While the radiant essence, as a byproduct of the *Eye of the Mind*, underpins

metaphor more deeply. Although expressed in different stylistic forms belonging to their respective traditions, they all convey the same message: 25 centuries of philosophy have been captivated by the optical magic of explaining the life-world. The first to strike this blow, almost like an artist before a canvas, is John Dewey, who calls this attempt to make knowledge unchanging "the spectator theory of knowledge." The second is Peter Sloterdijk, who, with his cynical mind, claims that the entire metaphysical heritage is a kind of meta-optics.[24] Hegel was not wrong when he observed in the introduction to his "*Lectures on the History of Philosophy*" that all paths to understanding the depth of Western reflection lead back to Ancient Greece. He states: "*But what makes us specially at home with the Greeks is that they made their world their home; the common spirit of homeliness unites us both. In ordinary life we like best the men and families that are homely and contented in themselves, not desiring what is outside and above them, and so it is with the Greeks*" (Hegel 1995: 150). He also highlighted the connection between the Germans and the ancient Greeks, noting that: "*The name of Greece strikes home to the hearts of men of education in Europe*" (Hegel 1995: 149). Using both the archaeological and genealogical methods, Rorty seeks to make tangible the knot in which all philosophy has been encapsulated—the radiant essence that allows humans to reflect nature, a concept with origins traced back to Ancient Greece.

---

the 'mirror of nature' and grants epistemology its exclusivity, the *Eye of Power*, with its formula of 'power through transparency, subjection by illumination,' reveals a new state of architectural experience, marked by the dispersed force of power. We can freely say that both theoretical and practical philosophy have been shaped by optical metaphors. In discussing the present, simply contemplating virtuality makes everything clear. See: (Foucault 1980); (Rorty, 1979).

[24] Note: In his text *"Clearing and Illumination: Notes on Metaphysics, Mysticism, and the Politics of Light,"* Peter Sloterdijk offers a highly provocative insight, asserting that metaphysics is nothing more than a meta-optics. He continues by arguing that most Western philosophers have used optical analogies to arrive at the appropriate terms for unpacking the essence and foundation of knowledge. These terms, in the form of ocular metaphors, have laid the groundwork for what is known as the 'metaphysics of consciousness,' in which, metaphorically speaking, foundationalist philosophy has been 'imprisoned.' Outside these discursive regimes, philosophy cannot operate as a metaphysics of presence. Sloterdijk outlines this monomania with opticality, stating: "… the intelligible sun whose radiation generates world forms, things, and intellects—like an all-embracing theatre of self-observation of absolute intelligence, in which looking and creating are one and the same thing. This backs up the claim that Western metaphysics, on account of its pervasive obsession with ocular themes, was actually a kind of meta-optics" (Sloterdijk 2017: 50). The trajectory of this meta-optical vision begins with the emanation of Plato's sun and leads to the *cogito* as the secure guarantee of radiant essences. See: (Sloterdijk 2017: 50).

But before proceeding, it is necessary to explain what these "radiant essences" are. Rorty gives a simple answer:[25] 1) Their genesis lies in the sparks of intellectuals who describe that "intellectual spirit" or, in Bacon's terms, the "human mind," which, in Descartes, takes on the connotation of the division between thought and extended substance, the veil of ideas; and 2) The clarity and purity that the mind possesses as a mirror of nature, which is linked to Descartes' Enlightenment efforts.

Returning to the argumentative continuity: Rorty delves into the problem by initially making a nuanced distinction between the 'eye of the body' and the 'eye of the mind.' The latter, beginning with Socrates and further developed by Plato through the notion of 'contemplation,' becomes the unsurpassable model for universal, valid, and infallible truths. Although he does not deviate from this metaphor, he offers a different option in antiquity, marked by Aristotle's attempt through his hylomorphism.[26] However, the continuation of this "historical mistake," as Rorty sees it, is fully formed in the culminating moment of modernity known as Cartesianism. Perhaps a complementary eccentric variant of this link can be found in Bruno Latour, who ties the entire modern project to humanism and, consequently, the announcement of the birth of man and the proclamation of his

[25] Note: Rorty borrows the use of "glassy essences" from Shakespeare, which, according to J.V. Cunningham, connotes the intellectual spirit as a kind of reflective brilliance of God. The first philosophical use of this term, however, can be traced back to the reflections of Charles S. Peirce. We must understand that this concept, initially a form of expression by literary figures to describe their relationship with supernatural powers, can also be found in music, as in "Bach was touched by the hand of God" (Wagner 1849). This worldview has deep roots in Platonism, as Rorty himself notes: "Our Glassy Essences is something we share with angels, even though they weep for our ignorance of its nature. The supernatural world for sixteenth-century intellectuals was modeled upon Plato's world of Ideas, just as our contact with it was modeled upon his metaphor of vision" (Rorty 1979: 42-43). See: (Rorty 1979); (Wagner 1849).

[26]Note: Rorty makes a substantial distinction between Aristotle's hylomorphism and the theory of representation or representationalism, stating: '…from the hylomorphic conception of knowledge—a conception according to which knowledge is not the possession of accurate representations of an object but rather the subject's becoming identical with the object' (Rorty 1979). To further clarify this difference between the Platonic-Cartesian model and the Aristotelian one, even though both operate through the metaphor of the eye and the mirror, Rorty points out that in the latter, the concept of intellect cannot be an internal eye that inspects through a mirror. Rather, the image on the retina itself is the intellect, which becomes all things, while the former model operates with surveillance maxims, where the intellect inspects entities modeled by the images on the retina. See: (Rorty 1979).

death. This chain of reasoning belongs to the habitat of modernity, as it is asymmetrical. Its asymmetry is built upon the dichotomous division that, through intelligible apparatuses, attempts to create a coherent situation via metaphysics in response to the practical hybridity it faces. Thus, for Bruno Latour, "we have never been modern" (Latour 1993: 10). The question arises: what makes these very different perspectives share a similar starting point? The answer is quite simple: the dividing line and bridge between antiquity and the constitution of modernity are closely tied to the name of a single philosopher, René Descartes. A legitimate question follows: where does modernity connect with antiquity, and where does it diverge in Rorty's discourse? The points of divergence are easy to identify: a) The surpassing of Aristotelian hylomorphism by modern representationalism. b) The constitution of the subject and, consequently, the marking of the mental. c) The replacement of practical Pyrrhonian skepticism with methodological skepticism, which, as Marcus Gabriel puts it, "Cartesian skepticism is a condition of the intelligibility of epistemology itself" (Gabriel 2022: 16). Where these two periods converge is in the concept of the mind: 1) The Greeks identified a distinctive and dignified feature of humans that separated them from animals. Hence, Plato's solution: that the mind enables the contemplation of universal truths, like those in mathematics, and ascend into the intelligible and ahistorical realm of reflection through *nous* as the *arche* (origin) of everything. 2) Modernity, on the other hand, does not see the human mind as a divine revelation but as the foundation for all knowledge. Descartes' solution is that all knowledge is built upon the mind (Tartaglia 2020: 46), with the mind playing a central role in inspecting internality and making sense of externality. Following Martin Heidegger's discourse, Descartes' name is closely associated with the conceptual knot of modernity as [*vorstellendes Denken*], which, in simple translation, would be 'representational thinking.' Rorty similarly contends that the origins of representationalism can be traced back to Descartes. Or, as Edwards phrases it: 'with Descartes, reason is constituted as representation'(Edwards 1990: 68). Two crucial components encapsulate this representational thought: 1) According to Rorty, Descartes marks the rise of the mental and the "mentalization" of thought, which becomes an unquestioned tyrant over both external and internal entities. This marks the transcendence of the ancient dichotomy of externality found in academic skepticism while situating the mental as the judge over internal dichotomies. At the same time, Descartes inaugurates the mind-body problem, which remains a subject of treatment to this day in cognitive science, neuroscience, and philosophy of mind. 2) His

methodological doubt embodies "integrative anti-skepticism" as its *telos*,[27] while simultaneously establishing the ego as a metaphysical subject. This makes Cartesianism the key that Kant would use to ground adequate representation of the world. As philosopher Salihu observes:

"*The condition of being, according to Descartes, is thought. (...) In dismissing the doubt about the primacy of being over thought, the subsequent impulses of post-Cartesian philosophy arise, which assign the subject a leading role*" (Salihu 2009: 30).

Under Habermas' dictum, this would represent the *modus ponens* for the transition from ontological thinking to mentalism (Habermas 1992: 21). To continue the argument, several presuppositions must be outlined that lead to the concept of the 'metaphysics of consciousness' as an inherent problem in contemporary analytic philosophy. The first presupposition is that after the fall of the reign of the mind, the *horror vacui* (the terror of the void) is filled by the 'linguistic turn,' but this turn remains captive to the old Cartesian problems, only extrapolated into language. The second presupposition, which follows from the first, is that a persistent problem has been created that continues to trouble philosophy to this day: the metaphysical inherence of the mind-body dichotomy. These two presuppositions will be the focus of this section in encapsulating the 'harm and benefit' of Cartesianism for life. The author explored here begins his critique of neo-Cartesianism with a highly provocative introduction that opens as follows:

[27] Note: The term 'integrative anti-skepticism' was coined by philosopher Dietmar Heidmann, who views it as a desideratum for capturing or understanding the intelligible nature of the modern epistemological project. This concept is embedded within Cartesian methodological skepticism, as Markus Gabriel notes: '*in the first place – in other words, can be motivated – only given a confrontation with the problem of Cartesian skepticism. (...)Integrative antiscepticism does not attempt to refute methodological scepticism directly. Yet, unlike negative dogmatism, it does not accept local sceptical conclusions either*' (Gabriel 2020) A new perspective within analytic philosophy is represented by the philosopher Crispin Wright, who attempts an apologetic approach to methodological doubt by highlighting its anti-skeptical strategies. He represents what is known as the latent version of methodological doubt, which challenges some beliefs without calling belief itself into question. However, what Gabriel calls the "Cartesian implosion" is evident in Wright's work, though his prospect remains within what Conant calls the "Cartesian predicament." See: (Heidmann 2007); (Wright 1991); (Conant 2020); (Gabriel 2020).

"*Discussions in the philosophy of mind usually start off by assuming 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*" (Rorty 1979: 17).

This is the critical moment of legitimizing the invention of the "mental" within the discursive regimes of analytic philosophy. With his historical approach, Rorty challenges the entire analytic discourse by asserting that the mind is an invention of the seventeenth century and was not always a central problem in philosophy. In antiquity, there was no such sharp distinction between the mental and the physical. The invention and delineation of the mental created the groundwork for the clear division between the mental and the physical. At first glance, according to Rorty, this division was not problematic, but it has introduced several issues, that warrant further exploration. For example, by viewing language through Descartes as something external, it creates confusion in expressing sensation and intuition. This problem arises because language is viewed as representation, as a 'mental image.' Like Descartes and Locke, who regarded language as something external used to express something internal within the landscapes of the soul, the idea emerges that words are the names of ideas; just as ideas represent reality, spoken words represent ideas in the form of naming or designation.[28] This implies that from the paradigm of an artificial sign, which spoken language is, a natural sign is presented through the act of speaking. As for

[28] Note: Nietzsche is aligned with this line of argument but expresses it with more radical and ironic tones. He views the entire effort of Descartes' *Cogito* as nothing more than a *Fallstrick* (a trap of words). As Nietzsche himself puts it:

"Let us be more careful than Descartes, who got caught up in the trap of words. Cogito is only a word to be sure: but it means something manifold: many a thing is manifold, and we grab at it crudely believing full well that it is one thing. In that famous cogito there is l) it thinks 2) and I believe that it is I who is thinking here, 3) but even assuming that this second point remains hanging, as a matter of faith, then also that first "it thinks" contains another belief: namely, that "thinking" is an activity for which a subject, at least an "it" must be thought: - and the ergo sum means nothing more than this! But this is the belief in grammar, here "things" and their "activities" are already posited, and we are far away from direct certainty" (Nietzsche 2019 : 195).

If we follow philosopher Sarah Kofman's argument, it is only through language that we can identify linguistic lapses that later become conceptual ones. Nietzsche seeks to deconstruct the idea that *cogito* could be any kind of rational truth of immediate certainty, because this very act implies a vast network of mediations—beliefs, opinions, and 'articles of faith'—that always separate us from ourselves. The concept of immediate certainty is inherently contradictory, a *contradictio in adjectio*. See: (Nietzsche 2019) ; (Kofman 1991).

.

written language, it is simply another level on the same scale; in a semiotic framework, this would mean 'a kind of sign of a sign of a sign' (Edwards 1990: 69). James Edwards lucidly recapitulates this entire connection when he states:

"*... (in Locke's phrase) the mirror of nature; it is a passive medium that naturally reflects, well or ill, the reality that stands before it. These natural reflections of reality Locke and Descartes call ideas; and they assume that, like the images appearing in an actual mirror, our ideas are the more or less accurate copies of the things that originally cause them to appear to us*" (Edwards 1990: 69).

The consequences of mentalism in language will turn it into a naming system for the representation of objects in ideas. Thus, the mirror that is formed will not be the psychoanalytic variant of Lacan's, but rather the mantra upon which all of philosophy will be grounded.

An intervention will be provided in response to Richard Rorty's critique of the encapsulation of mentalism within language. His response begins at the point where 'tactical eliminative materialism' and 'pragmatic Hegelianism' converge—the latter of which will be explained in subsequent chapters, though occasionally referenced here. The physicalist strategy arises as a consequence of deconstructing the metaphysical transcendence expressed through consciousness and the linguistified variants of this legacy, which is found in post-Cartesian positions in the theory of knowledge, as Charles Guignon states:

"*In retrospect, we can see that Rorty's eliminative materialism, then deemed to be merely one among various alternative positions available in the debate over mind–body identity, was actually an attempt to undermine the entire modern (Cartesian) philosophical tradition that organized the world in terms of mind and matter*" (Guingon and Hiley 2003: 6).

The connection between eliminative materialism and 'Pragmatic Hegelianism' can be understood through an intertextual reading of what James Tartaglia asserts:

"*Philosophical ontology emerged as both a response to the epistemological problems Cartesianism generated – the task being to describe the world in such a way as to undermine skepticism – and also as a reaction against the creeping materialism which modern science set in motion, and which was thought to devalue us. (...) But materialism is essentially anti- metaphysical – it makes everything relational*" (Tartaglia 2020: 47).

This tactical shift undertaken by Rorty highlights what he continuously emphasizes in his discourse—the primacy of social practice over ahistorical reflective instances. This nominalist

impetus creates the space for him to establish what Barry Allen rightly calls 'dis-epistemology' or his brief flirtation with hermeneutics.[29]

Hegel, in the context of American philosophy, is distinguished by the poetic will to create and the drive toward freedom. The notion of freedom emerging from Hegel's philosophy has been fundamental to Dewey's ethical democracy. Another key element is the dissolution of classical dichotomies and the push toward unity, found both in Hegel's philosophy and in that of Rorty and Dewey. This is because, for Hegel, history is deeply intertwined with the history of the concept, leading to the reconciliation of history with the rest of reality. Pure reason is historicized by Hegel (Henning 2014: 529). This American turn toward reanimating Hegel must pass through the lens of Darwinian naturalism: "Pragmatism recognized this 'sublation' of dualisms as its paragon; it merely wanted to avoid the intellectualist fixation. Ultimately, it also arrived at a 'philosophy of unity'; the modification vis-à-vis Hegel consisted in the Darwinization of monism" (Henning 2014: 529). Hegel's philosophy has served as the foundation for all philosophical orientations aiming to constitute the world through practice.[30] Henning aptly labels neo-pragmatism as a 'Hegelian persistence,' which is instructive for understanding this 'Hegelian version of pragmatism.' Thus, the American reading of Hegel begins with a revisionist touch to save him from traditional interpretations. The notion of 'acceptance' (Hegel) plays a central role in Rorty's anti-Cartesianism, as he views human intentionality on one hand and, on the other, the constitution

[29] Note: Although Rorty does not fully embrace hermeneutics, he views it merely as a temporary method to oppose epistemology. I see that Rorty, perhaps unconsciously, creates a reconfiguration within hermeneutics, which we can freely call a 'neo-pragmatic hermeneutics.' In this view, interpretative communities take precedence over scientific egotism in opening new pathways and vocabularies to grasp the forms of life. Rorty's interpretative community emerges as a necessary response to escape the suffocating whirlpool of ahistorical realism. Only through 'pragmatic hermeneutics' can we envision a new prospect for reaffirming the creative potential of life.

As I see it, pragmatic hermeneutics does not belong to the realist predicament of revelation, meaning we don't have to uncover things in the world. Instead, it resides in the realm of creating new forms of expression, where dialogue is endless and where we open ourselves to relationships with life-worlds, making them livable. From now on, whenever I refer to hermeneutics in this text, it will be in this sense.

[30] Note: Two currents in philosophy that have given primacy to praxis, both emerging from Hegel's philosophy, are: Marxism, which begins with Marx's famous postulate "the constitution of the world through practice," and John Dewey's pragmatism, with its version of "naturalized left Hegelianism" (Ryan 2000) or "ethical democracy." See: (Henning 2014); (Ryan 2000).

of objective spirit [*objektiver Geist*]. Through Rorty's 're-descriptive' lens, this means that the mind is not a product of a fixed human capacity but is drawn from social practice. Robert Brandom shares this view, seeing how Rorty, borrowing tropes from Hegel and Nietzsche, opposes the ontological certainty of Cartesianism by offering the pragmatic alternative that 'ontological facts depend on our social practices' (Brandom 2013: 24). This explains Rorty's admiration for Hegel, as noted by Paul Redding:

"*Rorty had been obviously attracted to the strongly anti-Cartesian dimensions of Hegel's account of "Anerkennung" in which mindedness is treated not as a fixed human capacity but as having a history in virtue of being dependent on historically variable forms of social interaction* " (Reading 2020: 255).

'Rorty's "social ontology," if it can be termed as such, takes a ballistic trajectory, connecting eliminative materialism with his social pragmatism, shaking the foundation of "being as truth" and ontological certainty, and instead offering the radical alternative of "the truth of being as thought and practice." As Brandom explains, the social is a symbiosis of individual-subjective and social-intersubjective ontological types, with the social being *primus inter pares* (Brandom 2013: 26). These ontological views are a consequence of John Dewey's pragmatic legacy, which places his radical liberalism beyond teleological identity definitions of individualism and communitarianism. Dewey positions it in the context of what Agamben refers to as the 'being-together of existences' (Agamben 1990: 1). Rorty provides the new 'vocabularies' to reflect beyond the 'Cartesian anxiety[31] (Bernstein 1983). These vocabularies challenge older ones, which are entrenched in

[31] Note: The concept of 'Cartesian anxiety' is a term coined by the philosopher Richard J. Bernstein. By this, he refers to the anxiety that has characterized a significant part of modern and contemporary philosophy, rooted in Descartes' mentalism, which has entrapped us within its dichotomous frameworks. Any stance taken outside its contemplative sphere has been viewed as a form of heresy by foundationalist approaches. This anxiety follows the formula proposed by Kierkegaard— the famous *Either/Or*—where any position beyond this scheme is regarded with disdain. It stems from what Adorno called the "disintegration of the medieval cosmos," which ties into what Salihu refers to as 'the dispersal of being into indefinite indeterminacy.' The drive for an Archimedean point that could find secure and infallible foundations fueled the birth of Cartesianism, which for Adorno was 'the grand projection of absolute immanence.' Cartesianism appeared to offer a solution that would provide certainty, but it had anxiety inscribed within itself, as Richard Bernstein states::

"*Reading the Meditations as a journey of the soul helps us to appreciate that Descartes' search for a foundation or Archimedean point is more than a device to solve metaphysical and epistemological problems. It is the quest for some fixed point; some stable rock upon which we can secure our lives against the vicissitudes that constantly threaten*

objectivity, certainty, and rigor. This oscillation places Rorty in a Nietzschean space of 'becoming,' tightly connected with the interpretive community. It is the only way to discourage the drive towards discursive formations grounded in intellectual comprehensibility. Unquestionable authority cannot be assigned to something that does not anticipate engagement with the lifeworld. Thus, Rorty's 'rhetorical play,' influenced by Wittgenstein, as Brandom observes, arrives at these conclusions:

"*What is intelleigible is cognitive theoretical consensus on various points (contingent, partial, and temporary though it may be." But the idea of something that cannot enter into a conversation with us, cannot give and ask for reason , somehow dictating what we ought to say is not one we can in the end make sense of*" *(*Brandom 2013; 27).

Perhaps a more radical interpretation of Brandom's quote can be seen in Sarah Kofman, who, in her essay *Descartes Entrapped*, argues that thinking, as defined by epistemologists, never truly happens. For Kofman, it is nothing but an arbitrary fabrication, one that excludes and ignores everything else, functioning only to mirror intelligible facts. This, she claims, is merely an artificial arrangement disconnected from the forms of life. The urge for certainty has given simple words a transcendent character, but when embedded in social practice, they are nothing more than simple words (Kofman 1991: 183). Precision is necessary here: Kofman's critique is largely built upon Nietzsche's presuppositions about Cartesian *cogito*.

In "*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*," paves the way for entering a post-philosophical, post-metaphysical context. When intelligible authority is relinquished, attention shifts toward interpretive communities. This "*gestalt switch*" (Kuhn) echoes the message from the Nobel

---

us. The specter that hovers in the background of this journey is not just radical epistemological skepticism but the dread of madness and chaos where nothing is fixed, where we can neither touch bottom nor support ourselves on the surface . With a chilling clarity Descartes leads us with an apparent and ineluctable necessity to a grand and seductive Either/Or" (Bernstein 1983).

The Cartesian anxiety, as a consequence of Descartes' Enlightenment thinking, is embedded in religious, metaphysical, moral, and epistemological frameworks, standing as their apex. Thus, Rorty's project requires tropes from Hegel, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and Dewey to overcome this anxiety—manifested as a form of *ressentiment*—that philosophy has continually tried to escape. See: (Bernstein 1983); (Salihu 2009); (Adorno 2007).

laureate physicist/chemist Ilya Prigogine about the "end of certainty.'[32] To recap this presupposition, it is worth recalling what James Tartaglia says about Cartesian dualism: "it was simply a theory designed to give intuitive meaning to the ahistorical" (Tartaglia 2007: 41).

The first presupposition has been sufficiently explained, clearing the way to address the second one, which is a derivative of the first: the analytical extravagance concerning the mind-body problem.

Rorty begins his elaboration on the mind-body problem with a historical critique, as previously mentioned, arguing that the problem favors Cartesian dualism. He builds this premise on philosophers like Strawson and Wittgenstein, suggesting that the mind cannot be identified without reference to the body, or as Rorty puts it:

"*Post-Wittgensteinian philosophers who oppose behaviorism and materialism tend to grant to Wittgenstein and Strawson that in some sense there is nothing there but the human organism, and that we must give up the notion of this organism as made out of a bit of res cogitans nonspatially associated with a bit of res extensa. (...)This intuition seems to them enough to establish an unbridgeable gap*" (Rorty 1979 :17-18).

From this observation, as Rorty himself notes, the question arises as to what distinguishes these properties. Rorty, with a certain virtuosity, attempts to provide a clearer answer: the physical is spatial, while the mental is not. Nervous processes, for instance, have a location in the brain, whereas a corresponding thought does not. However, Rorty emphasizes that this does not happen merely because both health and structure are physical, even though neither has a specific location (Gutting 2020: 213). This stance arises as a result of his tactful maneuvering between eliminative materialism and his meta-logical extensionalism. Eliminative materialism, along with its empirical approach to the world—what Deleuze refers to as *the empirical is the plural* (Deleuze-Parnet, 1987: vii)—and extensionalism remain unchallenged positions in the analytical debate about the philosophy of mind.[33] In the same vein, Rorty critiques candidates for distinguishing mental states, such as intentionality and their phenomenal qualities, as Gutting states:

---

[32] For more, see: (Prigogine and Stengres 1996).

[33] Note: In the book *Dialogues*, a conversation between Claire Parnet and philosopher Gilles Deleuze, the latter explains his positions regarding the relationship between empiricism and pluralism. He views the new context of life as situated within "pure immanence," which became the title of his famous essay *Immanence: A Life*. Deleuze

"*Neither characterization applies to all mental states: a phenomenal quality like feeling pain is not about anything; and it does not "feel like" anything to believe – even when we don't think about it – that Dobos torte is a Hungarian dessert). (...)Then we might argue that nothing physical could be either intentional or phenomenal, and so conclude that the mental cannot be physical. Rorty, however, maintains that showing that either the intentional or the phenomenal cannot be physical requires assuming, if not Descartes's substance dualism, then at least a Cartesian dualism of mental and physical properties*" (Gutting 2020: 213).

Intentionality, at least since Wittgenstein (if not Saussure), has been described in terms of meaning concerning the use of language. For this reason, meaning is not an intrinsic characteristic of a linguistic expression, but rather a matter of the linguistic rules governing the use of expressions. The only way to avoid this materialist conclusion would be to claim that only the mental can have proper meaning, and that so-called physical meanings can only be known if the mental reflections or thoughts to which inscriptions and signs correspond are already understood (Gutting 2020: 213), as Rorty himself asserts:

"*... since Wittgenstein and Sellars, that the meaning of topographyical inscriptions is not an extra "immaterial" property they have, but just their place in a context surrounding events in a language-game, in a form of life. This goes brain-inscriptions as well"* (Rorty 1979: 17-18).

This brings attention to another issue identified by Rorty: the linguistic flexibility in distinguishing between the physical and mental, and between the material and immaterial. According to Rorty, "How can two different concepts have opposite synonyms?" Another question Rorty raises is why phenomenal states are intentional and why some intentional states are not phenomenal. From reflecting on these relationships, two approaches in the philosophy of mind emerge: Intentionalism and the Relational Principle. Both approaches attempt to dominate the area that is simply referred to as "the mental." These two approaches specialize in finding the common features that unify all elements under the label of "mental" and ensuring that these are part of "adequate mental representations." As James Tartaglia puts it: "from his (Rorty's) perspective, both approaches 'gerrymander,' i.e., they are unfairly advantaged. Both Intentionalism and the Relational Principle... the association between intentionality and phenomenality is based on a

interprets the repercussions of empiricism as extended across the pluralistic plane of life. To remain faithful to my restructured version, Deleuze expresses this sentiment textually as follows: "I have always felt that I am an empiricist, that is, a pluralist." See: (Deleuze and Parnet 1987); (Deleuze 2005).

misunderstanding of meaning rather than a unifying mark of the mental" (Tartaglia 2007: 51-52). Rorty seeks an escape from the trap of the epistemological vocabulary used to conceptualize the mind, as this paves the way for a deeper entanglement within the linguistic epistemological coordinates of argumentation—how to know being, where desires and external manifestations are considered within the same conceptual framework—which remains a domain of expertise for contemporary epistemologists. Various metaphors used to describe biological sensations through a metaphysical linguistic apparatus merely hypostatize universals by thinking of them as particulars (Kelmendi 2018).[34] In connection with this point, Gutting expresses a similar view:

"*... Rorty says that he can fairly claim to have "dissolved" the mind-body problem by having shown that it doesn't arise as long as we "refuse firmly to hypostatize individual properties" (Rorty 1979, 32); that is, remain steadfast nominalists. (...) he says, explain the special status of the phenomenal in terms of linguistic use: the rules of our language-game stipulate that we accept as true speakers' sincere reports about how things appear to them. These points dissolve the mind-body problem in the sense that they show that it arises only within a language-game (that of philosophy since Descartes) that we have no need to play*" (Gutting 2020: 214).

Thus, nothing is outside the language-game, not even the Cartesian fiction, which can certainly be dispensed with. To recap this part of the long journey to deconstruct the 'metaphysics of consciousness,' Rorty's own passage is worth noting:

"*Let me now remind the reader of the course I have followed in this chapter. In sections 1-2 I argued that we could make no sense of the notion of "mental entities" as a distinct ontological genus without invoking the notion of "phenomenal entities" such as pains, entities whose being was exhausted by the single property of, for example, painfulness. I claimed that the real problem was not to abjure such hypostatized universals but to explain why anyone had taken them seriously, and how they came to seem relevant to discussions of the nature of personhood and of reason. I hope that sections 3-6 have given an idea of how I think these historical questions can be answered (although I am painfully aware of the lacunae in the story I have told). My answer to the question "Why do we tend to lump the intentional and the phenomenal together as 'the menta!'?" is that Descartes used the notion of the "incorrigibly known" to bridge the gap between them. So I now need to spell out more fully my own anti-Cartesian, Wittgensteinian, view of the nature of "our privileged access to the mental." In the following chapter, therefore, I put aside personhood and reason, and discuss consciousness almost exclusively. I shall try to show that the purportedly metaphysical*

[34] Note: For Rorty, the *hypostatization* of universals means using particular mental entities to describe more general abstractions, such as feeling.

"problem of consciousness" is no more and no less than the epistemological "problem of privileged access," and that once this is seen questions about dualism versus materialism lose their interest." (Rorty 1979: 68-69)

This disinterest in the dichotomies inherited from Descartes arises as a result of Heidegger's influence, whose discursive approach to metaphysics had a significant impact on Rorty. Heidegger presents a perspective similar to Rorty's, expressed as follows: *"...Yet a regard for metaphysics still prevails even in the intention to overcome metaphysics. Therefore, our task is to cease all overcoming and leave metaphysics to itself."* (Heidegger 1972: 24). This pragmatic extract from Heidegger offers an alternative: that the "horror of metaphysics" (Kolakowski) can be transcended by abandoning the vocabularies that are bound to it. As soon as its register is entered, defeat is inevitable due to its encapsulating power. The only way to avoid being detected by its hauntology is to leave it to itself and not engage with it, as Heidegger emphasizes: "*Once it has become anthropology, philosophy perishes from metaphysics."*[35] Thus, the first chapter will demonstrate how Heidegger's initiative is realized in the new post-metaphysical and post-philosophical contexts of Richard Rorty.

2.1.3 Representationalism as Miror of Nature

A philosophy reduced to "epistemology"... that is a philosophy in its last gasps, an end, an agony

(Nietzsche 2014: 103)

...the Kantian critique and what in the same period was posited as the first almost complete form of ideological analysis. But Ideology, by extending its reflection over the whole field of knowledge – from primary impressions to political economy, by way of logic, arithmetic, the sciences of nature, and grammar – tried to resume in the form of representation precisely what was being formed and re-formed outside representation. This resumption could be accomplished only in the quasi-mythical form of a simultaneously singular and universal genesis: an isolated, empty, and abstract consciousness must, beginning with the most tenuous form of representation, build up little by little the great table of all that is representable

[35] Note: The English translation of this Heidegger quote comes from Richard Rorty, who in his book *Consequences of Pragmatism* modifies the quote in his own reconstructive version: "Philosophy as metaphysics ... Once it has become anthropology, philosophy perishes from metaphysics" (Rorty 1994). See: (Heidegger 2000) ; (Rorty 1994).

(Foucault 2002: 263).

There is a trajectory taken for granted throughout the history of philosophy. This trajectory can be summed up in Rorty's provocative phrase, "Epistemology as the self-image of philosophy." In this, the indication of philosophy as the axis around which all culture turns in an effort to create its foundation is outlined. A discipline within philosophy that has access to this contemplative guarantee is epistemology. It is the discipline that operates with juridical discourses within the reflective realm, such as: constitution, justification, objectivity, and in more aesthetic variants, representation. No discipline is more privileged within philosophy than epistemology, as it is the guarantor that philosophy remains rigorous, thereby acting as the mirror of science. It must be well-reasoned and provide foundations such as constitution. Thus, philosophers see epistemology as the discipline in which they uphold each other's empty metaphysical compliments. Anyone reflecting outside these preconditions, which legitimate being a philosopher, is often labeled with pejorative predicates such as relativist, artist, or mystic. For example, some, like philosopher Rudolf Carnap, might even refer to them as "musicians without the skill to make music.'[36]

Epistemology becomes the guarantor of what Rorty would call "adequate representations," and consequently, all philosophy attempts to remain within the framework of what is known as the neo-Kantian consensus in both the continental and analytical philosophical camps. The question arises: what exactly is this neo-Kantian consensus within these traditions? Rorty provides a fairly simple explanation: for him, the Anglo-Saxon tradition reads Kant through the lens of Russell, abandoning the problem of synthetic a priori truths as a misunderstanding of the nature of mathematics. As a result, epistemology in this tradition is interpreted as an update of Locke. This is the neuralgic point where epistemology diverges from psychology in the study of relations between basic and non-basic propositions, and as Rorty puts it, "these relations were viewed as a matter of 'logic' rather than of empirical fact" (Rorty 1979:162). The repercussions of this approach can be seen in logical empiricism, which sought to demarcate philosophy from science, distancing the latter from the temptations of idealism that might bind it to the continental tradition. Even though philosophy on the other side of the Channel (La Manche) still attempts to defend

[36] Note: Here, Carnap is referring to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. An essay that describes this divergence is the one by philosopher Sam Dresser titled "Peak Ellipsis" in Aeon magazine. For more information, see: https://aeon.co/essays/heidegger-v-carnap-how-logic-took-issue-with-metaphysics.

freedom and spirituality through the notion of constitution, it operates within Kantian logic. The dominance of epistemology does not imply abandoning the idea of philosophy as a missionary endeavor, whose mission has been to "ground" knowledge, where the entire culture sees itself reflected in the mirror of philosophy. This foundation of knowledge, linked to objectivity, is what Martin Heidegger, according to Rorty, tried to warn us about, which Heidegger drew from Plato: "the identification of the reality of a thing with its presence before us" (Heidegger 1959: 185). The iconoclasm of this neo-Kantian consensus is "accurate representation," which philosopher Rosa M. Calcaterra aptly explains when she states:

"*The notion of "adequate representation", which shapes modern and contemporary attempts to deal with knowledge and truth "through pure, non-empirical methods", would express the untenable philosophical aspiration to reach a privileged point of view that would allow it to judge (as Kant wished)"* (Calcaterra 2022: 131).

or, as Rorty himself expresses it:

"the Mirror of Nature, and thus to think of Knowledge as an assembleage of accurate representations" *(*Rorty, 1979: 137).

The transition from "accurate representations," to "Privileged Representations," will be explored later in the reflection on epistemology. The upcoming section may appear to lacks an alternative, as it does not offer an argumentative solution but rather highlights the historical symptom of the arrival of representation. However, attention should be given to Paul Ricœur's intonation regarding the "Masters of Suspicion"[37]: 'they do not offer the argument but the

[37] Note: Here, the "masters of suspicion" refer to philosophers like Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud, who, according to Ricœur and Foucault (as noted by Rick Roderick), challenged the human idolatries that had been constructed and opened the space for deeper interpretations of the contexts of *societas* and *civitas*. From a methodological perspective, Ricœur and Foucault view Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud as precursors to hermeneutics. In contrast, the German hermeneutic school, particularly Gadamer, does not recognize them as such and does not acknowledge them in the way Fairfield notes. The connection between Rorty and these thinkers lies in the fact that extracts, in the form of tropes from the "school of suspicion" (*école du soupçon*), permeate his entire philosophy. The methodological link that ties them together is the therapeutic and elliptical approach, where there is no monolithic reading but rather an opening toward a non-conclusive plurality. This is perhaps their *Holzweg* , where they detect problems but do not fall into the metaphysical trap of accepting them as given. A significant shared element between Rorty and the "school of suspicion" is anti-essentialism, though it must be noted that both Marx and the later Freud diverge from these positions. The former ends in an ontological-teleological messianism of ideology, while the latter returns to the "noumenology

symptom.' It seems that Rorty belongs to this tradition, though this will be discussed further in later chapters, as it falls outside the scope of this section.

Rorty scholars may notice that the treatment of representationalism has been inverted. The analysis begins from the end to understand the beginning, specifically questioning the reflexive marker that makes 'accurate representations' possible. This methodological approach is drawn from the historical inversion applied by Reiner Schürmann to Heidegger's philosophy, where he asserts that Heidegger must be read from the end to the beginning to be fully understood.[38] This inversion also serves here to conceptualize what 'accurate representation' means and to understand its genealogical roots, which have become an unavoidable path in philosophy.

Taking a brief survey of the history of philosophy, the first sparks of representational thought can be traced to Descartes' 'mental representation,' though a latent starting point can also be found in Hobbes. Despite Hobbes' mathematical reflections still remaining somewhat within mechanistic principles, this beginning reaches its culmination in the neo-Kantian registers, as Michel Henry beautifully observes when discussing Kant's subject: "*This is what Kant calls consciousness, the 'I think' experience, i.e., pure experience, the condition of all possible experience. For Kant, therefore, I think = pure manifestation = pure consciousness = pure experience = representation. If it is experience that gives Being to all things, representation is the essence of Being*" (Henry, 1991:159-161). This passage is significant for grasping Kant's attempt to make representation the essence of being. Continuing along this line of reasoning, it becomes apparent that the lesson to be drawn from the *Critique of Pure Reason* is that being and existence are thrown into existence only by the thinking subject. This subject, in the form of "I think," implies that it is a subject of representation, which for Michel Henry is tautological ('subject of representation') (Henry 1991: 159). Ultimately, the essence of being, the ontological foundation, is subjected to epistemological premises, as mentioned earlier, where the essence of being itself derives from representation. This

---

of the unconscious" (Salihu 2009), which ultimately leads to the psychological comfort of a "Mosaic" consolation (Sloterdijk 2009). See: (Ricoeur 1974); (Foucault 1998); (Fairfield 2011); (Steiner 1997); (Sloterdijk 2009) ; (Salihu 2009).

[38] Note: Here, I am referring to Reiner Schurmann's highly authentic interpretation of Heidegger's philosophy. He asserts that any attempt to interpret Heidegger's philosophy should begin from the latter part of Heidegger's oeuvre. For more, see: (Schurmann, 1987).

representation is the only adequate one because the ekstasis of existence, or presence in existence, is determined by its subject.

A shift from phenomenological registers to pragmatic ones is now required, though parallels can be drawn between the presentations that these two disciplines propose. For Rorty, Kant first succeeded in transforming the vision of philosophy as metaphysics—"the queen of the sciences"—by making it a foundational discipline. In what sense is it foundational? In the sense that epistemology, as a rigorous discipline, would use metaphysics as a transcendent tool, allowing philosophy, through it, to become the secure path to science. To locate the signifier within Kant's discourse, philosophy as a kind of *Erkenntnistheorie* (Theory of Knowledge/Epistemology) was initially dismantled by Hegelianism and its world-spirit. Neo-Kantians like Zeller proposed that *Erkenntnistheorie* had the task of discarding speculative and idealistic remnants, focusing instead on the notion of the "thing-in-itself" [*ding-an-sich*], thereby establishing the objectivity of cognitive assumptions in all empirical disciplines. For Rorty, this moment is "*the new "professionalized" self-image wich neo-Kantian philosophers were in the course creating.*"[39] The extension of this approach can be found in analytic philosophy, which seeks to create a link between the Cartesian concept of the mind, combined with beliefs and sensations, and Locke's ideas, or as Rorty expresses it:

"*Whereas Locke had retained the new inner space of research-the workings of the newly invented Cartesian mind-he had not been able to hold onto Cartesian certainty. Locke's "sensualism" was not yet a suitable candidate for the vacant position of "queen of the sciences*" (Rorty 1979:137).

Kant's ambition to establish philosophy as the "secure path toward science" involved bringing external space within internal space and using Cartesian certainty as a lever to establish inner rules that were previously considered external. As Michael Williams points out: "*Kant's "transcendental idealism" is supposed to offer a way of avoiding the errors of both rationalist dogmatism and*

[39] Note: Here, I refer to a footnote by Rorty on the influence that *Erkenntnistheorie* (the theory of knowledge) has had on neo-Kantian continental philosophy, especially philosophers like Hans Vaihinger and Eduard Zeller. They sought to make this approach a dominant part of their tradition. Rorty also identifies the same impulse in an unpublished work by Ian Hacking on the emergence of epistemology as a discipline. The works he references are: Hans Vaihinger's *Über den Ursprung des Wortes 'Erkenntnistheorie'* and Eduard Zeller's *Über Bedeutung und Aufgabe der Erkenntnistheorie*. See: (Rorty 1979: 135).

empiricist naturalism. For Kant, all empirically knowable objects, "outer" as well as "inner," are subject to conditions inherent in our cognitive constitution" (Williams 2003: 64). Consequently, as Rorty highlights: "[The Copernican Revolution] *was based on the notion that we can only know about objects a priori if we "constitute" them, and Kant was never troubled by the question of how we could have apodictic knowledge of these "constituting activities," for Cartesian privileged access was supposed to take care of that*" (Rorty 1979:137-138). Kant's project to make philosophy a rigorous discipline aimed to distinguish it from both speculative metaphysics and empirical psychology. For Kant, epistemology, as a non-empirical pursuit, would determine the cognitive status of all other subjects without regard for their intent, whether or not they sought objective knowledge (Williams 2003: 64). This marked the point where philosophy, as epistemology, became both self-aware and self-confident. According to Rorty, three moments crown Kant's initiative: 1) Establishing epistemology as the relationship between two distinct representations—formal (concepts) and material (intuition); 2) Linking epistemology with morality by "destroying reason to make room for faith" (overcoming Newtonian determinism to make space for moral self-awareness), as Rorty observes: "With Kant, epistemology was able to step into metaphysics' role of guarantor of the presuppositions of morality" (Rorty 1979:138); 3) Conceptualizing epistemology as the foundational science capable of revealing the formal, structural, phenomenological, grammatical, logical, and conceptual characteristics of all human activities. Thus, Kant's project aimed to make representation the essence of being. In the next section, the extensions of Kantian philosophy into analytic philosophy will be examined, particularly the shift from "accurate representation" to what Rorty calls "privileged representation." This transition, simplified, moves from "constitution" to "justification," or as Gary Gutting puts it:

> *"The alternative is to maintain that justification of a belief requires that it receive some further "inner authentication"; that there be some special experience (insight, awareness, perception) to justify my having the belief; that, in Rorty's terminology, I have certain "privileged representations"* (Gutting 2003: 44).

It is necessary to ask: what are the markers that enable "privileged representation"? In theory, these are apodictic truths—undeniable and therefore unquestionable. But in practice, "privileged representation" become most evidently in analytic philosophy, where epistemology finds its home. Even though Rorty argues that it also appears in classical phenomenology, especially in Husserl's second phase, as opposed to "existential phenomenology," which characterizes Heidegger and

Sartre's efforts.[40] Following the historical trajectory suggested by Rorty, the 19th century marks a temptation within Kantian philosophy, as it began losing its primacy in providing secure foundations for knowledge, objectivity, and internal justification. Four key moments highlight this uncertainty:1) The emergence of empirical psychology, which posed the fundamental question: "What do we need to know about knowledge that psychology cannot tell us?" (Rorty 1979: 165). Cartesian certainty and Kant's synthetic a priori truths emphasized the dominance of epistemology over ontology. As a result, empirical psychology naturalized epistemology, emphasizing "physicalism" as the only alternative to ontological views; 2) In response, Anglo-American idealism sought to save "spiritual values" through Berkeley's arguments against material substances and Hegel's dismissal of individual ego, exemplified in figures like Royce; 3) Pragmatism emerged as a response, with James's "aesthetic irony" and Dewey's social reform pragmatism, which sought to abolish metaphysical dichotomies. This led to a radical critique of "truth as correspondence" and "knowledge as accuracy of representation," threatening Kant's project of philosophy as a meta-criticism of specialized disciplines; 4) Across the Atlantic, European thinkers like Nietzsche, Bergson, and Dilthey challenged similar assumptions through their "philosophy of life" (*Lebensphilosophie*), seeking to break free from the constraints of epistemology. This conceptual map suggests that philosophy began finding the strength to move beyond epistemology—or what Rorty calls the "tribunal of reason," Derrida terms the "tribunal of the cogito," and Fairfield refers to as the "autocracy of the mind." However, as Rorty notes, by the early 1900s, there was a return to the mathematical fantasy as a guarantee for philosophy. This mathematical logic attempted to silence critical voices, dismissing them as neither rational nor rigorous. Two philosophers, one from each tradition—Husserl and Russell—revived Kant's

[40] Note: In a footnote, Richard Rorty highlights Gilbert Ryle's reaction to *Sein und Zeit*, where Ryle tactically draws an inter-conceptual connection between Husserl's and Russell's projects, which we will elaborate on in this chapter. Gilbert Ryle states: "It is my personal opinion that, as First Philosophy, Phenomenology is at present heading for bankruptcy and disaster and will end either in self-ruinous Subjectivism or in windy Mysticism." This stance, with almost apocalyptic overtones, serves to preserve the mathematical spirit in both camps. The "gestalt switch" (Kuhn) from traditional phenomenology to existential phenomenology marks the end of phenomenology's absorption as a "rigorous science." At the same time, this moment is quite significant and symptomatic in the conceptual alignment of the neo-Kantian legacy within philosophy. For more, see: (Spiegelberg 1994).

efforts, aiming to secure philosophy through apodictic truths. This shift set the stage for the emergence of "privileged representation," as Rorty emphasizes:

" *The paradigmatic figures in this attempt to recapture the mathematical spirit were Husserl and Russell. Husserl saw philosophy as trapped between "naturalism" and "historicism," neither of which offered the sort of "apodictic truths" which Kant had assured philosophers were their birthright.2 Russell joined Husserl in denouncing the psychologism which had infected the philosophy of mathematics, and announced that logic was the essence of philosophy*"[41] (Rorty 1979: 166).

In this segment of the history of philosophy, the path toward apodictic truths is outlined. In the analytical tradition, Russell discovered "logical forms," while in the continental tradition, Husserl uncovered the "essences" and "pure forms" of the world. Regarding this representationalist impetus in Husserl, Jacques Derrida states: "Speech represents itself; it is its representation. Even better, speech is the representation of itself." (Derrida 1973: 57). The same concern, but within the context of Richard Rorty's philosophy, is raised by Calcaterra, who claims:

"*Rorty thinks that Husserl's phenomenology and Russell's analytic philosophy also followed this scheme, because of their commitment to the distinction between propositional knowledge and knowledge by acquaintance that they shared with Carnap and Lewis.*" (Calcaterra, 2022, 131).

According to Rorty, the reanimation of Kantian philosophy within both the analytic and continental traditions has led to the uncovering of these 'privileged representations.' This way of reflecting has also projected seriousness, rigor, and purity, making epistemology a kind of *faute de mieux* for forty years. However, as Boris Groys noted, an 'anti-philosophical sentiment' eventually emerged, with both traditions producing their heretics. In the phenomenological tradition, Heidegger and Sartre stand out, while in the analytic tradition, Quine and Sellars emerge. Rorty examines these heresies through a historical parable, likening them to the apodictic truths that Hegel once questioned in Kant. These heretical movements, as Rorty observes, are marked by two acute moments: the first is the triumph of 'rigorous' or traditional phenomenology over existential phenomenology and its extensions, such as fundamental ontology. The second moment occurs in the Anglo-Saxon analytic sphere, where there is a shift from a logical reading of the philosophy of

[41] Note: For the sake of citation accuracy, Rorty refers to two key books by these thinkers, particularly specific texts that are paradigmatic for understanding the maintenance of the Kantian spirit in philosophy. These texts are: Huseerl 1965); (Russell 2009). The citation can be found in: (Rorty 1979).

science to a historical one. Science is no longer seen as existing in the 'myth of the framework' (Popper 1994) of individual discovery as a kind of cold, ahistorical access, but rather as the *sur-congnistaz* (Bachelard) of the scientific community, justified through social practice and holistic dialogue.

2.1.4 Pathway Nominalist Conversations: Quine and Sellars

Within this conceptual field, there is a strong tendency within analytic philosophy to reconstruct knowledge rationally. This involves the Vienna Circle's efforts, and its Anglo-Saxon extensions, to reveal the distinction between 'contingency' (which is influenced by *the given*) and 'necessity' (influenced by the mind and therefore completely under its control) as a difference between 'truth as a virtue of meaning' and 'truth as a virtue of experience."[42] As Rorty's "Linguistic Turn" suggests, these thinkers did not abandon foundationalism but instead sought to find the ideal language. The first challenge to this framework comes with Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations, followed by the Oxford school, particularly Austin, and Sellars with Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind. Not to be overlooked is Quine's groundbreaking Two Dogmas of Empiricism, which radically challenged the Kant-Russell-Husserl trinity's presuppositions. In his selection of thinkers, Rorty focuses on Sellars' behaviorist/holistic critique of the "framework of givenness" and Quine's behaviorist/holistic critique of the necessary-contingent distinction.

The question that emerges is where these thinkers converge? What unifies their intellectual endeavors? The common thread, according to Rorty, is that they do not see any special relationship between words and objects; instead, they see justification as rooted in social practice. This shift toward social practices carries traces of 'Hegelian Pragmatism,' while simultaneously being grounded in the holistic frameworks of these thinkers. The theoretical ventures of these philosophers are united by an important premise: whether it be the distinction between the given and the contingent, or the distinction between necessity and contingency, knowledge cannot be understood without grasping the social justification of belief. This leaves no room for privileged representation, as Gary Gutting points out:

---

[42] Note: For argumentative accuracy, Rorty here refers to two theories that have dominated epistemology within the domain of the philosophy of language. This relates to the critique of Carnap's concept of the "given," with Russell's *"knowledge by acquaintance"* and Lewis's *"expressive language."*

"*But on Rorty's reading, as we have seen, this new empiricist program eventually imploded in the work of Sellars, Quine, and Davidson, thereby undermining the representationalist picture and leaving no place for analytic philosophy as a distinctive domain of knowledge*" (Gutting 2020: 217-218).

For Rorty, replacing confrontation with conversation leads to the abdication of the notion of the mind as a "Mirror of Nature". He describes this effort as follows:

"*….rather than an empirical discovery, or as isolating "trans-framework heuristic categories." If we see knowledge as a matter of conversation and of social practice, rather than as an attempt to mirror nature, we will not be likely to envisage a metapractice which will be the critique of all possible forms of social practice. So holism produces, as Quine has argued in detail and Sellars has said in passing, a conception of philosophy which has nothing to do with the quest for certainty*" (Rorty 1979: 171).

Furthermore, it must be asked: How can this critique of the neo-Kantian derivatives in analytic philosophy be described? Rorty refers to Sellars' and Quine's efforts as "epistemological behaviorism," as both thinkers question the epistemic privilege or 'epistemic segregation' (Barbara Smith 2005), where privileged representations are seen as the nexus of certain claims. Now, what is epistemological behaviorism? Epistemological behaviorism or nominalism abandons the claim that experience plays a decisive role in the understanding of knowledge and instead offers the alternative of viewing knowledge within social practice (Guignon and Hiley 2003: 9), or as Gary Gutting puts it: "*Epistemological behaviorism conflicts with the "empiricist" claim that beliefs such as "There is a tree outside the window" are justified by my sense experiences and with the "rationalist" claim that beliefs such as "All bachelors are unmarried" are justified by my awareness of meanings.*" (Gutting 2003: 45) This is also the holistic drive behind this approach, as it eliminates the correspondence theory, which both Heidegger and Strawson sought to discard. In Quine's terms, this would be the 'museum myth' (Quine 1969: 187), where the object and the world are preserved as they are.

Sellars' and Quine's behaviorism views beliefs within the framework of a communicative culture, where statements are justified not by the intrinsic internal representations they express but by the communicative culture of social practice. As Rorty puts it:

"*…Explaining rationality and epistemic authority by reference to what society lets us say, rather than the latter by the former, is the essence of what I shall call "epistemological behaviorism," an attitude common to Dewey and Wittgenstein. This sort of behaviorism can best be seen as a species of holism-but one which requires no idealist metaphysical underpinnings. It claims that if we understand the rules of a language-game, we understand all that*

there is to understand about why moves in that language-game are made (all, that is, save for the extra understanding obtained from inquiries nobody would call epistemological- into, for example, the history of the language, the structure of the brain, the evolution of the species, and the political or cultural ambiance of the players). If we are behaviorist in this sense, then it will not occur to us to invoke either of the traditional Kantian distinctions" (Rorty 1979: 176).

Rorty views Quine and Sellars as alternatives to the notion of "privileged representation," as they attempt to view belief within social justification. In this view, beliefs exist within a web and do not require conceptual schemes. Or, as Rorty himself states:

"... in which Sellars and Quine are behaviorist is not to offer reductionist analyses, but to refuse to attempt a certain sort of explanation: the sort of explanation which not only interposes such a notion as "acquaintance with meanings" or "acquaintance with sensory appearances" between the impact of the environment on human beings and their reports about it, but uses such notions to explain the reliability of such reports" (Rorty 1979: 176).

Rorty views Quine and Sellars as deeply embedded within linguistic frameworks that aim to escape the propositional concepts often used to view language, which are typically confined to expressing within a rigid structure. For them, the central issue is not about the precision or adequacy of facts, but whether socially justified practices can be founded on facts. This leads to two alternative directions derived from their reflections: 1) One option leads towards a pragmatic view of truth and a therapeutic approach to ontology. 2) The other leads towards an ontological exploration of the relationships between mind and meaning, universals and particulars, thought and language, consciousness and the brain. To conclude this section, the holistic approach to knowledge embodies a sort of skepticism toward the epistemological endeavor itself.

The behaviorist approach to episodes of "direct awareness" is not an anti-mentalist polemic but rather a deep mistrust of Plato's attempt to offer a special kind of certainty—one supposedly linked to the visual perception of reality. What Quine and Sellars teach us is that representational theory holds no privileged status in relation to reality, and Locke's confusion between explanation and justification helps clarify why "the nature of knowledge" is, ultimately, just a description of human behavior.

At this juncture, it is useful to examine these thinkers within the context already laid out. Both Sellars and Quine, through their holistic and behaviorist approaches to epistemology, have opened new paths for eliminating the correspondence and coherence theories of truth. This has sparked what Habermas refers to as "post-analytic philosophy" (Habermas 1992: 3). In seeking parallels

in the continental tradition, Gadamer's efforts are noteworthy, especially his attempt, through hermeneutics, to overcome the narrow horizons offered by the correspondence theory of truth. What links post-analytic philosophy with hermeneutics is something that, in Sellars' terms, would be called a "Hegelian meditation," which means that the justification and recognition (Kojeve, 1980) of beliefs, assertions, and ultimately our knowledge, must meet two criteria: 1) These must arise from social practice. 2) These must be grounded in history.[43] In essence, this means abandoning Kantian foundations in philosophy.

Sellars' essay, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," is highly instructive for grasping his entire effort of "psychological nominalism" or the concept of "pre-linguistic awareness." He states:

"*all awareness of sorts, resemblances, facts, etc., in short all awareness of abstract entities – indeed, all awareness even of particulars – is a linguistic affair. According to it, not even the awareness of such sorts, resemblances, and facts as pertain to so-called immediate experiences is presupposed by the process of acquiring the use of language*" (Sellars 1963: 160).

From this citation, it emerges that Sellars distinguishes the problem of awareness between *'awareness-as-discriminative-behavior'* and *'awareness that involves the ability to notice what sort of thing something is.'* Rorty continues the argument, suggesting that awareness in the first sense can manifest simply through a reliable signal (as with rats, amoebas, computers), while awareness in the second sense is displayed only by beings whose behavior constructs or formulates a sentence with the intention of justifying that sentence. As Charles Guignon and David R. Hiley notes:

"*The first type of awareness is a matter of causal interaction with the world – being affected by pain, for example, or responding differentially to stimuli in one's environment. Sellars does not deny that such episodes and states occur, but he holds that they can have no role to play in grounding knowledge. This is so because knowledge, that is, justified*

[43] Note: Gadamer views hermeneutics through the lens of reconstructing Hegelian heritage within it. In his variant of hermeneutics, two important elements emerge: the principle of acceptance and that of social practice. For Gadamer, *ice*, a understanding implies that *"understanding is not a mere action, a purposeful activity, a setting up of signs through which I transmit my will to others"* (Gadamer 2004). From this passage, we can recognize what Fairfield astutely detects, *"it is a social practice 'life process in which a community of life is lived out' and in which a '"world" is disclosed"* (Fairfield 2011). The same observations, albeit within the registers of analytic philosophy, can be found in Sellars. For further reading: (Gadamer 2004); (Fairfield 2011).

true belief, always has a propositional structure – it is belief that such and such is the case" (Guingon and Hiley, 2003: 10).

This shift by Sellars, according to Rorty, aims to make justification part of social practice. Anything that is not part of social practice does not help in understanding the justification of human knowledge. Sellars' reflections on epistemology are not about offering a theory for internal episodes. This is tied to his approach to philosophy because the quest for truth or the epistemologists' dream of something certain and unassailable is, in his terms, nothing more than "self-authenticating episodes." This stems from his psychological nominalism, which does not focus on whether the mind exists but, as a nominalist and thus part of the epistemological behaviorist camp, requires the separation of mental events and faculties through justification practices, without needing an ontological or empirical foundation. This implies that the community has become the source of epistemic authority, or as Rorty puts it, "reference to the practices of real live people is all the philosophical justification anybody could want for anything" (Rorty 1990: 11). Sellars' linguistic holism sometimes resembles Ludwig Fleck's holism in the philosophy of science, particularly his concept of "mutual attunement," which Barbara Herrnstein Smith masterfully explains:

"*mutual attunement (...) a shared perceptual-cognitive-performative style. Nothing in this process could be called 'true' or 'right' per se. But the product of this process, a densely woven network of extensively interconnected and mutually supportive elements, is a harmonious, satisfying, effective structure – a conceptually coherent, perceptually stable, pragmatically reliable set of ideas and practices experienced as right and fitting by the members of a community.*" (Smith 2005: 60-61)

Justification must be social because it is a linguistic matter, and language can be learned only by becoming part of a community. Language is the means through which *communitas* expresses itself. To adapt Esposito's thesis, it would mean that "language enables co-giving" (Esposito 2010). Or as Gutting puts it, "*Belonging to a community means coming under the norms that constitute that community, but not every opinion shared by all or most members of a community expresses a communal norm*" (Gutting 2003: 49). In Sellars, the early beginnings of epistemological circles can be observed, reanimating Hegelian positions within the tradition, which will be discussed later.

These holistic intonations lead to another concept of Sellars: "The Myth of the Given," which is crucial for deconstructing the privileged position in epistemology. Before delving into

explaining this myth, the question must be asked, what is "the given" here? Richard J. Bernstein, under Sellars' dictum, explains the "given" within two key components: a) that the given implies many things, such as sense contents, material objects, universals, propositions, real connections, first principles, even givenness itself; and b) that the framework of the given, which might be interpreted through Heidegger's register as a kind of trap or "enframing" (*Ge-stell*) of the given, is a key component of many philosophical systems. The most well-known according to Sellars are "dogmatic rationalism" and "skeptical empiricism" (Sellars 1997: 14). From this, it can be concluded that the framework of the given in philosophy operates as a dyadic trap that many philosophers experience as a form of anxiety. The given has an anesthetizing power, particularly pronounced in epistemology. From this, the question emerges, what is the myth of the given? Philosopher Richard J. Bernstein gives a brilliant explanation when he states:

"*Sellars's critique of the Myth of the Given reads as if it were a translation of the opening sections of the Phenomenology into what Sellars called the "new way of words." Sellars, who has a sophisticated knowledge of the history of philosophy, introduces his critique of the Given with an allusion to Hegel's critique of immediacy. If we translate Sellars back into Hegel's idiom, we can say that the critique of the Given rejects the claim that there is immediate knowledge that doesn't involve any conceptual mediation - a type of direct intuitive knowledge that allegedly serves as the foundation for all inferential knowledge*" (Bernstein 2010: 97).

The repercussions of Sellars' thinking are that, once the "Myth of the Given" is abandoned, horizons are opened up that embrace a fallibilistic and non-foundational meaning. This implies that understanding of concept formation as a modus operandi is intra-subjective. Sellars' *conditio sine qua non* is the "Myth of the Given," which can be interpreted on two levels:

1) The rejection of representationalist semantics and the call for a more holistic approach to the problem of meaning and inference.
2) The questioning of the empiricist framework, which claims that material world propositions can be justified by experience. This arises from Locke's confusion between the idea of a red triangle and the impression of a red triangle. As Gutting notes, "Having an impression of a red triangle is a factual state of a mind and/or a brain often causally produced by a red triangle. Knowledge of a red triangle is a relation between the knower and a proposition ('that the triangle is red'), and the claim that the knower is justified in believing the proposition is a normative claim, not a factual claim about a red impression's relation to the knower's mind or brain" (Gutting 2020: 216-17). In Rorty's discursive

register, this means that the empiricist perspective in epistemology is akin to the naturalistic fallacies in ethics.

This brings the discussion to the final point regarding Sellars' significance in Rorty's critique: Sellars' Hegelian reflections that signify the severing of raw feels and the justification of true beliefs from the status of privileged representations. According to Bernstein, Sellars sought to challenge the idea that knowledge exists outside the conceptual level—what Kant and Hegel refer to as *Verstand.* Consequently, there is no pure or receptive knowledge, what Kant calls spontaneity. Thus, immediate knowledge or knowledge by acquaintance does not exist, "when this is understood to be a type of immediate self-authenticating episode that can presumably serve as an epistemic foundation for inferential knowledge" (Bernstein 2010: 98). The sparks of this thinking, found in Sellars and influencing Rorty, can be understood as a kind of "secular metanoia" (Groys)—the shift from Kant to Hegel regarding the problem of action and thought. The Hegelian impulse embedded in Rorty's philosophy has, in fact, opened the door to finally breaking the dichotomy between analytic and continental philosophy. This reconstructive power found in Hegel seems to resonate with the pragmatist variant. Pragmatism has helped synthesize different approaches without abandoning the reconstructive efforts of Kojeve or Whitehead to provide a renewed interpretation of Hegel's philosophy.[44] Regarding the significance of Hegel's philosophy, Rorty, in a lecture later archived in written form by Brandom, expresses the following:

"*First, I am interested in the divide between nature and culture. In t his context we can identify the realm of the cultural with activities that either consist in the application of concepts in judgment and action or that presuppose such capacities. The Geisteswissenschaflen have as their proper aim the study of concept use and things made possible by it - activities of which only concept users are capable. One of my principal goals is to present and explore the consequences of a particular sort of principle of demarcation for the realm of culture, so understood. Although of course cultural activities arise within the framework of a natural world, I am most concerned with what is made possible by the emergence of the peculiar constellation of conceptually articulated comportments that Hegel called "Geist." Cultural products and activities become explicit as such only by the use of normative vocabulary that is in principle not reducible to the vocabulary of the natural sciences .... The study of natures itself has a history, and its own nature , if any, must be approached through the study of that history. This is a picture and an aspiration that we owe to Hegel"* (Brandom 2000: 33).

[44] Note: For the influence of Kojève's and Whitehead's interpretations within the Hegelian spectrum and their impact on Rorty's philosophy, see: (Redding 2020).

The sovereignty of philosophy, detached from the "spirit of the age," is severed by the pragmatist inversion, which seeks to view philosophy as an organ of life in the function of Hegel's *geist-der-zeit* (spirit of the times). The Hegel of pragmatism, within Brandom's philosophical spectrum, would be the 'pragmatism of the conceptualism of norms.'

A brief excursus on 'Hegelian pragmatism' is necessary to more deeply grasp Rorty's reading. Brandom interprets this "Hegelian Pragmatism" through the development of discursive social practices, which enable an understanding of the normativity embedded within these practices, or as he expresses:

"*Kant, however, punted many hard questions about the nature and origins of this normativity, of the bindingness of concepts, out of the familiar phenomenal realm of experience into the noumenal realm. Hegel brought these issues back to earth by understanding normative statuses as social statuses - by developing a view according to which ... all transcendental constitution is social institution . The background against which the conceptual activity of making things explicit is intelligible is taken to be implicitly normative essentially social practice"* (Brandom 2000: 33-4).

Rorty and his student, Brandom, both emphasize the primacy of community, an approach they inherited from Hegelian reflections. Social practices take precedence in the justification of our beliefs. This is also reflected in epistemological positions, as the Hegelian extension is evident in Brandom's brilliant concept of "I-we sociality," which are also found implicitly in Rorty. This concept suggests that inter-subjectivity is understood in the contrasting network between individualism and community. The normative correctness of social practice here is determined by the collective voice of the community (Bernstein 2010:121). The connection with the community, being an explicit inheritance of Hegelian thought, not only appears in the critique of the metaphysics of presence but also highlights the socio-political importance of the community in the form of *civitas*. All of this reminds me of Rorty's famous passage on the influence Hegel had on progressive thinkers, stating that:

"*Philosophers in non-anglophone countries typically think quite hard about Hegel, whereas the rather skimpy training in the history of philosophy which most analytic philosophers receive often tempts them to skip straight from Kant to Frege. It is agreeable to imagine a future in which the tiresome 'analytic-Continental split' is looked back upon as an unfortunate, temporary breakdown of communication - a future in which Sellars and Habermas, Davidson and Gadamer, Putnam and Derrida, Rawls and Foucault, are seen as fellow-travelers on the same journey, fellow-citizens of what Michael Oakeshott called a civitas pelegrina"* (Rorty 1997: 11-12).

It can be said that there is a current trend of reanimating Hegel's philosophy within the milieu of analytic philosophy. However, Rorty was among the first prominent figures to highlight the reconstruction of Hegel. The concept of 'Hegelian Pragmatism' should now be somewhat clearer in the context of Rorty's philosophy and Sellars' critique of privileged representations.

The behaviorist approach of Quine operates on two levels: 1) his critique in *"Two Dogmas of Empiricism"* of the distinction between synthetic and analytic knowledge, and 2) his criticism of the concept of "Idea, Idea" by introducing his doctrines of the "indeterminacy of translation" and the "inscrutability of reference." Quine's critique of "Idea, Idea" will be unpacked first, although these two levels remain intertwined. "Idea, Idea," in a compressed explanation, refers to the view that language is an expression of something intrinsic. This indicates operating within the framework of revelation, where expression determines meaning or the interpretation of linguistic behavior. Abandoning this idea would automatically free one from the burden of two concepts: a) the logical-empiricist concept of 'truth in virtue of meaning,' and b) the Oxfordian concept of "conceptual truths." This approach opens the way for abandoning the Kantian distinction between necessary truths, which are analytic truths (pure concepts and forms of pure intuition), and contingent truths, which are synthetic a priori truths. On this critique, within the context of Richard Rorty's philosophy, Gary Gutting explains:

"*(Quine) asking how we can distinguish between so-called empirical (synthetic) knowledge and so-called conceptual (analytic) knowledge. His case is essentially a challenge-argument, showing the failure of various ways of drawing an analytic-synthetic distinction and leaving it to proponents of the distinction to do a better job*" (Gutting, 2020: 217).

This comes from Quine's view that concepts and meanings are simply tools for achieving purposes, and he aims to discard all such purposes. He argues that "meanings," "beliefs," and "desires" lack the kind of behaviorist equivalents often presumed, as Rorty also notes: "*The Author of "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" should have said that concepts and meanings are harmless if posited to give explanations of our behavior, and become harmful only when treated as source of a special kind of truth and of a special sort of certain assertations*" (Rorty 1979: 194). His effort, in a compressed sense, suggests a critique of the claim that there is no "matter of fact" in the meaning of expressions, beliefs, and cultural aspirations. A counterintuitive consequence of epistemological behaviorism, as Rorty observes, is that it "lets us see it as clearing the ground for

morality and high culture rather than depriving them of objective truth" (Rorty 1979: 193). Continuing this line of thought, Quine offers an alternative distinction between truths as *convenience* and those of *correspondence*, different from the logical positivist distinction between truths by *convention* and truths confirmed by sensory experience. The truths about meaning, belief, and proposition, which, according to Rorty, are not absolute truths in their totality, can be seen as the positivists sometimes project them: necessary truths that are not quite about the world. Here, Quine sees a weakness in the distinction between analytic truths like "Bachelors are unmarried men" and more common truths like "There have been black dogs." This distinction leads Quine to challenge the prevailing epistemic authorities on differentiating truths derived from meaning from those based on belief. In both cases, the normative status of these claims lacks a privileged epistemic position, and their justification is fragile and contingent. Brandom describes these as products of optional features of social discursive practices (Brandom 2021), or as Quine himself puts it, "they can survive only on grounds of practical convenience" (Quine 2013:126). To recap these intertwined critiques of Quine, the attack on "truths as virtue of meaning" should not be confused with his separate critique of "meanings" as ideas in the mind. These ideas, which supposedly determine the precision of representations in linguistic behavior, cannot. This skepticism toward privileged representations leads him to also question "Idea, Idea" itself. The harmful effects of this approach to epistemology, according to Rorty, are not ontological. It seems crucial to provide an explanation of Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" and how Rorty interprets them within his program to liberate the individual from the "mirror of nature." To begin with an explanation of the first dogma, which, according to Quine, provides essentialism with a special shield. Essentialism in brief describes the distinction between what people are discussing and the essence they are trying to reveal. In linguistic terms, this would be the doctrine of translating the terms of *ancient scientists* into our language, thus making the essence and reference possible through the distinction between analytic claims (which presuppose meaning) and synthetic claims (which express the potential falsity of beliefs about the referent). The second dogma suggests that such translations are always possible and that these analytic claims can always be formulated because they are grounded in defining the meaning of every referred expression. This stems from the notion in the philosophy of language known as the "natural observation of language," which confirms or denies the existence of the referent in propositional statements. For philosophers, essence becomes an immaterial entity in the intellect, and surely there will be points

of contact with the presentation of sensory perceptions in the world, coupled with the operational character of "meaning-analysis," which acts as a tool to characterize the essence of the referent. This gives science a competitive advantage over religion and politics, as Rorty puts it: "the ability to use contact with the real as the touchstone of truth" (Rorty 1979: 268). However, a "horror" gripped epistemologists with the overthrow of the two dogmas by Quine, just as Rorty illustrates with the scientific examination of "theory-ladenness" by Kuhn and Feyerabend, which began to dismantle the pathways to a singular truth. These thinkers opened the door to dissolving the demarcation line that traditional epistemology had drawn between science, culture, and society. Epistemological behaviorism, along with constructivism, has opened pathways to view knowledge not as a pursuit of certainty but as a study of historical and socio-cultural phenomena. In Barbara Herrnstein Smith's terms, they were scandalized by the emergence of new forms of expression that did not align with previously established forms.

The aim has been to present Quine's critique and his holism in a concise yet clear manner. It is important to note that this interpretation is authentic under Rorty's lens, despite Quine himself, adhering to his own school of thought, critiquing this interpretation.[45]

Another aspect of Quine's holism worth briefly highlight is his alternative approach to knowledge, which he refers to as the "web of belief." According to Rorty, the "web of belief" bears a strong resemblance to pragmatism due to its fallibilist nature. This is clearly evident in Quine's own explanation: when new beliefs are encountered, every part of the web, including those areas once considered unchangeable, must be revised. Rorty sees this evolving web as a social nexus of linguistic practices that justify beliefs, or, as Habermas would put it:

"This fact suggests an anti-foundationalist conception of knowledge and a holistic conception of justification. Because we cannot confront our sentences with anything that is not itself already saturated linguistically, no basic

[45] Note: In an early collection dedicated to Richard Rorty's philosophy, one of Rorty's early philosophical idols, W.V. O. Quine, wrote an essay where he disagreed with Rorty's interpretation of his philosophy. However, Quine could not remain indifferent and acknowledged some of Rorty's original readings. Similar concerns were shared by Davidson and Dennett, though they responded more positively, commending Rorty's original interpretation of their work. Many historians of analytic philosophy tend to agree more with Rorty's interpretations than Quine himself did. However, the exploration of this issue is left to the historians of analytic philosophy. What is important for this paper is to outline this critique. For further details, see: (Quine 1991).

propositions can be distinguished that would be privileged in being able to legitimate themselves, thereby serving as the basis for a linear chain of justification" (Habermas 1998: 357).

This holistic and pragmatic turn has, embedded within its framework, the radical empiricism of William James. This version of empiricism does not view everyday life and the use of language as separate from action, since speaking *in se* is affected by verbal actions. These verbal actions are rooted and immersed in interactional contexts and intertwined with instrumental actions.

From this, it can be concluded that the efforts of epistemological behaviorism, as seen from these two authors, do not offer any philosophical support regarding the problem of translation, intentionality, or even any other ontological subject. Consequently, it is unnecessary to employ philosophical explanatory instruments to distinguish between scientific and non-scientific explanations. This position, as mentioned previously, shares similarities with pragmatism and its neo-pragmatist variants, which claim that there is no distinction between science, culture, and society; instead, their explanatory models offer a certain harmony between them. This eloquently expresses the capacity to view the world without any overarching metaphysical-epistemic master plan.

As a concluding stance, it can be ascertained that Rorty sees epistemological behaviorism as hopeful. In this way, the confusion within the epistemological tradition regarding the process of "acquiring knowledge" and the questions surrounding its justification is dismantled. Sellars' "Myth of the Given" and Quine's "Museum Myth" are critiques that are almost pragmatic in the sense that they highlight the primacy of social practices while simultaneously deconstructing immediate semantic-sensory knowledge (Brandom 2021). The outward shift that Rorty attempts to trace is one that moves from the social context of justification, rather than an internal isolation in intrinsic representations. This turn towards the community is also visible in Wittgenstein's investigations, as Marcus Gabriel notes:

"Wittgenstein and Luhmann are in agreement insofar as they argue for the necessary finitude of all operations of observation – that is, of all operations of determinacy: whatever can be something determinate for a discursive community counts as something determinate only under the presupposition of historically variable parameters, which respectively fix what a community can register. The community constitutes a discourse precisely by fixing hinges upon which all individual moves in the discourse turn" (Gabriel 2020: 7).

The discourse on norms within social practices, as observed in these thinkers, implies that there is nothing intrinsic that can be seen as a legitimate instance to validate a discourse. On the contrary, the turn towards context highlights the finitude of discourses. Rorty, in the form of a question, asserts that all these critiques of the foundation of truth also delegitimize the importance of epistemology itself. However, there will always be those who attempt to revise it: a) The approach of the philosophy of psychology (notably the distinction between cognitivism and the philosophy of mind) attempts to explain behavior within the discursive regimes of "inner representation." For these approaches, the connection with the justification of beliefs and actions is not necessary. However, Ryle, Skinner, and, to some extent, Armstrong make efforts to return us to the retrograde problems of the 17th century, specifically the mind-body problem. But Rorty, in a lucid way, tries to protect empirical psychology from the remnants of epistemology, which means, in brief, to shield it from Wittgenstein's critique and Chomsky's compliments. b) The remnants of the Cartesian tradition in the philosophy of language, summarized in the formula "how language hooks onto the world," represent an alluring attempt, although it carries within it the seeds of failure. Rorty explicates both these revisions in a clear manner, and in a compressed reading, it would amount to keeping semantics and psychology apart from epistemology. He attempts to explain in detail, reaching the same conclusion: explanations of internal representations in psychology and the word-world relation in semantics are irrelevant to issues of justification. From this, it can be maintained that for Rorty, abandoning the pursuit of "privileged representations" translates into abandoning the goal of a "theory of knowledge." This moment marks Rorty's declaration of epistemological dissent (Smith 2005), a dissent that would shape his entire life until his death.

2.1.5 Endgame of Mirror of Nature

To secularize the famous Latin phrase *Mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (the sacred center of our lives), it becomes evident how epistemology, in its secularized variation, has sought to be that very center. This is perhaps closely tied to Spinoza's effort to articulate *Deus sive Natura*—in other words, to project philosophy as a "Mirror of Nature" through epistemology, as Brandom notes:

"*The paradigmatic expression of the represenationalist picture of mind as mirror of nature is Spinoza's. Because "the order and connection of things is the same as the order of connection of ideas", nature and God's mind are two modes of one substances, two aspects of what there is, "Deus sive natura." Spinoza concludes that any cognitive progress our finite minds make in better mirroring the nature, eliminating the flaws of our errors and the gaps of our*

ignorance, is also progress in making our finite minds more identical with the infinite mind of God" (Brandom, xiii 2021) .

Here begins what Foucault refers to as the "period of resemblance" (Foucault 1998: 270-71), marking the transition from ancient allegory to modern resemblance. The 'period of resemblance,' in the form of a parable, describes the entire journey of the constitution of the mirror of nature, from which philosophy often hesitates to depart. This hesitation arises from the comfort philosophers find in the thermotopic warmth of metaphysics as epistemology. Representationalism becomes the Achilles' heel of philosophy as metaphysics of presence because, through its "dispositif" or "gestell," it holds the academic discourse in bondage, even though it generates resistant forces that attempt to deconstruct its reign. Lyotard eloquently interprets representationalism under the 'conceptual style' of the French tradition, stating that:

"*Theatricality and representation … a fortiori metaphysical (…) One must realize that representing [la mise en representation] is desire, putting on stage, in a cage, in prison, into a factory, into a family, being boxed in are desired, that domination and exclusion are desired; that extreme intensities are instantiable in these assemblages too*"[46] (Lyotard, 1993: 3).

Following Lyotard's nuanced critique of 'theories of representation,' attention shifts to further creative interpretations of representationalism and epistemology in the context of Rorty's

[46] Note: In this early period of his philosophy, Lyotard attempts to present the limits of representationalism. Two main aspects form the core of his critique: 1) the libidinal aspect in terms of representation, and 2) the linguistic aspect, which, through the play of signs, creates an insurmountable bridge between expressing intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. He seeks to find a space outside this 'moebian-labyrinthine' system in which all our registers sound unified and unquestionable, as Ian Hamilton Grant describes in this 'theology of representation.' An insightful interpretation is offered by Todd May, who states:

"Lyotard's critique of representation, as well as his account of the libidinal economy, is profoundly antihumanist. It is precisely by a gesture of self-representation that the subject is able to understand himself or herself; and although that self-representation is, by its transparency, supposed to offer an immediate access by the self to its own consciousness, the very act of representation presupposes a difference between representer and represented that introduces absence into the representation" (May 1994: 83).

It should be highlighted that May's final remarks transpose Derrida's critique of Husserl's approach to linguistics to explain Lyotard's thought. See: (May 1994); (Derrida 1973). For an idiosyncratic reading of the early period of Jean-François Lyotard, see: (Bennington 1998).

philosophy. One of the most vibrant and creative interpreters of Rorty's philosophy, Barry Allen, refers to Rorty's critique of epistemology as 'dis-epistemology.' According to Allen, dis-epistemology signifies the inversion of the effect epistemology has on distorting thought about knowledge (Allen 2022:180). Epistemologists view knowledge as their exclusive property, akin to a "*Ktema es aie*" (possession for all time), where they alone hold the key to both the problems and their solutions. As Allen observes, Rorty, in his efforts to reveal the limitations of epistemology, attempts to show just how optional and ultimately fragile its claims are (Allen 2022:180). Yet, the rigor of discourse makes epistemology a kind of *faute de mieux*—a "necessary evil." Thus, Rorty's project is centered on abandoning any external epistemic authority, even in its secular form of the Intrinsic Nature of Reality.

Under the influence of three of his philosophical idols—Dewey, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein—Rorty's emphasis on the primacy of social practice over privileged knowledge sensitizes us to the forms of life. It seems that for Rorty, "forms of life" are a combination of Nietzsche's "life-games" and Wittgenstein's "language-games." Epistemology appears to have severed all connections with these forms of life, maintaining an exclusive entry into its architectural construction, akin to a fortress. The esoteric fortress of epistemology seems to have no place for the forms of life. Hence, the central theme of "Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature" echoes Wittgenstein's sentiment: "*Philosophizing is an illness, and we are trying to describe minutely its symptoms—clinical appearance*" (Wittgenstein 1961: 139-40). This is because abstract forms of reflection have become detached, showing no sensitivity to the forms of life. In this sense, philosophical presuppositions are not truths but "nonsense," as Rorty and Wittgenstein assert. A nearly identical observation about Rorty's view of philosophy-as-epistemology can also be found in Habermas, who remarks:

"*Richard Rorty has undertaken the most ambitious project: he wants to destroy the tradition of the philosophy of consciousness—from its Cartesian beginnings—with the aim of showing the pointlessness of the entire discussion of the foundations and limits of knowledge. He concludes that philosophers, to be rid of the problem, need only recognize the hybrid character of their controversies and give the field over to the practitioners of science, politics, and daily life. Like the later Wittgenstein, Rorty sees philosophy itself as the sickness whose symptoms it previously and unsuccessfully tried to cure*" (Habermas 1998: 404).

Forms of life, according to Rorty, take precedence over epistemological constructions. He strives to emphasize their importance while maintaining a critical tone toward projections that

attempt a severance from these forms. Rorty does not view the world in the manner Emerson beautifully defined as the "transparent eyeball" (Emerson 1950:6), where the world is seen without any sensitivity or concern for it. Thus, the following elaboration will be dedicated to philosophers whom Rorty sees as advocates of the forms of life—those who have sought to give a vitalist impulse, in contrast to what Wittgenstein calls "the godhead of the independent I" (Wittgenstein 1961: 74), which manifests as "*sub specie aeternitatis*." The discourse that follows is part of Richard Rorty's *Anti-Essentialist Treatise*.

2.1.6 The Pragmatic Hermeneutics and Democratization of Science

> *"The expression "hermeneutic" derives from the Greek verb* ***hermeneuein****. That verb is related to the noun* ***hermeneus****, which is referable to the name of the god Hermes by a playful thinking that is more compelling than the rigor of science. Hermes is the divine messenger. He brings the message of destiny;* ***hermeneuein*** *is that exposition which brings tidings because it can listen to a message. Such exposition becomes an interpretation of what has been said earlier by the poets who, according to Socrates in Plato's Ion (534e),* ***herments eisin ton theon*** *-"are interpreter of the gods"*
>
> (Heidegger 1982: 29).

It was a tense and nebulous period when hermeneutics emerged as a discipline or discursive endeavor within Western culture. As Gianni Vattimo highlights, this moment was marked by the collapse of Catholic unity, which led to the problem that arose as a consequence of this collapse—the issue of misunderstanding or [*missverstehen*]—and how this misunderstanding should be addressed or resolved within culture and society (Vattimo 1988: 150). Delving into the history of antiquity reveals that hermeneutics, as a form of thought and mythical metaphorical manifestation, first emerges in the myth of Hermes[47] and later becomes more articulated in the reflective work of

[47] Note: If we decode Hermes, he would be the transmitter of the words of the gods to human intelligence. The basis of this interpretation comes from Plato's spark in the dialogue *Cratylus*, where he reveals the role of the "hermeneut" as being a messenger of the gods, or as Francisco Gonzalez puts it, "one who is a messenger (angelos), and specifically, a messenger between gods and humans." Starting from these assumptions, we must dig even deeper into the origins of this concept. The Greek word *hermios* lucidly refers to the priest at the oracle of Delphi. Thus, the word *hermeneuein* and the noun *hermenia* explicitly reference the god Hermes. If we explain the role of Hermes, for the Greeks it implied the revealer of language and words. This assumption leads us to conclude that if we reify this myth in the terrestrial

Aristotle.[48] However, the aforementioned moment marks the beginning of a historical trajectory, initially aiming to resolve misunderstanding, with exegesis helping Catholicism gradually distance itself from dogmatic readings of religious scripture. This shift led to a focus on philosophy, particularly with Dilthey's emphasis on 'historical reason' and the primacy of life. This entire odyssey of philosophical hermeneutics culminates in Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics and later in Gadamer's, who, according to Habermas, urbanized Heidegger's thought. Rorty's pragmatic hermeneutics (or his pragmatist interpretation of hermeneutics) can be aptly described as an extension of ontological hermeneutics (Vattimo 1988: 132).

In the post-metaphysical context, following the [*Verwindung*] (twisting) of the sovereign registers of metaphysics, a discipline emerges that does not replace these registers but offers an alternative after their reign. This discipline is hermeneutics, or more specifically, ontological hermeneutics in the context under discussion. As a discipline it shifts from the rigid atemporality of metaphysics to the interpretive temporality of interpretive communities, which are integral to presence of existence. Pragmatic hermeneutics, as a variant of ontological hermeneutics, intersects with the interpretation of the historicity of existence. Key aspects includes a radical critique of epistemology in general and its variations, such as the theory of correspondence or the theory of coherence, as Gadamer himself states: "the dominant epistemological methodologism" (Gadamer 1989). Another significant element is the return to interpretive communities or, as Gadamer conceptualizes it, the notion of *horizons*.

realm of explanation, it would mean "the tools for understanding and comprehension among humans" and "the transmission of these meanings to one another." See: (Palmer 1969); (Gonzales 2015).

[48] Note: In his philosophy, Aristotle attempts to define the concept of *hermeneuein* as the operation of the mind in making statements that aim to draw the demarcation line between the truth and falsity of a thing. Regarding Aristotle's stance, we encounter two quite contrasting and ambiguous positions about the meaning of his work *Peri Hermeneias*. The first is from Palmer, who defines it as *interpretation* or *declaration/proclamation*. The second is from Gonzalez, who sees the opposite: he believes that Aristotle, through this work, tries to define *communication or expression*. However, both authors mentioned above have an intellectual consensus that Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias* is the first hermeneutic work. See: (Palmer 1969); (Gonzales 2015).

Rorty's reflective premise begins by highlighting the distinction between hermeneutics and epistemology. He believes that the entire hermeneutic project is not a replacement for epistemology but rather a valuable alternative to it, as Rorty himself emphasizes:

"*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 1979: 316).

Following this line of argument, Rorty asserts that epistemology, through its one-dimensionality, aims to convince us of the presupposition that all contributions within a discursive range are comparable. In contrast, hermeneutics is a completely opposite endeavor to these assumptions. While epistemology presents itself as a kind of overseer of culture, seeking to establish its foundations and the foundation of all knowledge, hermeneutics manifests as an interlocutor or mediator that promotes the opening of conversation (Warnke 2003:105). Epistemology seeks to find foundations that are sometimes unknown to the speaker but are based on a shared rationality, whereas hermeneutics views different forms of discourse as engaging in dialogue without submitting to a disciplinary matrix, with the hope that agreement between interlocutors can be achieved through conversation. This tension seems to be inherited from ancient philosophy, as Rorty also keenly observes. While *theoria* is closely tied to epistemology as an endeavor, *phronesis* is more dialogical and linked to hermeneutics. As Richard J. Bernstein notes, "*When Gadamer elaborates the centrality of phronesis and dialogue for philosophy and hermeneutics, he complements the pragmatic emphasis on practice and dialogue*" (Bernstein, 2010: 29). From this, it follows that epistemology operates within the paradigm of verifiability/rigor, while hermeneutics operates within the paradigm of dialogue/plurality.

According to Rorty, epistemology views its participants within their own circle, as Oakeshott describes it, as a *universitas*—a group united by a common interest in reaching shared conclusions, resembling the old concept of community as *communion*. Hermeneutics, again following Oakeshott's discursive framework, involves participants united in what he calls *societas*—people whose life paths have brought them together, which implies a community as *communitas*, composed of 'different voices' (Nancy 1991) or the 'being-together of existences' (Agamben

1993).[49] These participants are united through citizenship, not by a shared goal or common foundations.

All this power of hermeneutics, to immerse itself in historical or epochal explanations—or to use Gadamer's discursive term, 'embedded historical consciousness'—is deeply rooted in the historicity of existence. Given hermeneutics' dialogical force within culture, according to Rorty, it is necessary to reorient its efforts. The question arises: what is this reorientation? Rorty views dialogue with the unfamiliar as a virtue, or rather, the development of new skills. In this context, the function of hermeneutics is not to offer a method but rather to embody what becomes the mantra of philosophy without mirrors, which is: instead of copying the world, we cope with it. This approach to reorient or reconstruct hermeneutics, or to offer an authentic[50] version of it, leads

[49] Note: I am aware that it is not possible to reconstruct such a parallel between what is known as the foundation of conservative thought, as marked by the philosopher Oakeshott, and thinkers of an opposing provenance like Nancy and Agamben, who seek to deconstruct Oakeshott's thought. Rorty uses Oakeshott's discursive framework to align the latter's thinking with his own philosophical conclusions. If viewed from this perspective, the established parallel continues along this line. However, from the standpoint of conceptual history, Oakeshott's work *On Human Conduct*, which Rorty references, is considered by many scholars to have more liberal intonations, with Oakeshott himself somewhat distancing from the classical conservative tradition. Nevertheless, his entire reflective effort within the realm of political philosophy is often defined as "conservative liberalism." Thus, this parallel falls within the scope of reconstructive philosophy.

[50] Note: In one of the many frequent, intense, and fruitful discussions with philosopher Salihu about the concept of authenticity in Martin Heidegger's philosophy, he stated that this concept cannot be philosophically unpacked but can only be grasped poetically. He reached this conclusion after many re-readings of Heidegger's work in the context of the philosophy of technology and his relationship with younger philosophers such as Peter Sloterdijk and Don Ihde. The reasoning is extensive, perhaps deserving a full paper on its own, but what stayed with me was the provocation Salihu made, leading me to think deeply and ultimately agree with some of his interpretations, that authenticity can only be captured 'poetically.' It's easy to pose the question: what does all this have to do with Rorty's exploration of 'authentic hermeneutics'? Recently, a series of Rorty's lectures were published, known as the 'Page-Barbour Lectures,' under the instructive title *Philosophy as Poetry*. In line with this reasoning, the discussion I had with Salihu shows that this romantic impulse of poetics can be found in many influential thinkers throughout the history of philosophy—from the Anglo-Saxon readings of Hegel to Schlegel and Heidegger, and among American philosophers such as Emerson, Bloom, Cavell, and even Rorty himself. All of these figures, in their own way, strive to fulfill that 'impossible romantic mission' of marrying philosophy and poetry. This marriage only happens in those romantic visions, which, as Nancy, Lacoue-Labarthe, and Critchley suggest, are naïve—a necessary naivety to help us face life.

Rorty to make an unusual connection—between the hermeneutic tradition and the holistic approach found in both the philosophy of science and epistemology. He names this synthesis 'democratic hermeneutics' or 'democratic science.' The question arises: where do these two approaches meet? Perhaps the answer is quite simple: "history." Both hermeneutics and the approach of Kuhn and Feyerabend in the philosophy of science—both of whom Rorty references in his work—along with other philosophers previously discussed, all shift their focus on scientific problems away from ahistoricity and atemporality. In short, this means moving from individualism/subjectivity to collectivism/intersubjectivity, or as Don Ihde puts it, "science-as-practice (...) what was much more important was the shift to perceiving science as an embodied and historical institution" (Ihde 1993: 117). The question therefore arises: what is the consequence of this connection? The Rortyan answer would be the social aspect of science, its ethical dimension, and its relevance to life-worlds in general. Translating this reduced explanation into Rorty's and Ihde's registers, both sharing the same worldview, it would mean seeing science as *praxis*.[51] Meanwhile, according to Gadamer, hermeneutics highlights these aspects of science as

---

I will return to this topic throughout this work and the distinctions found in various forms of romanticism. Returning to Rorty: In the final stage of his career, he made a turn, seeing philosophy as closer to literature, particularly in his last essay titled *The Fire of Life*, published in *Poetry* magazine. There, he admitted that he wished to spend more time reading poetry, recognizing the significant impact poets had on his thinking. I would say this is his most authentic essay, where, in two pages—much like in the verses of Stevens or Larkin—Rorty's entire philosophy is poetically unfolded, and life, along with what Derrida calls 'the impossibility of mourning' (which is death), dissolves with sublime pathos. Thus, authenticity can be grasped poetically, applied through the word-forming extracts of our discursive registers in that genre called philosophy. Ultimately, in Rorty's neo-pragmatism, science, poetry, and society cohabit in balance, as his wife Mary V. Rorty notes in the afterword of the lectures mentioned earlier: *"If philosophy is poetry, then perhaps, when changing how you describe things changes the world, poetry is also philosophy."* A dose of this romanticism is necessary to face the world—a resounding, comforting repetition. See in: (Rorty, 2023); (Rorty 2010); (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1988); (Critchley 2004).

[51] Note: The impact of the shift made by thinkers such as Kuhn, Feyerabend, and Lakatos in analytic philosophy of science is quite evident. Throughout this time, various thinkers and philosophers have attempted to name this direction. A partial consensus, though not entirely settled, regarding this shift in philosophy of science can be found under the label of "social constructivism." I am aware that in this "science war," such a term might be taken lightly or, at best, end up as memes shared by a younger generation trying to appear rigorous and objective. Scientists, on one hand, pose as progressive, but this progressivism often ends in misdirection as they attempt to preserve values that have long since been relegated to the "museum of forgetfulness" within the "spherology of reflection." In the context of this

praxis, or what he calls: 'science as a social factor of life.' Similarly, this line of thought is found in Barbara Herrnstein Smith, who lucidly emphasizes how philosophy after Kuhn connects to the shift known as social constructivism, which is defined as follows:

"*conceptual inquiry and (re)formulation, are largely empirical: archival and observational. In questioning classical conceptions of knowledge and pursuing the study of science as a set of historical phenomena and social-cultural practices, constructivist epistemology (…) are radically different both from philosophical epistemology in the tradition of Descartes and Kant and from mainstream philosophy of science in the tradition of the Vienna Circle and Karl Popper"* (Smith 2005: 3).

A connection between the efforts of hermeneutics and philosophy of science can be observed, and this connection is not as absurd as it may appear from dogmatic readings in both camps. Thomas Kuhn's vision, and even his theories, are not so shocking, and the hermeneutic reading of science seems to support these presuppositions. While Kuhn leaves open the question of how to conceptualize the historical event of a paradigm shift, hermeneutics can aid developing this thought beyond the life-games and forces of history (Vattimo 1988: 138). This significant linkage between holism and hermeneutics is elaborated quite clearly by philosopher Gianni Vattimo when he states:

"*Kuhn's chief merit probably consists in having reconnected this general and generic conventionalism to an historical perspective (…) basis of abstract criteria of economy or practical utility, but rather on the basis of their 'conformity' to 'forms of life', and thus also to historically defined traditions and cultures. Hermeneutics effects a*

---

paper, Rorty rarely uses the term "social constructivism," but he sees the entire holistic effort as a way of surpassing the view of science as a conceptual tool of representationalism. Both Don Ihde and Barbara Herrnstein Smith share the opinion that with Kuhn and his philosophy of science, we enter a new era of thinking about science. Ihde views this shift within the framework of postmodernist perspectivism, while Smith elaborates that we have moved from an individualist paradigm of the knower or scientist to a social paradigm, which is collective and inter-subjective, or institutional. Both thinkers regard this shift as social constructivism. Like Rorty, they see a connection between philosophers of science and holistic epistemologists, and those belonging to the schools of ontological hermeneutics and post-structuralism. It seems that Ihde's approach is influenced by Rorty's reading of Kuhn, and we see the same influence in philosophers like Gianni Vattimo and Nancy Fraser. Fraser, in her brilliant essay "Abnormal Justice," dedicated in memory of Richard Rorty, expresses—paraphrasing here—that Rorty's reading of Kuhn's "normal" and "abnormal" sciences in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* was pivotal in shaping her philosophical career. For more, see: (Smith 2005); (Vattimo 1988); (Ihde 1995); (Fraser 2008).

radicalization in respect to this general and generic acceptance of the rhetorical nature of science, which consists precisely in pursuing this path of historicization" (Vattimo 1988: 139).

From this passage, it becomes noteworthy, that there is a connection between hermeneutics and Kuhn's philosophy of science. This connection can be found within a framework that addresses how to cope with the world when the mirrors of nature are shattered, or to invert Ludwig Fleck's approach: "when the truths of culture are the truths of nature" (Fleck 1979: 121).

At this juncture, following Gianni Vattimo's discursive line to summarize this complex web of explanation regarding the relationship between hermeneutics and epistemology through Rorty's lens. Vattimo summarizes it into three components: 1) Epistemology is founded on the assumption that all discourses are commensurable and translatable with one another, and that the foundation of their truths lies in the fact that they can be translated into a language that mirrors the fact as a reflection of itself. Hermeneutics, on the other hand, does not believe in this unitary one-dimensionality of a language and seeks to adapt to the language of the other through dialogue, rather than translating it into its own language. 2) According to Rorty, epistemology has the status of normal sciences, which are conserved within the current register of the scientific system, while hermeneutics is seen as a revolutionary science that, through innovative and creative dynamism, has the potential to revolutionize society and the inhabitable world. Simply put, epistemology is conservative, while hermeneutics is creative. 3) Epistemology is discourse about discourse as commensurable, while hermeneutics is discourse about heretofore incommensurable discourse (Vattimo 1988: 149). To conclude, an excursus on what can be termed Richard Rorty's 'pragmatic hermeneutics' will be provided.' This pragmatic hermeneutics synthesizes ontological hermeneutics, the holistic aspect of science, and skeptical hermeneutics, with Odo Marquard as its main representative. The aspect of ontological hermeneutics and its connection to the holistic/constructivist aspect of were thoroughly elaborated earlier. Thenceforth, the focus shifts to this component of skeptical hermeneutics and its connection to pragmatic hermeneutics. An insightful definition of how Marquard views skeptical hermeneutics is given in his maxim: "the core of hermeneutics is skepticism and the important form of skepticism today is hermeneutics" (Marquard 1989: 111). He sees hermeneutics as a confrontation with finitude, since life is short [*vita brevis*], and the interpretation of past extracts and their recontextualization helps us let go of principles. Thus, hermeneutics helps cope with the world by reinterpreting the past within newly created contexts. This might differ from the pragmatist approach, which seeks to adapt the best

principles that work within a particular practical context, but the converging root of these efforts is that both are aware of the multiplicity of actors in the life-world and do not believe there is a central axis upon which this multiplicity can be grounded. Consequently, by affirming this pluralism, they do not believe in principles as something static, unchanging, and etched in stone. Such rigid principles stand in contrast to the dynamics of life forms, and these forms, along with the finitude of the experience of presence in existence, compel the reinterpretation of principles, recontextualizing them to make them more dynamic, alive, and in sync with life. Another aspect to highlight is that both of these approaches are critical of transcendences and are oriented toward the practice of immanent theories. Even though, as Allen notes, Marquard's skepticism is too skeptical for Rorty's taste, despite this minor divergence, as Allen puts it: "Rorty is nearly as hermeneutic about it as Marquard" (Allen 2013: 99). This implies that both thinkers celebrate creativity and the power of reinterpretation.

To construct a pragmatic hermeneutics, the intersection between pragmatism and hermeneutics must be first identified. The main point where these two philosophical traditions converge is the reasonable critique of all our practices. Another area of agreement between pragmatism and hermeneutics is the primacy of practice, though this does not imply that practice dominates theory, nor theory over practice, as Rorty observes. Regarding the primacy of practice, Fairfield states:

"*The primacy of practice entails that our being-in-the-world is oriented by involvements in a myriad linguistic and social practices in terms of which we find our way about a lifeworld and that such practices, while ready-to-hand in their immediate mode of being, are already reflective and capable of being theoretically articulated*" (Fairfield 2011: 108).

Hermeneutics is the desideratum of theoretical inquiry for understanding what is, what has been, and what ought to be done, whereas pragmatism is the explanation of what hermeneutics already knows: that theory is not its ultimate goal and that its function is to understand and enhance our practices without establishing or reflecting any foundation. After this breakdown, it can be said, that pragmatic hermeneutics authentically encapsulates all the components discussed earlier. Pragmatic hermeneutics neither needs mirrors nor foundations; instead, it seeks to develop individual practices as democratically as possible through dialogue, as Gregoria Warnke states: "*Hermeneutics thus aligns itself with radically democratic politics, since it denies that we can find security or grounding for our particular interpretation of what achieving our country involves*"

(Warnke 2003: 116). Pragmatic hermeneutics must, first and foremost, be democratic hermeneutics. It should be based on the Whitmanian spirit of politics combined with what Hegel calls 'progressive evolution' in the political sphere, but this is not disconnected from a democratic approach to science. For pragmatists like Rorty, there is no distinction between the political, social, and epistemic aspects; the dichotomy between theoretical and practical life should be abolished, as both are intertwined in the forms of life.

In the context of Rorty's philosophy, hermeneutics becomes eclipsed in his later books as an opening for pragmatism. To use Allen's terminology, hermeneutics is explicated to bring pragmatism to the forefront. However, it remains evident that Rorty's version of pragmatism did not fully escape the hermeneutic circle, and his pragmatic ontology—meaning the form of an ontology of actuality/processuality— cannot be fully understood without reference to ontological hermeneutics, and by extension, pragmatic hermeneutics.

2.1.7 Edifying Philosophy

"... forgetting about Being as foundation"

(Heidegger)

The central theme of Richard Rorty's philosophy is the notion of a "philosophy without mirrors," which, in simpler terms, signifies a shift from Philosophy with a capital "P" to a more modest, lowercase "p" philosophy. This "philosophy without mirrors" signifies the continuation of Heidegger's project of [*abbau*] or deconstruction of Western metaphysics. In short, it implies a philosophy free of the classic dichotomies of metaphysical-epistemological tradition and without foundations upon which such a platform must be built. Simply stated, it means shifting from an essentialist view to an anti-essentialist one. Thus, rather than choosing philosophy as truth, the choice is philosophy as freedom. While hermeneutics for Rorty served as a cultural-communicative alternative to epistemology, he viewed this as insufficient. Philosophy must move "beyond hermeneutics," as seen in the trajectory of French philosophy, which significantly influenced Rorty's early philosophical development. He expressed this transition as follows: 'has been replaced by poststructuralism.' Although poststructuralism followed hermeneutics, it offered innovative ways to face the world after the collapse of its metaphysical framework. The

incorporation of other disciplines, from literature to sociology, into philosophical thought has blurred the lines between disciplines, allowing them to become part of a broader discourse that, through its therapeutic power, seeks to offer solutions in this vast network of everyday life systems. While Philosophy with a capital "P" claimed to know everything, philosophy with a lowercase "p" opens the door to a more immersive engagement with reality. This shift can also be seen as an affirmation of multiplicity and pluralism, which demystifies and desacralizes thinking about life and the world. Influenced by figures like Heidegger, Nietzsche, Derrida, Foucault, and Dewey, each of whom sought to freedom from viewing the world through the lens of foundationalism or the metaphysics of presence, Rorty offers his own alternative to the challenges of what he calls "the genre of philosophy": *edification*.

The question then arises: what does *edification* mean as a concept? In a simplified form, it represents a synthesis of two notions: "Education" and "Bildung" (a German word meaning 'formation' or 'cultivation'). Rorty explains: "While 'Education' sounds a bit flat and 'Bildung' sounds a bit foreign, I will use 'Edification'." According to Rorty, edification means creating an open communicative space between ourselves and culture, where there are no scientific-like consensuses on issues, but rather the reflective stance of a skeptical artist or poet. This way of thinking cannot be part of normal discourses because they are abnormal. And by being abnormal, they do not produce certainty, as epistemology does, but rather creativity—new ways of "discovering the fact," outside the classical image of humans as the essential knowers of essence. To clarify this, Rorty himself can be cited:

"*I shall use "edification" to stand for this project of finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking. The attempt to edify (ourselves or others) may consist in the hermeneutic activity of making connections between our own culture and some exotic culture or historical period, or between our own discipline and another discipline which seems to pursue incommensurable aims in an incommensurable vocabulary*" (Rorty 1979: 360).

For Rorty, edification offers a new and more fruitful way to engage with discourse and language. Edification highlights the incommensurable vocabularies that create harmony with other disciplines. This shift that Rorty undertakes unconsciously suggests that he wants to draw a line between traditional philosophy and his own approach. As he expresses: "*I shall thereby develop a contrast between philosophy which centers in epistemology and the sort of philosophy which takes its point of departure from suspicion about the pretensions of epistemology*." (Rorty 1979: 366).

This distinction, according to Rorty, lies between systematic philosophy, which is inherently essentialist, and edifying philosophy, which sparks anti-essentialist insights. With this in mind, a few key distinctions between these approaches must be made, despite the inherent risks involved in interpreting an original and contested thinker like Rorty. The initial distinction between systematic philosophers and edifying philosophers is this: while the former try to present universal dimensions of a final vocabulary, the latter, described by Kuhn as "revolutionaries," create new schools with new vocabularies. As Rorty states: "who see the incommensurability of their new vocabulary with the old as a temporary inconvenience, to be blamed on the shortcomings of their predecessors" (Rorty 1979: 369). This suggests that transcendence occurs with the institutionalization of new vocabularies. For a clear example, Rorty contrasts systematic philosophers such as Russell and Husserl—who continue the canon of Descartes and Kant—with edifying philosophers like Wittgenstein and Heidegger, who embody a rebellious attitude against the philosophical traditions of their time. These aforementioned rebellions, according to Rorty, originate with Kierkegaard's rebellion against Hegel and Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics through perspectivism and the multiplicity of truths. Philosopher Boris Groys also sees Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel as the entry point into what he calls anti-philosophy. This connection is explored further in later chapters, examining the parallels between anti-philosophy and post-philosophy. Rorty's view is persuasive in suggesting that systematic philosophers sought to preserve the status quo of their discipline, while edifying philosophers aimed to challenge and rebel against established philosophical canons. Rorty further distinguishes systematic philosophers, who, with a certain fanaticism, aimed to place the contemplative subject on a secure path toward science, from edifying philosophers, who sought to bring philosophy closer to literary and cultural criticism, transforming it into a more poetic endeavor. As Rorty himself puts it:

"*Edifying philosophers want to keep space open for the sense of wonder which poets can sometimes cause-wonder that there is something new under the sun. something which is not an accurate representation of what was already there, something which (at least for the moment) cannot be explained and can barely be described"* (Rorty 1979: 369-370).

The third and final distinction that Rorty elaborates on is that even within systematic philosophers, there is a degree of revolutionary thought, but it is still rooted in the pursuit of final vocabularies through representationalism and an endless obsession with objectivity. As for edifying philosophers, they almost radically refuse to provide us with an answer to what

philosophy is, and therefore, they do not offer objective truths. As Rorty states: "Edifying philosophers, unlike revolutionary systematic philosophers, are those who are abnormal at this meta-level" (Rorty 1979: 370). Decoding the philosophy of edifying philosophers reveals that their goal is not to provide an adequate representation of the world; rather, they aim, in a therapeutic manner, to demonstrate that the concept of adequate representation itself is flawed and unworkable. Another significant point Rorty emphasizes about edifying philosophers is that they aim to prevent dialogue from degenerating into a research program and to avoid turning the love of wisdom (philosophy) into a safe path toward science. To clarify Rorty's often misunderstood approach, it must be acknowledged that any attempt to deconstruct something inevitably becomes established and then deconstructed again—this is the lesson to be drawn from the masters of deconstruction, Heidegger and Derrida. Therefore, it be said that deconstruction has a subversive character as a conceptual tool.

The attempt to make philosophy resemble a research program produces the "boring academic specialist," who, when discussing the historical development of human endeavors in the life-world, becomes disengaged, prioritizing abstract problems of mind, language, and truth over understanding how these problems emerged. Thus, instead of cultivating sentiment, the result is a group of "problem-solvers" who believe they possess exclusive access to objectivity. As Rorty says: "*For epistemology is the attempt to see the patterns of justification within normal discourse as more than just such patterns. It is the attempt to see them as hooked on to something which demands moral commitment- Reality, Truth, Objectivity, Reason*" (Rorty 1979: 385). This approach of "problem-solvers" seems to undermine one of the key aspects of philosophy, which is the "pragmatics of being-in-the-world," a concept that aligns with a profound humanism. In Levinas' terms, this could be described as "a past humanism that is still not human" (Levinas 1979). This critique of humanism is what led to its overcoming the crisis it faced (Jurič 2018: 10).[52]

[52] Note: There is a common denominator in the approaches of Rorty, Levinas, and Juric, which can be described as "deep humanism." All three thinkers, in their own way, manifest an "infinite ethical demand" as a responsibility towards the Other. Although they each give different names to their concept of humanism, they acknowledge that it can be developed and that any critique of humanism moves it out of crisis, rather than putting it into one. Therefore, Bernstein's term "deep humanism" fits well with their approaches. Despite the theoretical divergences that these thinkers may have in terms of their positions, we can see some common elements that can be drawn together. This note is not meant to exhaust the topic or provide a complete explanation, but perhaps it is a good starting point for a

Translating this into Rorty's philosophy, it means that he desires philosophy to be a dialogue with humanity. This dialogue, as Axel Honneth might phrase it, would be: "We practically cope with the world in such a way that it is given to us as a field of practical significance" (Honneth 2008: 30), or drawing from Honneth, what could be defined as the "pragmatics of being-in-the-world.'

A shift evident in Rorty's critique, particularly in his orientation toward epistemology, is his move from experience to discourse. While classical pragmatism emphasizes experience as a foundational point, we see that the beginnings of Rorty's neo-pragmatism are more focused on a linguistified variant. He bases his entire philosophical vocation on the plane of conversation, even when discussing the future of philosophy. This impulse is clearly articulated in the conclusion of his book "Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature", where he states: "*The only point on which I would insist is that philosophers' moral concern should be with continuing the conversation of the West, rather than with insisting upon a place for the traditional problems of modern philosophy within that conversation.*" (Rorty: 1979: 394) In an interview, when asked about the role of experience in John Dewey's philosophy, Rorty remarked that it would have been better if Dewey had not written that book. When further questioned about the importance of experience in philosophy, given the abandonment of epistemologically-oriented philosophy and the theory of knowledge, Rorty responded, "I'd prefer 'discourse' to 'experience'" (Hudson and Van Reijen, 2010: 495). For Rorty, conversation was crucial and one of the principles he never abandoned. His anti-essentialist manifesto begins precisely where the concept of edification in his philosophy starts to fade. Rorty gradually shapes the transition from philosophy to post-philosophy, which, for him, occurs through his brand of pragmatism.

This trajectory is eloquently described by philosopher Alexander Nehamas:

"*With Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Rorty acquired his own voice in the conversation of culture. With Consequences of Pragmatism, his voice becomes dominant within that conversation (...) like all good authors, he can be complimented (as in the present case) by having his own metaphors applied to him. He has brought philosophical writing to a broad audience. No other American philosopher has done more to bring philosophy and criticism closer*" *(Nehamas,1982, 412)*.

future paper. With this, I would like to emphasize that the quotes used here are not for stylistic purposes only; they also contain substantive components that can unite these approaches. See: (Rorty 1989); (Levinas 1979); (Jurič 2018).

From this prelude in “Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature”, Rorty begins his critique of essentialism, demonstrating how it invariably leads to aporia in all its forms. But this is not all—it marks the beginning of what would be known as Rorty’s anti-essentialism, encompassing an idiosyncratic reading of non-metaphysical liberalism, neo-pragmatism, and philosophy as poetry. The latter aspect—philosophy as poetry—remains an integral part of his romantic democratic vision, something that cannot be separated from his work. This romanticism is embodied in his admiration for Walt Whitman, whom Rorty regarded as a “strong poet,” or, as Bloom would say, “the strong poet.” Thus begins the brilliant journey of this thinker, whom philosopher Nancy Fraser rightly calls ‘one of the most important thinkers of the twentieth century.’

3. PRAGMATISM

3.1 Redesigning Pragmatism

The statement that Rorty redesigned pragmatism is not just an overhaul. The historical arc of pragmatism as a philosophical movement confirms this shift. While the founders of pragmatism focused on experience, as seen in James' radical empiricism and Dewey's work, Rorty's neo-pragmatism displaces this emphasis on experience for discourse. What emerges from this is a form of "linguistic neo-pragmatism," where conversation, not empirical experience, takes center stage. The question, then, is why? It appears that, for Rorty, experience is trapped within the confines of the analytic philosophy he rejects. In this framework, experience is no longer a pursuit of truth but a component of discourse, which is rooted in the historical and social contingencies of different communities, pointing towards a more liberating philosophical practice. Rorty aims to confront analytic philosophy with a philosophy oriented towards dialogue. Rorty draws inspiration from philosophers across diverse traditions, uniting them within his dialogical pragmatism—what could be described, borrowing Derrida's term, as a '*pragmatology*' (Derrida 1996: 80). Rorty's pragmatism is shaped by thinkers like Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Dewey, and Derrida, all of whom, in his view, expanded philosophical horizons in a hermeneutic sense akin to Gadamer. Central to their philosophies is a focus on language, discourse, writing, and the interpretive community as key elements of their reflective worldviews. This approach also disrupts the traditional divisions inherited from Aristotle, breaking down the boundaries between science, politics, and art within philosophical systems. These thinkers have moved away from a speculative, ahistorical perspective, grounding their philosophies in the historicity of terrestrial contingencies. Their influence on Rorty has led to a more dynamic and vibrant redesigning of pragmatism, one that has gained significant recognition in contemporary philosophy. This is likely why dialogue plays such a central role in Rorty's pragmatism; few contemporary philosophers have engaged in more polemical exchanges across the philosophical spectrum than Rorty. As Zabala notes, Rorty embodied a philosophy of dialogue through his books, interviews, and collections of polemical texts, continually responding to his critics (Zabala, 2017). To reinforce this point, volumes such as

Rorty and His Critics feature Rorty's responses to his critics, demonstrating his commitment to sustaining an ongoing philosophical conversation.[53]

Rorty's pragmatism resonates with James' pluralism, Heidegger's emphasis on action, Cavell's focus on the ordinary, and Dewey's vision of radical democracy. He approaches philosophy as a public intellectual, deliberately avoiding confines of theoretical abstractions prevalent in academic philosophy. He views philosophy as an ongoing, unfinished dialogue, constantly evolving within the flux of historical contingencies. The central motif of neo-pragmatism lies the theme of improvement, relentless drive to make the world less cruel by addressing public cruelty and dismantling institutional denigration. The phrase encapsulating Rorty's entire neo-pragmatism is: "if you take care of freedom, truth will take care of itself." As Zabala astutely notes, this means that truth is determined by the continuous conversation of a free community (Zabala, 2017). This concept connects with the post-philosophical and post-metaphysical culture that will be discussed in later sections, as well as with non-theoretical strategies, as Salihu suggests:

"*This venture has a purpose: the reevaluation and rethinking of the West as a project that is specific to philosophy, which would allow for the viewing of the West from a different perspective, as a non-philosophical project where an open liberal and post-philosophical culture is developed"* (Salihu 2024: 5).

Rorty's neo-pragmatism is primarily a rebellion against the empty promises of philosophy, which subjugate moral and aesthetic needs to theoretical pleasures (Habermas 1998: 368). Both pragmatism and post-Nietzschean philosophy aim to revise and rebel against the lack of vitality in the esoteric fortress of philosophy. This vitality can only be achieved by shifting from the theory of truth to a theory about truth (Salihu 2024). This shift represents a move from speculative immobility to the dynamic, processual nature of practice, transitioning from a near-juridical proclamation to the fluid realm of *truth à venir* (Derrida), conceived as an event (*ereignis*, Heidegger), minimal truth (Davidson), and a plurality of truths (Nietzsche). Rorty's neo-pragmatism seeks to deconstruct the concept of truth. As will be explored in the chapter dedicated to this topic, truth is the central issue around which all philosophical reflection revolves. This

[53] Note: It is important to highlight three crucial volumes in which Rorty engages in dialogue with contemporary philosophers, whether from the analytic or continental traditions. These do not include individual books and collections where Rorty responds to many of his intellectual peers. See (Brandom 2000a); (Saatkamp Jr. 1995) (Mouffe, 1996).

sacrilege seeks to initiate a process of profanation, as identified by thinkers who have concluded that this sacred reverence for truth has exhausted its self-mystifying resources.

To fully grasp the significance of Rorty's re-designed pragmatism, it is necessary to undertake a historical excursus, tracing how pragmatism began as a philosophical movement and how it has evolved. This development has not been entirely organic or without misunderstandings. Pragmatism is arguably one of the most misunderstood philosophical directions. This misunderstanding stems largely from the brutal common-sense usage of the term. The initial confusion arose within the Anglo-Saxon philosophical tradition, with Bertrand Russell, a prominent figure in discrediting pragmatism, embracing the Vienna Circle's Germanic approach and using brutal positivism to resolve epistemic crossroads. Russell declared that pragmatism (this "American philosophy") was "a play on words"—nothing more than an American Hegelian romanticism and a misreading of British empiricism. This misinterpretation was further perpetuated by the public sphere, where pragmatism came to be understood only in its literal sense, as found in dictionaries. As a result, it is no surprise that the phrase "political pragmatism" is often used synonymously with flexibility or as a variant of Machiavellianism. In reality, pragmatism stands in direct opposition, being rooted in the following components: radical democracy, improvement, pluralist ethos, and social poetry. This historical misunderstanding has since been transposed into the "media-sphere" (Debray 1996) or McLuhan's "galaxies." In the media-sphere, public commentators, journalists, and politicians frequently attach the term pragmatism to their ignoble actions, always in a pejorative sense, as a betrayal of a noble ideal.[54] This misreading stems

[54] Note: The same misunderstanding and misreading of pragmatism was also encountered. After reading inspirational works about building a better society, the misunderstanding and sometimes the arrogance of continental circles towards pragmatism became frustrating. In academic heterotopias, pragmatism is rarely considered something "in," "trendy," or "sexy" for the indignant revolutionaries of the bourgeois class. Even in this context, the public sphere often fosters this misunderstanding of a vibrant tradition that is deeply human—all too human—whose influence spans the most progressive figures in America, from Martin Luther King Jr. to Bernie Sanders, from Lionel Trilling to Irving Howe, Charles Wright Mills to Roberto M. Unger, and from John Dewey to Cornel West. Pragmatism is synonymous with the American democrat, a direct legacy of Walt Whitman. It seems that the collar-wearing cynics, typically politicians and their entourages, who occupy much of Habermas's public sphere, have contributed to this misunderstanding of pragmatism. This is eloquently explained in Jonathan Ree's review titled "Richard Rorty and the Power of Pragmatism" in *Prospect*, where he emphasizes this confusion. He states in his review:

from the Manichean interpretations crafted by the cyber-anthropologists of the techno-media apparatus. The perceived battle between idealists and pragmatists, realists and dreamers, and so on, has obscured the true nature of the dangerous American philosophers' ideas. Pragmatism is pluralist and, therefore, in inherent conflict with any form of eternal truth. William James often referred to pragmatism as humanism because it is a human invention that is not subject to any transcendent authority but to ordinary human hopes and interests (Ree 2021). Pragmatists carry within them an internalized sense of democracy, an immanent communal brotherhood, non-theoretical solidarity, and anti-totalitarianism. Pragmatism is the realm of democratic romance, not of any ideological or epistemic monomania (Ree 2021)—it affirms the democratic *civitas* as a permanent feature of human action.

From the books read on pragmatism, the interpretation of the philosopher Richard J. Bernstein seems to resonate the most. Bernstein begins his exploration of the history of this philosophical movement with a *tour de force* etymological analysis.[55] His lucid and exhaustive interpretation

---

"*In the past few years, the word "pragmatism" has been spreading like a weed through the discourse of democracy. Theresa May and Boris Johnson both promised us a "pragmatic" Brexit, and Jeremy Corbyn and Keir Starmer undertook to be "pragmatic" in response. The same applies to every other issue you might mention: from Covid and the climate emergency to the supply chain crisis, our politicians assure us they are going to be thoroughly pragmatic*." (Ree, 2021)

Ree expresses disdain for this degradation of the concept of pragmatism. Borrowing a bit from the methodology of literary theory, particularly intertextual analysis, it becomes clear that Ree is implying that those using the term "pragmatism" don't truly understand it. He goes on to demonstrate this throughout his review. Ree provides a review that counters the misunderstanding of pragmatism. His close relationship with Richard Rorty, whom he calls 'the bad boy of American philosophy,' is significant in this context. Ree, a post-Marxist and former editor of the subversive journal *Radical Philosophy*, promoted Rorty's pragmatism in its pages. He has also written extensively on pragmatism and Rorty in journals like *Telos* and various compilations on contemporary philosophy. Ree even suggested that pragmatism is the most suitable alternative to help achieve social justice and develop new forms of democratic expression. See: (Ree 2021).

[55] Note: There are many interpretations surrounding the conceptual history [Begriffsgeschichte] of pragmatism, but among the most significant, aside from the lucid interpretation of Richard J. Bernstein, are: 1) the musical and rebellious interpretation of philosopher Cornel West, and 2) the interpretation that seeks to create a dialogue between pragmatism and its French counterpart in contemporary philosophy, post-structuralism, under the creative interpretation of philosopher John J. Stuhr. These are not the only books that allow navigating the generic American philosophy known as pragmatism, but they are among the most creative and comprehensive. Additionally, to grasp

appears to follow the ghost of Hegel. Referring to many historical interpretations of the formation of the philosophical spirit in America, all seem connected to Hegel. Even the famed "Metaphysical Club"[56] (Menand, 2002) is linked to the figure of the philosopher of the absolute, which in the American context becomes Darwinized. Below, through an improvisation akin to jazz, an attempt will be made to explicate the connection between pragmatism and Hegel. One fact stands out: Hegel, among the few European thinkers, foresaw the prospect of the United States in the further development of freedom.

British Empiricism in James on the one hand, and Hegel in Dewey on the other, form the conceptual map from which pragmatism has been influenced. Hegel's impact on Dewey has shaped not only his approach to epistemology, where he critiques the mirror of nature that comes with Descartes and culminates with Kant, but has also shaped his criticism of the dichotomy between action and thought. The repercussions of this critique can be found layered in his approach to democracy, where no distinction is made between action and thought—both are tools functioning in the creation of social poetry. Hegel, as a *pragmatist avant la lettre*, shows that action and thought are interconnected and make a significant difference in the understanding of a concept itself; the concept does not manifest until it is put into use. Simply put, the materiality of use makes the difference in meaning (Pinkard 2024). Thus, social practice determines the meaning of the concept, which is nothing other than interpretative communities. Another connection can be found in the "apocryphal humanism" of pragmatism, particularly in James's variant mentioned earlier, and Hegel's position. As Pinkard notes, Hegel explained to his students that "Man" does not exist in himself but gains value through engagement in practical life and the historicity of existence. He outlines that human achievements are not grounded in some transcendent background beyond their power. This assertion by Hegel is found in his manifesto, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction, Reason in History*, where he states:

---

the aura of pragmatism's historical development, one must read the brilliant essay by philosopher of religion Jeffrey Stout, "Spirit of Pragmatism." See: (Bernstein 2010); (West 1989); (Stuhr 1997); (Stout 2012).

[56] Note: The 'Metaphysical Club' is the place where the word "pragmatism" was discussed and mentioned for the first time. In fact, it is known as the place where the narrative surrounding pragmatism was first established. James first heard discussions on pragmatism in this club in Cambridge in 1870. For more information, see: (Menand 2002); (Bernstein 2010).

"Laws and principles have no immediate life or validity in themselves. The activity which puts them into operation and endows them with real existence has its source in the needs, impulses, inclinations, and passions of man. If I put something into practice and give it a real existence, I must have some personal interest in doing so; I must be personally involved in it, and hope to obtain satisfaction through its accomplishment" (Hegel 1975: 70).

For Hegel and the pragmatists, an ideal must possess a bonifying, non-extremist character, as can be explained by Pinkard's formula: '*the material course of human life and can make a difference as to what we do*' (Pinkard 2024). Therefore, concepts are not mere abstractions that fail to explain actions; rather, they are concretely interconnected (Pinkard 2024). Abandoning the dichotomy between action and thought allows Hegel to be seen not as an idealist in an esoteric fortress but as a philosopher affirming life. This is affirmed by Pinkard, and philosopher Blerim Latifi has also recently supported this position.[57] The version of Hegel's praxis can only be captured through a pragmatic reading of him. To abolish these dichotomies, contemporary Hegelian scholars like Pinkard and Bernstein show that Hegel affirmed life.[58] Bernstein highlights Hegel's influence on the Frankfurt School and pragmatism, where the intersection of these traditions manifests in Bernstein's neo-pragmatism—a synthesis also found in the later work of Rorty. Pragmatists have reinterpreted one of Hegel's most original and polysemous concepts, *Geist*, outside its speculative framework, instead grounding it in the practical realization of life. Pinkard echoes this, stating:

"*It is when life on earth becomes self-conscious life in its human form that Hegel's own conception of Geist—mind or spirit, depending on the translator—comes into view. Geist is a specific type of unity of self-conscious lives. It is not merely the sum of various individuals. You don't just add up individuals as if they were all just separate little*

[57] Note: This connection between pragmatism and post-metaphysical philosophy aligns with the influence that Hegel's philosophy had on these contemporary philosophical registers. The exploration of the link between pragmatism and Hegelian philosophy follows Pinkard's assertion, emphasizing a crucial point: the only purpose of theory is to reveal its practical function. This journey can be summarized through viva voce—if pragmatism is not beneficial for theory, then it is even worse for theory itself.

[58] Note: Terry Pinkard, in his elaboration on the connection between pragmatism and Hegel, highlights several contemporary authors who attempt to read Hegel differently from traditional interpretations. The authors and their works include: Karen Ng, *Hegel's Concept of Life: Self-Consciousness, Freedom, Logic*; Thomas Khurana, *Das Leben der Freiheit: Form und Wirklichkeit der Autonomie*; Dean Moyar, *Hegel's Value: Justice as the Living Good*; and Andreja Novakovic, *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life*. For more, see: (Pinkard 2024)

individual data points and arrive at Geist. On the other hand, Geist is also not some super-entity swallowing everything else into itself and thereby obliterating the individuality of the individuals within it " (Pinkard 2024).

These singularities are not annihilated in this ontological prospect. Rather, as singularities in *Mit-sein* (being-with), they have advanced their social practice. *Geist* becomes the ontological register (Zabala 2009: xiii) where the dichotomy between individuality and community is broken, or more freely, where the transgression beyond these static identities occurs. As Hegel himself defines in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, "The I that is We, and the We that is I." According to Pinkard, this means that if language is universal, then, individual speakers, as themselves, are the universal. Simply put, language is the existence of *Geist* (Pinkard 2024). The same Hegelian schema is found in Dewey, who rejected being defined as either a collectivist or an individualist. By reconstructing the formula of *Geist* within his philosophy, Dewey even synchronizes with Hegel's claims, stating: "… the individual embodies and realizes within himself the spirit and will of the whole organism" (Dewey 2008: 236). The implications of this view push beyond conceptual formations within social philosophy, such as liberal or communitarian. Dewey sought to affirm communal life through democracy without undermining individuality, emphasizing responsibility, prosperity, and initiative. Dewey doesn't advocate for egotistical or aristocratic individualism but speaks of communal life as a *communitas*, involving exchange, sharing, and responsibility toward one another. He alludes to democratic *caritas* as the sole path to shaping the politics of society—being brothers (West; Dewey) and friends to affirm freedom. Dewey's concept of individualism within democracy is expressed as:

"*There is individualism in democracy which there is not in aristocracy; but it is an ethical, not a numerical individualism; it is an individualism of freedom, of responsibility, of initiative to and for the ethical ideal, not an individualism of lawlessness*" (Dewey 2008:243-4).

Here, the individual merges into the democratic spirit, making democracy more demanding and, as a result, emphasizing its "infinitely demanding" nature (Critchley 2013). Dewey's democracy is ethical, aiming to cultivate ethical sensibility as a form of permanent ethical demand, encapsulated in the dictum of MacIntyre and Rorty: "an ethics without metaphysics." This ethical turn, beyond the metaphysical scheme, manifests as an ethics of sensibility rather than an ethics of obligation. Similar expressions are found in the philosophies of Hans Jonas and Emmanuel

Levinas. Westbrook beautifully elaborates this connection between ethics and democracy in Dewey's philosophy, stating:

"*... (Dewey) belief that democracy as an ethical ideal calls upon men and women to build communities in which the necessary opportunities and resources are available for every individual to realize fully his or her particular capacities and powers through participation in political, social, and cultural life*" (Westbrook 1991: p. xv).

This Hegelian conceptual trope is found among all philosophers who have abandoned extreme metaphysical positions on the political spectrum, as seen in Rorty, MacIntyre, Agamben, Nancy, Foucault, and Derrida. Whether moving away from Marxist appropriations or metaphysical liberalism, both are viewed as limited: one manifests as one-dimensional collectivism, denying freedom; the other as a teleological adventure, a fantasy. Ethical democracy echoes MacIntyre's postulate, which in his *After the Virtue* declares: "the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained" (MacIntyre 1984: 261). Ethical democracy, as a component of social ontology, finds a new agent in the return to *civitas*, which emerges as the only viable way to grasp the expression of cultural politics.

Returning to Pinkard's problematization of Geist in connection with pragmatic drives, this reading reveals that the focus is not on individuals per se but on singularities as a species that exist within social practices. These practices form the modes of life that unify us. Hegel calls these life forms a modeling or *Gestalt* of consciousness, and consequently, the modeling of the world as a whole (Pinkard 2024). Lastly, the point of Hegel's relevance to pragmatism is found in the idea of "the eternal present"[59] (Hegel)—a constant temporality in the form of historicity, manifesting through radical democracy. Radical democracy is not merely a vote but a way of life, as Dewey asserts:

"*Democracy is a way o f life controlled b y a working faith in the possibilities of human nature. Belief in the Common Man is a familiar article in the democratic creed.* (Dewey 2008b: 226) (...) *Democracy, like any other*

[59] Note: In an intriguing manner, philosopher Astrit Salihu elaborates on the concept of the eternal present and the immortality of spirit. Salihu states that Hegel does not perceive the end of history in the future, nor in the concrete present, but in the eternal present, where the immortal spirit always manifests itself through its actions. It seems that Salihu shares the same position with Pinkard and Rorty in asserting that the immortality of spirit is rooted on earth and does not belong to any heavenly or Christian background. See: (Hegel 1953); (Salihu 2009)

polity, has been finely termed the memory of an historic past, the consciousness of a living present, the ideal of a coming future" (Dewey 2008a: 240).

Democracy is, as Jacques Derrida stated, "la démocratie à venir" (the democracy to come), a vision that calls for continual effort to actualize. Rorty, according to Critchley, views this endeavor through the lens of Dewey, referring to it as a "utopia of social hope." This anti-extremist spirit characterizes pragmatism (Sloterdijk 2017: 94) as a constant negotiation from the middle, attempting to create new spaces for manifestation. Pragmatism, in its practical-discursive battle, is sometimes labeled as radical liberalism or non-metaphysical, while at other times, it is connected with the progressive spirit of democratic socialism. However, these labels do not fully capture the vibrant philosophical undertaking of thinking about the world within this framework. Perhaps the most fitting description is that of a "pragmatist sensibility." As West points out, James noted that pragmatism "has room for everyone;" each person re-designs it with their own tropes and variations. This pragmatist sensibility only makes sense within a pluralistic universe.

The imperative of life, expressed through forms of life, finds its roots in Hegel, perhaps as the first anti-essentialist philosopher. The genesis of pragmatist anti-foundationalism can be traced back to Hegel, just as it is found in post-metaphysical thinkers. Criticism of meta-narratives, dichotomies, and the metaphysics of presence (Bernstein 2010: 29) appears to derive from Hegel, and perhaps the roots of Western anti-essentialist thought can be located in his philosophy. These observations about these thinkers are echoed by the philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who argues that the "genealogy of post-metaphysical thought" is deeply implanted in philosophy through *Meditations Hegeliennes* (Sellars):

"*They all defend themselves as if they were living in the shadow of the "last" philosopher, as did the first generation of Hegelian disciples. They are still battling against the "strong" concepts of theory, truth, and system that have actually belonged to the past for over a century and a half. ... They believe that they have to tear philosophy away from the madness of expounding a theory that has the last word.*" (Habermas 1987: 408)[60]

[60] Note: It should be emphasized here that Habermas is referring to philosophers such as Heidegger, Adorno, and Derrida. Sloterdijk holds a similar view about Derrida, as he explains in his book *Derrida, an Egyptian*, where he elaborates on Derrida's Hegelian style. Derrida managed to innovatively revisit and reconfigure a tradition that already contained its own limits. When speaking of tradition here, it is understood in the Heideggerian sense of *traditio*, meaning "surrender" and "handing down," originating from *tradere*, which means "handing over." Derrida stands

This connection between pragmatism and post-metaphysical philosophy aligns with the influence Hegel's philosophy had on these contemporary philosophical registers. The exploration of the link between pragmatism and Hegelian philosophy follows Pinkard's assertion, emphasizing a crucial point: the only purpose of theory is to reveal its practical function. This journey can be summarized through *viva voce*, if pragmatism is not beneficial for theory, then it is even worse for theory itself.

Until recently, it was considered heresy in academic circles to merge an idealist concept with a pragmatist one. In both Anglo-Saxon analytical circles and continental academia, despite the fact that the very constitution of these traditions connects them, such a merger was unimaginable. In the inverted viva voce of philosopher Sidney Morgenbesser, it could be said that pragmatism is good in practice but not in theory (Pinkard 2024). However, with Rorty's re-design of pragmatism, he has restored its relevance in current philosophical debates. Rorty, reflecting on this wave of change, has expressed it as follows:

"*[W]hat Davidson added to Dewey is a non-representationalist account of knowledge. I have argued elsewhere that the "linguistic turn" in philosophy was sort of a last refuge of representationalism and that the dialectic that leads the later Wittgenstein and Davidson away from a picture theory of language is the same as that which led Dewey, away from a spectator theory of knowledge. If no further refuge is found, then Davidson may have been right when he wrote "a sea change" is occurring in recent philosophical thought - "a change so profound that we may not recognize that it is occurring." If the change of which Davidson spoke is someday recognized as having occurred ... [then] Peirce, James, and Dewey may cease to be treated as provincial figures. They may be given the place I think t hey deserve in the story of the West's intellectual progress"* (Rorty 1990: 5).

He views pragmatism as a relevant spirit that responds to the contemporary context. Thus, the actualization of Hegel's thought is evident in Rorty's re-designed version of pragmatism. However,

---

behind Hegel (Sloterdijk), and in the context of discourse, with sharp insight, deconstructs the normative order of logical space, fully aware of the challenges and the one-dimensionality of semantics. He offered a new play on the temporal history of the sign. Derrida and Adorno, by standing behind Hegel, inherit his attribute of having both affirmation and negation within a conceptual formation (Critchley 1999) as the only way to escape the uniformity of the metaphysics of presence. Therefore, deconstruction inherently carries this duplicating character. With Hegel, the immanent need was introduced into philosophy to create new vocabularies, and his cryptic admirers have continued, under his influence, to create these new vocabularies. See: (Habermas 1987); (Bernstein 2010) ; (Sloterdijk 2006); (Critchley 1999). On Hegelian variations in Derrida's and Adorno's reflections, see: (Derrida 1982); (Adorno 2007); (Zabala 2009).

Rorty's neo-pragmatism is more discursive, centering on dialogue, a focus also found in Hegel's reference to social practice. Rorty has had a significant influence on affirming this approach to philosophy. This re-design aligns with Brandom's definition:

"*Pragmatism about the norms implicit in cognitive activity came down to us in the first half of the twentieth century from three independent directions: from the classical American pragmatists, culminating in Dewey; from Heidegger of Being and Time; and from Wittgenstein of the Philosophical Investigations. In trying to work out how the insights of these traditions (partly common, partly complementary) could be applied to make progress within contemporary philosophy of language and philosophy of mind*" (Brandom 2000: 34).

Based on the pragmatist approach, this version, through syncretism, eclecticism, and elliptical argumentation as a methodological form, attempts to bring together ways of thinking that, in traditional readings, might seem incompatible. However, many books have been written about the connection between these thinkers and pragmatism. The promotion of an open and versatile approach is where pragmatism is grounded. Rorty's re-design can be encapsulated in the formula he offers: "*pragmatists keep trying to find ways of making antiphilosophical points in nonphilosophical language"* (Rorty 1982: xiii).

The re-design of pragmatism must pass through the post-metaphysical state, move into anti-foundationalist registers, continue with the dismantling of Western monomania for truth, and conclude with post-philosophical and anti-philosophical axes. This offers one way to preserve the critical and bonifying character of philosophy in its humble form. This state affirms the revitalization of hope necessary to constitute neo-pragmatism. Pragmatist sensibility, beyond deconstructing philosophy's epistemological orientation by detecting its aporias, also aims to raise awareness of ideological totalitarianisms that haunt social hope, social justice, and social poetry—phantoms that exist outside the spectrality of democracy to come.

3.1.1. Neo-Pragmatism: Linguistic Pragmatism

Earlier, an attempt was made to explain how Rorty's re-designed pragmatism appears in its discursive form within the reflective realm of contemporary philosophy. A summary of some key points is necessary to highlight the foundational premises of this idiosyncratic variant of pragmatism: 1) conversation, 2) language replacing experience, 3) critique of epistemic-metaphysical dichotomies, 4) truth without essences, 5) contingency, and 6) democracy and ethical pluralism. These premises are interwoven into what is known as Rorty's stylistic approach. Many

of his interpreters and followers are fascinated by the disciplinary harmony found in his thinking, which moves seamlessly between literature and politics, philosophy and literature, and from politics to sociology and history. The diversity of expressions that carry a dose of anti-academic intellectualism is a hallmark of his style. The academic intellectual is often seated in comfort, enjoying the conformism of private reflection and the safe ruminations of the esoteric ivory tower. In contrast, anti-intellectualism demands that thought become public, calling for the vitality of a better society, inviting "social imagination" (Mills 2000) and "social poetry" (Havel)—both of which Rorty, like Dewey, affirms through pragmatism. This is captured vibrantly by philosopher Cornel West, who states, "American pragmatism ... Its basic impulse is a plebeian radicalism that fuels an antipatrician rebelliousness for the moral aim of enriching individuals and expanding democracy" (West 1989: 5). Returning to the style of Rorty's work, it lies in the combination of scholarly erudition and his literary gift. These two elements intertwine idiosyncratically, weaving together critical expository analysis with illuminating historical narratives. Through the lightness of articulation within his texts, Rorty moves from purely technical academic argumentation to cultural commentary. In no instance does he use tricks to deceive the reader; rather, with astuteness, his texts illuminate and exhilarate, offering the feeling of being drawn in rather than convinced (West 1989: 197). This aligns with his discursive stature, which is less about rigor and more about finesse, hope, and the vitality of life.

Before delving further into the unpacking of neo-pragmatism, a brief excursus is necessary to trace the historical context of the American turn in philosophy known as pragmatism. Here, various perspectives will be interwoven to provide a historical, discursive, and contextual reading of pragmatism's emergence as a discursive field of action. Pragmatism stands as one of America's most significant contributions to the reflective world. The genealogical quartet of pragmatism consists of names like Emerson, Pierce, James, and Dewey, each of whom interpreted pragmatism in an original way within their respective discursive fields. From the perspective of intellectual history, pragmatism abandons the search for universal truths, placing emphasis instead on the primacy of practice over propositional truths. In fact, truth is a consequence of practice. It is not practice that submits to theory, but theory that submits to practice. This dynamic view of truth positions pragmatism, to use Zahavi's phenomenological dictum, as "Being We" (Zahavi 2025)—an active reflection on democratic society from which pragmatism originates, while simultaneously aiming to advance its nature (Ratner-Rosenhagen 2019: 103). Cornel West uses an

interesting metaphor to encapsulate this movement, referencing James's claim that pragmatism is a house with rooms for everyone's modes of thinking. According to intellectual historian Ratner-Rosenhagen, pragmatism can be seen as the "root of rootlessness," embodying both radical empiricism and social activism, as it evolves through Hegelian philosophy into a Darwinized form of Hegelianism (Rorty 1982; West 1989; Stuhr 1997; Bernstein 2010; Ratner-Rosenhagen 2019).

This plurality of pragmatism is evident across various domains of human endeavor. In addition to Emerson as a proto-pragmatist, and the pioneers Pierce and James, with intellectual maturity arriving in Dewey, pragmatism appears in other disciplines. This includes the sociologist C. Wright Mills and his "sociological imagination," the historian Du Bois, the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, and literary critic Lionel Trilling (West 1989: 6). It also manifests in literature and literary criticism with figures like Baldwin and Howe, in economics with John Kenneth Galbraith, and in activism and politics with Martin Luther King Jr. and Eleanor Roosevelt (Rorty 1999). Pragmatism embodies the spirit of the American democrat—public intellectuals (public philosophers) and social poets. These American democrats, regardless of their backgrounds, are the direct heirs of Walt Whitman's vision in *Democratic Vistas*. In the context of defining pragmatism, one of the earliest definitions comes from philosopher and psychologist William James, who states:

"*The term is derived from the same Greek word pragma, meaning action, from which our words 'practice' and 'practical' come . It was first introduced into philosophy by Mr. Charles Peirce in 1878. In an article entitled 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear, ' . . . Mr. Peirce, after pointing out that our beliefs are really rules for action, said that, to develop a thought's meaning, we need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce: that conduct is for us its sole significance. And the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions, however subtle, is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference in practice. (...) This is the principle of Peirce, the principle of pragmatism. It lay entirely unnoticed by anyone for twenty years, until I ... brought it forward again and made a special application of it to religion. By that date (1898) the times seemed ripe for its reception. The word 'pragmatism' spread, and at present it fairly spots the pages of the philosophic journals* (James 1997: 377-8).

With William James, pragmatism remains within the realm of humanism, without yet incorporating a political platform. However, what is crucial at this stage is its anti-academic character, seeing the thinker as historicized, where ideas are not intelligible abstractions but functional tools: not to "copy the world" but to "cope with the world." This starting point would later be developed by Dewey into his radical democracy, under the influence of Hegel and experimental power, attempting to create a new path where knowledge, being, morality, and art

are not separate but are part of making the human-all-too-human world. To recap this early pragmatism: it rejected the belief that ideas are "out there" waiting to be discovered, instead viewing ideas as tools that people invent to cope with the world, a creative potential inherited from Romanticism. Ideas, they believed, were not produced by individuals but were social in nature. Ideas, they argued, did not develop according to their own intrinsic logic but, like microbes, depended on the human environment. Since ideas are temporary responses to particular situations, their survival depends not on their immutability but on their adaptability (Menand 2002; xi-xii). Thus, the *sine qua non* of pragmatism is the turn toward the community and the primacy of the social.

The post-war *interregnum* in American academia saw pragmatism pushed once again outside academic circles. The expansion of what became known as the Anglo-Saxon school of analytic philosophy, combined with the Vienna Circle or logical positivism, had dismissed pragmatism as non-rigorous, romantic, or idealistic. The analytic school worked hard to keep philosophy private, in its laboratory, detached from society—contrary to the ideals of pragmatism. It is worth noting that, as history progressed and contingencies evolved, even within the analytic school, a triptych emerged that challenged the analytic echelon by introducing pragmatist approaches into the discipline. This triptych, composed of figures such as Quine with his holism, Goodman with his pluralism, and Sellars with his anti-foundationalism (West 1989: 200), produced anti-Cartesian and anti-Kantian arguments. Following this re-animation of pragmatism in academic circles, new expressions also appeared in political philosophy, with thinkers like Richard J. Bernstein synthesizing pragmatism with hermeneutics and the Frankfurt School, and Harvard law professor Roberto Unger attempting to combine the best aspects of liberal and Marxist traditions to create a synthesis known as "radical pragmatism" or the "prophetic pragmatism" that carries on Dewey's legacy (West 1989). There is also the German communicative turn toward pragmatism, represented by figures such as Jürgen Habermas, Karl Otto Apel, Axel Honneth, and Hans Joas. The philosopher who made pragmatism a respectable philosophy in the reflective domain and opened the possibility for communication and debate with other contemporary philosophical expressions is undoubtedly Richard Rorty. Thus, when West traces the trajectory of pragmatism, he sees it progressing from Emerson to Rorty, as a kind of apex that forms the new direction for this way of thinking.

A discursive intermezzo is needed here to explore the connection between neo-pragmatism and Heidegger's philosophy, especially given the latter's disdain for America and its intellectual tradition. In his book *Being and Time*, when Heidegger initially presents the distinction between *Zuhandensein* (readiness-to-hand) and *Vorhandensein* (presence-at-hand), he argues for the primacy of *readiness-to-hand*. This implicitly resonates with pragmatism's claims regarding the precedence of practice. A notable example of these relationships is found in his use of the hammer, where Heidegger examines and explores the consequences and meanings of *Zuhandensein* in relation to *Vorhandensein*. Through this, Heidegger is laying the groundwork for understanding *being-in-the-world*. Although *being-in-the-world* is not a term used by classical pragmatists, it implicitly articulates the pragmatic understanding of the transaction between the human organism and its environment—this transaction involves *know-how* as the basis for *know-that*. Other topics where Heidegger's philosophy intersects with pragmatism include *care* (Sorge), *projection* (Entwurf), and *situatedness* (Befindlichkeit) (Bernstein 2010: 20). Axel Honneth interprets this connection between pragmatism and Heidegger's philosophy beautifully when he states: "*according to Heidegger, we do not encounter reality in the stance of a cognitive subject, but rather we practically cope with the world in such a way that it is given to us as a field of practical significance*" (Honneth 2008: 39). This, according to him, is the foundation upon which pragmatism is constructed.

After this excursus, several key points of Richard Rorty's neo-pragmatism or linguistic pragmatism can be explicated. His approach is deeply influenced by his biographical moments and academic development, with many biographies noting the claim that Rorty was poised to become the greatest analytic philosopher of his time. This observation is instructive in understanding that his pragmatism is not oriented toward experience but toward language. This modification of pragmatism is inherited from the linguistic turn and the influence of holistic analytic philosophers such as Sellars, Quine, and Goodman. However, his *bricolage* attempts to combine Dewey with Heidegger, along with Wittgenstein's language games, community, and post-philosophical intent. The first glimpse of this shift can be seen in an interview given after the publication of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, where he abandons the concept of experience in pragmatism, modifying it with discourse. This shift to discourse allows him to more easily dismantle the mystified concept of truth in metaphysical tradition, which has been constructed through the subordination of being to knowledge and, consequently, of the good to truth. By turning toward discourse, Rorty arrives

at the conclusion that, since truth is a property of sentences, and in the tradition of the philosophy of language, "languages are made, not found." This makes appeals to philosophical arguments merely circumstantial and apologetic, where rhetorical self-congratulations circulate within their respective perspectives (West 1989: 200). But to arrive at language, the concept of the world as "something out there" validating truth must first be deconstructed. Dewey and Heidegger seem to agree on this critique of the concept of the world, as both seek to demystify Kant's mirage of the *omnitudo realitatis*. The subject-object dichotomy, where the subject is on one side and the object is detached and external, has only served to maintain the metaphysical framework. Martin Heidegger begins the deconstruction of Western metaphysics precisely by dissolving the subject-object distinction, offering his famous formula of *being-in-the-world* (*In-der-Welt-sein*). With this, he throws existence into two states: a) as an ecstasy of existence and b) as an excess of it. In other words, from the atemporal realm, beings are thrown into the unforgiving flow of temporality. Rorty develops a similar critique of the world from a pragmatist perspective in the first essay, "The World Well Lost," in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, but his critique passes through Dewey. In fact, Rorty attempts to relativize the idea of the world as used by realists as the final court for determining truth. Somewhere out there in the world lies the criterion of objectivity. The world becomes the fulcrum of truth's legitimacy through coherence or correspondence, which is nothing more than a legitimization of Kant's dichotomies regarding necessity and contingency, receptivity, and spontaneity. This approach creates a conceptual framework for the thing-in-itself. Rorty attempts to critique this concept of the world through Dewey when he asserts:

"*I can now express the same point by saying that the notion of "the world" that is correlative with the notion of "conceptual framework" is simply the notion of a thing-in-itself, and that Dewey's dissolution of the Kantian distinctions between receptivity and spontaneity and between necessity and contingency thus leads naturally to the dissolution of the true realistic believer's notion of "the world" ... Because the idealists kept this general picture and occupied themselves with redefining the "object of knowledge," they gave idealism and the "coherence theory" a bad name-and realism and the "correspondence" theory" a good one. But if we can come to see both the coherence and correspondence theories as noncompeting trivialities, then we may finally move beyond realism and idealism and to the point at which, in Wittgenstein's words, we are capable of stopping doing philosophy when we want to*" (Rorty, 1982: 16).

Thus, through this passage, the intersection and complementarity of the concepts of language and world become clear. Rorty, as a deep connoisseur of the pragmatist tradition, does not view

the world through a realist lens, seeing it as something "out there" and detached. Instead, the world does not speak through descriptive language about itself. It is true that the world preserves some of our beliefs, but these beliefs are elements of human language, and human languages are our creations—creations that vary according to historical contingencies (West 1989: 199). Here, Rorty uses language as a tool to dismantle the epistemology's foundation as a rigorous discipline and metaphysics as an unquestionable authority.

Now, it is necessary to pause for a more comprehensive interpretation of where Rorty's neo-pragmatism is situated. This interpretation comes from one of the most lucid and thorough scholars of Rorty's thought, Alan Malachowski. Malachowski offers a heuristic overview of Rorty's neo-pragmatism, based on Rorty's reflections in his work *Consequences of Pragmatism*. According to Malachowski, Rorty's neo-pragmatism is: 1) An anti-essentialism applied to philosophical theorizing about notions such as 'truth', 'knowledge', 'language', and 'morality'. 2) A view that rejects any epistemological distinction between how truth might be and how it is, as well as any metaphysical difference between fact and value, and any methodological difference between morality and science. 3) Pragmatism is a doctrine with no inherent limitations in inquiry, aside from those imposed by conversation, with no constraints arising from the nature of the object, mind, or language, but only from the limitations produced by the dialogue among colleagues engaged in inquiry (Malachowski 2002: 83; Rorty 1982: 162, 163, 165).

Rorty's version of neo-pragmatism does not remain confined to a critique of epistemology. Instead, this critique opens pathways to merge with the effort toward creating a better society. Pragmatism becomes the philosophy of radical democracy, which must pass through practical creative realization, implanted with an onto/anthropological emancipation that serves as a route toward socio-political emancipation. As a subversion of tradition, pragmatism values democracy more than philosophy. It layers social poetics with creative discursive imagination. It is the path where all those who wish to make *being-in-the-world* more human, and exceedingly human, must passs.

3.2 An Anti-Fondancionalist Perspective

Transcendental signifiers have taken on a new form in analytic philosophy, particularly in epistemology. These signifiers are found as extensions of Plato's old formula, now reimagined in the epistemological form of "Truth as justified belief."[61] Foundationalism seeks to provide the guarantee that epistemology can lay down the "secure path to science," a maxim of Kant, asserting that our true beliefs have a foundation and can be justified through knowledge. In short, foundationalism is the Platonism of positivism. This is because the foundation, through correspondence or coherence, is expected to provide the necessary certainty for the "coherence" or "correspondence" of our true beliefs, which are justified through objectivity. If this discourse is analyzed intertextually, it reveals that foundationalism is constructed upon classical dichotomies. In his interpretation of Richard Rorty's philosophy and the rebellion of philosophers from both traditions against Platonism, philosopher Astrit Salihu expresses the following:

"*Due to the widespread and growing skepticism in ongoing philosophical discussions about the possibilities of finding the answers in the foundational origins of traditional philosophy, the development of Western philosophy needs to be viewed as a whole, regardless of the exclusive forms in major philosophical strands, which today are referred to as continental philosophy and analytical philosophy (…) Richard Rorty considers that regardless of the differences between analytical and continental philosophical thinkers — William James and Friedrich Nietzsche, Donald Davidson and Jacques Derrida, Hilary Putman and Bruno Latour, John Dewey and Michel Foucault — they are equally characterized by the attempt to release themselves from the Platonic metaphysical burdens about the dualism between the essence and accidence, or between appearance and reality*" (Salihu 2024: 2).

[61] Note: In Plato's *Theaetetus*, if read carefully, the formation of the correspondence theory is actually encountered. In this dialogue, Plato attempts to affirm the criteria for 'knowledge as justified true belief.' However, according to Heidegger and later Rorty, the dialogue also presents a critique, despite its ambiguity. Many historians of ancient philosophy, such as Copleston and Johansen, among others, agree that Plato takes a negative approach in this dialogue. He tries to show what true knowledge is not, but does not explicitly tell what it is. Nevertheless, his formula, "knowledge is justified true belief," undergoes a transformation in modern epistemology and foundationalism, where truth becomes equated with justified belief. Johansen, in his history of ancient philosophy, affirms the purely epistemological character of this dialogue. This is where the origins of the essentialist-foundationalist platform can be traced. It seems that Platonism will remain a specter hovering around epistemology. See: (Heidegger 2002); (Copleston 2003); (Johnasen 2012).

Foundationalism is maintained in academic circles through epistemology, driven by the need for "*Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft"* (philosophy as rigorous science).[62] In Rorty's terms, this reflects the appropriation that epistemology makes through foundationalism of the reflective triptych: truth, objectivity, and reality. This shift can be poetically marked as the transition from the "tribunal of cogito" to the "tribunal of semantics." Thus, analytic philosophers now view epistemology as a discipline where the philosopher can be shaped as a specialist in rigorous scientific philosophy.

This *explicandum* should begin with a definition of how foundationalism is constructed as the cornerstone of philosophy oriented toward epistemology. It is seen as an epistemic view about the structure of justification and knowledge, as previously noted, extending from Platonism. This structure is built in a two-part formula: 1) some "foundational" beliefs have a positive epistemic status—for example, they are justified or knowledge that does not depend on any other belief regarding their status, and 2) every other belief with positive epistemic status must ultimately depend on foundational beliefs for this status (Hasan, Fumerton, 2022). If this is abstracted from the epistemic structure and examined purely in the discursive realm, it becomes clear that the human drive and dedication to foundationalism stem from seeing every bit of knowledge resting on the tree of knowledge. This tree forms the structure of justification, which does not end or

---

[62] Note: In this early paper titled "Redesigning Pragmatism," this axiom is seen as pertinent in the context of foundationalism. Although it is often regarded as integral to the registers of analytic philosophy in academic circles, similar tendencies are also found in continental philosophy. The elaboration of this maxim proceeds as follows:

"*The axiom Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft (translated from German: Philosophy as rigorous science) is attached to the neo-Kantian tradition, to Husserl in continental philosophy, and to Carnap in analytic philosophy. According to Rorty, this tradition views philosophy strictly within the boundaries of disciplinary professionalism. Moreover, according to this tradition, it is the intellectual responsibility of the philosopher to formulate arguments solely within 'neutral conditions' (Richard Rorty) – 'conditions acceptable to all those who compete for argumentative choice' (Rorty)*"

From this, it becomes evident that epistemology attempts to create neutral conditions by abstracting praxis, distancing itself from everyday life. Epistemology-oriented philosophy regards individuals as mere monads of little importance in these intelligible elaborations. These intelligible elaborations, through transcendental signifiers, have built the security of their arguments through a triad of myths: the myth of the given (Sellars), i.e., essence; the museum myth (Quine), i.e., semantics; and the framework myth (Popper), i.e., objectivity. For more on these myths, see: (Sellars 1997); (Quine 1969); (Popper 1994).

encompass falsehood (Sosa, 1979, 79). This instantly evokes, as "mimetic violence" (Girard), the image of the tree, which, since Descartes, has symbolized metaphysics. Thus, the epistemological tree continues the tree rooted in metaphysical foundations. "The Mirror of Nature" becomes the image from which epistemological discourse cannot escape. The same observation is made by philosopher Salihu, who asserts that:

"*How philosophy is thought about has become an important part of the philosophical tradition of the last two centuries. The various attempts to describe the current condition of the West fail to realize its unique foundation, i.e., fail to realize that 'ahistorical legitimacy' undertaken since the beginnings of philosophy, oriented towards a search for foundation or laying of a foundation*" (Salihu 2024: 1).

In the context of Rorty's philosophy, this is closely tied to the Western obsession with continually seeking the foundations of rationalism. This drive appears to have structures sedimented from modernity but is now transposed into the rationalization of all forms of life. Epistemological foundationalism, as a continuation of the metaphysical tradition, can be seen as that impulse toward the totality of Truth with a capital T, Reality with a capital R, and Objectivity with a capital O. This fascination with totalities leads to the emergence of fantasies that manifest as monstrous machines in the form of ideologies. Since ideologies have a profoundly metaphysical character, they promise the ultimate Truth and Good in the form of earthly paradises. Like epistemology, ideologies rely on a belief in infallibility. Thus, all their efforts are directed toward legitimizing structures that are ahistorical but have real-world consequences in our concrete lives. A formula that could encapsulate this trajectory in the form of complementarity would be: 'from abstract/transcendent totalities to immanence with concrete transcendence.' Perhaps, as a fitting expression of this unbearable discursive lightness, the observation of the writer of "unbearable lightness" Milan Kundera comes to mind, when he asserts that:

"*Totalitarianism is not only hell, but also the dream of paradise–the age old drama of a world where everybody would live in harmony, united by a single common will and faith, without secrets from one another. (...)Once the dream of paradise starts to turn into reality, however, here and there people begin to crop up who stand in its way, and so the rulers of paradise must build a little gulag on the side of Eden. In the course of time this gulag grows ever bigger and more perfect, while the adjoining paradise gets ever smaller and poorer*" (Kundera, 1980).

At this point, Adorno's revolt against totalities takes on significant meaning when he asserts that "truth is not the whole." However, his revolt appears as a melancholic refusal, a consequence of retreating from messianism. His critique, emerging as messianism without a messiah, focuses

on critiquing techno-bureaucratic rationalism, which, through "micrology," he views as the only hope confronting nihilism and the arrival of [Ge-stell] as a new metaphysics at the apex of techno-scientific rationality (Vattimo 1992). There seems to be a trajectory here that could unite Adorno with Kundera, though there are also sentiments that link him with Rorty. While Adorno's "micrologies," marked by melancholy, offer an alternative between Judeo-Christian promises and nihilism, he seems to have chosen a minimal approach that defines: [lesbare Konstellation von Seiendem] or "legible constellation of beings" (Adorno 2007). This always sounded like a hope stemming from a middle ground, which disappointed the radical armchair theorists. The same approach can be found in Kundera, who, in the same interview previously cited, elegantly and charmingly remarks: 'Human life is bounded by two abysses: fanaticism on one side and absolute skepticism on the other.' According to him, neither alternative provides the ethical democracy integral to Kundera's social prose. Here again, the deconstruction of totalities appears as an opportunity to create a new space, beyond extremism, for ethical democracy. A similar approach is found in Rorty's pragmatism, where his utopia is always built on daily work toward social justice, which is not constructed on mystifying assumptions. At times, Rorty himself, in interviews, sounds disillusioned, yet deep down seems to resonate with the coming democracy and the ordinary romanticism of inspiring figures of democratic ethos. The event [*ereignis*] of this coming democracy is described thus: "*This call bears every hope, to be sure, although it remains, in itself, without hope. Not hopeless, in despair, but foreign to the teleology, the hopefulness, and the salut of salvation*" (Derrida 2005: xv). This democracy [to come] is not alien to the other, as it greets them in the form of that exchange of existences within the community, not foreign to adieu, which implies the affirmation of dialogue arriving in peace, nor foreign to social justice because: "Deconstruction is Justice." The coming democracy is built upon a dual physiognomy: heterogeneous and rebellious. In the double meaning of the ellipse: a) as less than one, and b) more than one (Derrida 2005:1). In this explicandum of Rorty's positions within Derrida's variations, it can be concluded that both thinkers, like the discursive formation of the aforementioned philosopher, seek to find a middle path outside the schemas of totalities. It is not surprising that Habermas, in his book "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity," views Adorno, Derrida, and Heidegger within an anti-foundationalist strata, resembling Rorty's positions. Adorno shares similar views with Rorty in his critique of philosophy oriented toward epistemology. In his lectures titled "Against Epistemology: A Meta-Critique," Adorno identifies the source in the Neo-Kantian

extensions of [Erkenntnistheorie], particularly as it manifests in the rigorous phenomenology of Husserl. The attempt to preserve some essence upon which our presuppositions about truth might rest is seen by Adorno, as philosopher James J. Valone notes in his review of the book, as: "*Adorno is not bashful in his considerations of Husserl, placing in a critical light Husserl's assurances that pure phenomenology is not epistemology (...) Adorno regards Husserl's later phenomenology as a betrayal, a form of philosophical treason wherein he slips into a modified Neo-Kantianism*" (Valone 1988: 87). Rorty shares this position, as previously noted, and in sections that elaborate on the extension of Neo-Kantian consensus in philosophy. In his meta-critique of epistemology, Adorno sees the puritanical realism of its identity merely as a reduction to subjective immanence, leading to the thought of non-identity. This implies not merely consolidating the jurisdiction of the concept but, in purifying everything heterogeneous, it silences and fractures all under its jurisdiction. This approach seems to resemble the technocratic bureaucracy of dialectical and historical materialism within the revolutionary Russian empire. Rorty shares similar views. Both thinkers oppose the heliopolitical incandescence emanating through the subject as the eye of the mind and the professional revolutionary as the eye of power. Returning to another crucial point in Adorno's critique, that of fetishization, epistemology is nothing more than the fetishization of knowledge and the installation of absolutist logic, which he describes as: "*Thus it prepares the end of the fetishism of knowledge . The fetishizing spirit becomes its own enemy. And this has seldom been as penetrating or prototypical as in Husserl*" (Adorno 2013: 27).

This fetishization of knowledge and the obsession with its essence is shared by both sides of the philosophical spectrum: the continental and the analytic traditions. Both extensions of the Descartes and Kant canon culminate in the problem of intentionality, which becomes the prison from which they cannot escape. On one side, there is Husserl and his rigorous phenomenology, and on the other, the serious analytic philosophy across the channel. Both are deconstructed by social critique: Adorno's dialectical critique and Rorty's nominalist razor. Adorno sees Husserl's approach as imaginary, stating: "*Husserls qualification of essence settles for just that. He calls it fictional. What he calls 'the atmosphere of absolutely pure imaginability' in the Cartesian Meditations, in which the εἶδος 'floats', was the climate of his entire philosophy, the crystalline kingdom of a cognition which confuses the flight before fleeting existence and the negation of life with the citizenry of its infinity*" (Adorno 2013: 123). Here, it is clear that both Adorno and Rorty criticize the neutral stance of epistemology, which abstracts the social aspect, a crucial factor in

reflecting on the worldliness of the world. As for Rorty's arguments, avoiding repetition, they have already been explored earlier, particularly concerning the hypostatization of universals. The converging point of these disciples of Hegel—one focused on *praxis*, the other on *pragma*—is that, like their master, they both reject essentialism. Adorno, with refined style and finesse, delivers what can metaphorically be called a "knockout" to the Neo-Kantian extension of continental philosophy represented by Husserl. As a result of this knockout, Adorno arrives at the conclusion that "essences remain without essence," while the neo-pragmatist critique concludes that "truth has no essence." The division between essentialists and anti-essentialists lies in the fact that the former offer an ahistorical and esoteric paradise of truth, while the latter provide the civil historicity that only freedom can offer. The former advocate for homogeneity, while the latter stand for heterogeneity. The former promote transcendental imperatives of conduct, while the latter emphasize the ethos of reified responsibility as an imperative for life. The former represent totalities, while the latter represent pluralism. The former support totalitarianisms, while the latter advocate for democracy. The point where Adorno's dictum converges with Rorty's lies in highlighting the social aspect in the constitution of our knowledge. The only difference is that Adorno sees the dialectical tension between society and knowledge, while Rorty turns to nominalism as the only way to affirm historicity without absolutes and to offer an alternative through his discursive pragmatism.

From this earlier discussion, it can be seen that between the empiricism of positivism and brutal rationalism, Rorty offers a third alternative: nominalism. Nominalism is the only way, through affirming context and historicity—or perhaps only a "historicist nominalism"—to provide a more open approach to the conflict, a conflict that has gained the status of epistemological and ontological iconoclasm between universals and particulars, absolutism and relativism. In fact, accepting Deleuze's innovative vocabulary, nominalism affirms the "universal history of contingency" and thus recognizes society and practical layering as crucial in the constitution of 'historical a priori truths' (Foucault 2002). A brief explanatory digression is necessary: at first glance, universality and contingency may appear to be oxymoronic. However, considering the reconstructive power of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy, which resists being confined to the historical vocabulary of philosophy, he offers new discursive and conceptual forms that make sense within new, innovative vocabularies. In this sense, nominalism and universality should be understood as what is being explicated here. Delving into a historical excursion in the constitution of conceptual

tools, it becomes apparent that nominalism, from its inception as a modus operandi, operates by removing universals from ontology (Allen 2021: 88). One only needs to recall Ockham and his razor.[63]

Nominalism has a deep-rooted development in the history of philosophy, and even Adorno calls it: "All philosophies of origins of modern times arose under the auspicious of nominalism" (Adorno 2013: 31). Thus, it is seen as the healthy starting point for modern reflection. However, Adorno does not affirm forms that lead to extreme empiricism, which is closely tied to positivism. The first critique of positivism within the reflective environment of pragmatism is found in Peirce's reflections. He, observing the origin of modern philosophers in the 14th century, argues that this period, viewed more broadly, is the Achilles' heel of empiricism. His observation aligns with Peirce's effort to preserve semantics in relation to the realm of cognition, while still maintaining a connection to the epistemological tradition. Agreeing with Allen's assessment, although presented critically, nominalism is seen as an intellectualism because it opens a dialogue between different sciences, affirming inter- and trans-disciplinarity, well before these concepts became popular in contemporary discourses of scientific conflict. Nominalists seek to avoid the trap of realism, which is synonymous with foundationalism. This trap is precisely explained by Ian Hacking when he notes: "den[ial]', contra realism's affirmation, that Nature is inherently structured in certain ways" (Hacking 1999: 82). The approach of this nominalism, as opposed to realists offering reduced theories for complex problems, provides a networked approach to such issues. Only through nominalist historicity can the conceptual-discursive-pragmatic systems of the sciences be

[63] Note: Perhaps the most suitable metonym for nominalism, discursively, to accurately describe it would be the razor— the razor that cuts through the universalist/transcendent delusion. It should be noted that nominalism in philosophy is closely associated with the scholastic philosopher William Ockham. Hence, the nominalist approach is often linked to Ockham's razor. However, many behaviorist thinkers in epistemology, stifled by foundationalism and positivist empiricism, tend to adopt nominalist approaches. Barry Allen explains that, when confronted with foundationalist constraints, the only position left for Sellars is to represent psychological nominalism. Meanwhile, another of Richard Rorty's philosophical idols, Donald Davidson, opts for linguistic or discursive nominalism, abandoning empiricism and the insistence on experience. Rorty appears to align more with Davidson than with James. As Allen detects, James and Davidson are mirror images of each other: the former is more of an empiricist seeking to escape extreme nominalism, while the latter is more of a nominalist aiming to escape empiricism (Allen 2021:96). Rorty constructs his neo-pragmatism precisely in this nominalist layering, which is discursive, like Davidson's. See: (Allen 2021).

captured, as Kuhn would argue. This extension of nominalism affirms revolutionary approaches rather than a conceptual superimposition, which is inherently ahistorical and unintelligible to contextual practical problems. The connection between nominalists and pragmatists lies in how they do not see a separation between theoretical nodes and practical nodes within the broader system of the sciences. They view these as immersed in forms of life. Perhaps the most beautiful reasoning for nominalism comes from Michel Foucault, when he asserts: "*One needs to be a nominalist: power is not an institution, a structure, or a certain force with which certain people are endowed; it is the name given to a complex strategic relation in a given society*" (Foucault, 1988: 93).[64]

It is evident that in the contemporary context, nominalism is oriented towards the network of beliefs and the sedimentation of power in relation to the creation of regimes of truth. It is, therefore, a critique of self-evident epistemological vocabularies that present through theory notions such as fact, truth, reality, and knowledge. Nominalism, on the contrary, is the idea that concepts function as elements within a network of presuppositions, beliefs, and discursive practices that are internally connected and deeply normative (Smith 2005:7).

When examining Rorty's nominalism, scholars of his work often detect two kinds of nominalism: a) discursive nominalism and b) historicist nominalism. Discursive nominalism has played an important role in his critique of epistemologically oriented philosophy. The roots of this approach are found in his seminal work *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Through Sellars' psychological nominalism and Davidson's linguistic nominalism, Rorty abandons the risks that

[64] Note: Michel Foucault is known for his position as a nominalist throughout his philosophical journey. This is first observed in his attempts at critiquing madness, but it becomes especially evident in his book *The Order of Things*. In addition to the archaeological approach, this book introduces 'historical nominalism' as a response to Platonism, dialectics, cultural historians, and traditional historians (Flynn 2005: 30). In Foucault's 'archaeological' period, nominalism appears in his discussion of 'discursive formations'; the same approach is also found in his genealogical period, through the concept of power. This nominalist stance is evident in his confrontation with the power/knowledge binary. The correlation with various social practices and the challenge he presents through this intellectual map is not to ask questions about the reality of the past but to question the rationality of the present (Godin 1980: 242). See: (Foucault 2001); (Flynn 2005); (Godin 1980).

the concept of experience holds for philosophy. These risks are evident in the field of the philosophy of mind, particularly with intentionalism, which is also found in Husserl's rigorous phenomenology. This type of nominalism helps Rorty lay the groundwork for neo-pragmatism as a form of "discursive pragmatism," where he abandons the concept of experience so significant to classical pragmatism. Furthermore, he draws a complementary trajectory between pragmatism and nominalism, especially the linguistic variant, when he states:

"*I read Sellars and Brandom as pragmatists, because I treat psychological nominalism as a version of the pragmatist doctrine that truth is a matter of the utility of a belief rather than of a relation between pieces of the world and pieces of language. If our awareness of things is always a linguistic affair, if Sellars is right that we cannot check our language against our non-linguisti awareness, then philosophy can never be anything more than a discussion of the utility and compatibility of beliefs—and, more particularly, of the various vocabularies in which those beliefs are formulated"* (Rorty 2021: 165).

For Rorty, knowledge begins not with experience or innate ideas but with discourse, language games, forms of life, and social practices as part of social interaction in the space of reason. Knowledge is not a mere causal transmission initiated by perception. Instead, it is connected to the discursive and argumentative trajectory manifested through the logical space of reason (Allen 2021 :100). When discussing the "space of reason," Rorty asserts: "*that the space of reasons as we find it is also, by and large, the shape of the world. Because most of our beliefs must be true, we can make no sense of the idea that a great gulf might separate the way the world is and the way we describe it*" (Rorty 2021: 186).

Many interpreters see Rorty's discursive nominalism gravitating more towards post-analytic philosophers of language rather than pragmatists. However, such an interpretation seems somewhat overstated, as Rorty seeks to place the tropes of pragmatists within the broader reflective landscape. He appears to understand that his approach cannot step outside the tradition of the linguistic turn to which he belongs. He does not abandon the understanding of experience as seen by the mechanical empiricists he admires, such as the skeptics like Hume, but rather seeks to discard the mix of Descartes and Locke, which culminates in Kant and ends in representationalism.

All forms of life—whether language games or regimes of truth—are tightly linked to history and historicity, as Nietzsche suggests: "A lack of historical sensibility is the original failing of all philosophers" (Nietzsche 1995:16). The historical sensibility Nietzsche demands does not relate

to any variant of historicism but seems to refer more to a form of historicity. This historicity could be viewed as the "Bad Hegel" (Foucault/Gutting), where without the Absolute, history is seen as a contingent network of ontology and processuality, reconstructing life itself. A history that still finds pleasure in small narratives, far from being a "meta-narrative" (Lyotard/Salihu) of modernity. In this context, history will be employed in the sense used by German thinkers in *Historismus*, which evaluates individuality, epochs, culture, and development, as opposed to Popper's interpretation of historical wholes, governed by their own laws, known as historicism (Marquard, 1991, 7). This view of history, described as "alternative inertia" (Dilthey), extracts sequences and moments, devoid of the intoxication with nostalgia associated with the discourse '*historia magistra vitae,*'[65] and instead is grounded in universal history. It seems that the impact of Hegel cannot easily be dismissed; variations within his philosophy are offered by nominalists like Foucault and Rorty. One renounces the Absolute, following only methodologically by integrating Heidegger's variant of historicity, while the other offers a pragmatist reading of Hegel. Every time Hegel is criticized, he seems to wait for our repentance, as Foucault implies when he says: "*We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us*" (Foucault 1972: 235). For Rorty, nothing is more historically embedded than language games. It is in the reflective moment that discursive nominalism intersects with historical nominalism, as both create the foundation for his anti-foundationalist perspective and his neo-pragmatism. As Allen lucidly observes, this is why Rorty uses nominalism and historicism together, not as equivalents but as complementary elements, suggesting that Hegel finishes what Ockham began. For Rorty, the term historicism in a simple reading implies the historical contingency of language games (Allen 2021: 103). He also expresses this idea in the introduction to *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*: "historicist and nominalist culture... one in which such individuals write the table of values, would idealize the proliferation of Freedom over convergence toward an already existing Truth" (Rorty 1989: xvi). It seems Allen's presumption holds not just for Rorty but for all of Hegel's disciples who pursued their anti-foundationalist versions, from Heidegger with the phenomenology of existence as the

[65] Note: For further elaboration and detailed explanation on the prevalence of the classical conception of history, see Chapter 5 in Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, translated by Keith Tribe, Columbia University Press, New York, 2004.

deconstruction of metaphysics, to Adorno with the dialectical tension between society and knowledge as a warning against techno-bureaucratic rationalism, to Derrida with the deconstruction of linguistic engineering, the manifestation of the sign, the affirmation of semiotic difference, and the critique of phallocentrism and logocentrism. Regarding Rorty, nominalism implies anti-essentialism, not the variant where essences exist but cannot be known, but rather the belief that there are no essences—no grammatical fictions like the subject, and no things-in-themselves [Ding an sich] (Allen 2021:103).

The philosophical prospect where the anti-foundationalist perspective is built and takes life lies outside the scene of *prima philosophia*. It must be viewed beyond rigorous horizons and the nearly perfect arrangement over something presumed to be given, something with a foundation that sustains the quest for ultimate truth. Anti-foundationalism seems to begin at the epitaph of traditional philosophy, not as a transcendence but as a healing—a relief from the burden of truth, essence, and foundations. Derrida's assertion that philosophy of a metaphysical-epistemic provenance has relinquished its throne, leaving witnesses to the tragic theater of this great death, is accurate. He emphasizes this in his iconic text *Violence and Metaphysics*, where he asserts:

"That philosophy died yesterday, since Hegel or Marx, Nietzsche, or Heidegger—and philosophy should still wander toward the meaning of its death—or that it has always lived knowing itself to be dying (as is silently confessed in the shadow of the very discourse which declared philosophia perennis); that philosophy died one day, within history, or that it has always fed on its own agony, on the violent way it opens history by opposing itself to nonphilosophy, which is its past and its concern, its death and wellspring; that beyond the death, or dying nature, of philosophy, perhaps even because of it, thought still has a future, or even, as is said today, is still entirely to come because of what philosophy has held in store; or, more strangely still, that the future itself has a future— all these are unanswerable questions. By right of birth, and for one time at least, these are problems put to philosophy as problems philosophy cannot resolve" (Derrida 2001: 97-98).

The questions that metaphysically and epistemologically oriented philosophy has been unable to resolve have narrowed the prospects of philosophy. Derrida's anti-foundationalism offers a new path to grasp post-philosophical horizons at this juncture. The question arises: what is anti-foundationalism? In a basic definition, it refers to a philosophical approach that does not rest on given foundations. In Rorty's perspective, anti-foundationalism would mean reclaiming the discursive ground where foundations have been lost (Laclau 1991: 83). It is within this post-philosophical context that anti-foundationalism becomes politically significant, as it opens the

possibility to see its implications within political terrain. According to Rorty, anti-foundationalism, along with the plurality of narratives and other cultural interventions, has created space for cultural politics. Through anti-foundationalism and a pluralist critical ethos, an intellectual climate emerges where foundations are reconsidered, and the social and political spectrum becomes thinkable (Laclau 1991: 83).

Anti-foundationalism primarily focuses on deconstructing the notion of metaphysical sovereignty in philosophy. It can also be seen networked into political and social projects where plurality, heterogeneity, the interweaving of narratives, and the emphasis on freedom—rather than truth—are affirmed. The slogan of anti-foundationalism might well be, "take care of freedom and the truth will take care of itself" (Rorty). This encapsulates, in a lucid way, the aims of anti-foundationalist philosophers within their discursive registers. In these fields of intellectual engagement, there is no necessity to find juridical registers such as constitution or necessity; instead, there are elliptical forms of expression and syncretism, which open myriad possibilities for manifestation. This therapeutic approach is elliptical because it does not offer a foundational structure for our web of beliefs, whether political or moral. Rather, it sees them as part of the nominal and historical flow of discursive contingencies.

3.3 Post-Philosophical Insight

The Nietzschean moment in Rorty's thought is reserved for the conclusion of his first book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, where he states:

"*If that happens, even philosophers themselves will no longer take seriously the notion of philosophy as providing "foundations" or "justification" for the rest of culture, or adjudicating quaestiones juris about the proper domains of other disciplines. Whichever happens, however, there is no danger of philosophy's "coming to an end"* (Rorty 1979: 394).

This kind of provocation in the traditional discursive culture of philosophy created significant ripples and had wide-reaching repercussions.[66] As Malachowski observes, even Rorty's most loyal

[66] Note: An excerpt from the broader influence, not only within academic circles but also in other significant segments of the so-called "boom culture," as Lotman would call it, is evident in the BBC documentary about Rorty's philosophy titled *"Richard Rorty: The Man Who Killed the Truth."* The exaggeration of this title lies in the fact that no one thoroughly examined Rorty's assertions in an open manner. These assertions, to be fair, are also part of the temporal

interpreters like Brandom were not exempt from this "spell" of discourse. In the introduction to *Rorty and His Critics*, Brandom states, "*In his classic work Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Rorty notoriously prophesized approvingly the 'death of philosophy'*" (Brandom 2000a: x).[67] It seems that excessive loyalty to tradition has led many philosophers to remain committed to its etymological meaning—submission. In this sense, they submit to the established contours, rules, and order that philosophy has dictated, stifling the creative potential to think outside these boundaries. Perhaps this notion of "surrendering," which Deleuze refers to as an "assassination," is vividly captured in a striking passage where he asserts:

"I belong to a generation, one of the last generations, that was more or less assassinated by the history of philosophy. The history of philosophy plays an obvious repressive role in philosophy, it is a properly philosophical Oedipal complex: "All the same, you dare not speak in your own name until you have read this and that, and that on this, and this on that". Many members of my generation never broke free of this; others did by inventing their own particular methods and new rules, a new approach" (Deleuze 1997: 5).

The twenty-five-century-old philosophical tradition is deeply rooted in the metaphysical tree, yet the deconstruction of this tradition serves as a kind of healing from it. In contemporary contexts of development, its vocabulary often lacks relevance, as it exists in the ether of an esoteric fortress. When revisiting tradition, it is important to heed Theodor Adorno's warning in *Negative Dialectics*, that overcoming something does not necessarily lead to improvement, and could result in a worse

---

context in which many continental and analytic philosophers were attempting to establish new transgressive fronts against a tradition that could no longer preserve its former glory. As previously mentioned in the last chapter, through Habermas' dictum, "when the spirit shakes" (Hegel), fortifications are no longer effective, as even they tremble. See: (Jeffries 2003) ; (Habermas 1992).

[67] Note: To be accurate, Brandom provides a more detailed excursus on how Rorty views philosophy. However, the selected passage seems to outline the moment in which Rorty's philosophy has been reduced to a few catchphrases. Brandom notes that Rorty regretted this rhetoric, and it appears that here, Brandom attempts to somewhat exonerate Rorty for his earlier statements. If Rorty's position is properly understood, it is clear that he never completely abandoned philosophy or the importance of certain canonical authors in specific contexts. However, Rorty critiqued the approach of metaphysical rationalism, which sought to make philosophy the "ultimate determinant" (Salihu 2024). He also criticized epistemology for its obsession with self-legitimization and the set of self-evident truths. Brandom also highlights these points, noting that Rorty criticized philosophy as a discipline with epistemology at its core, functioning as a super-science that limits our knowledge by explaining the nature of the relationship between reality and our representations of it. See: (Brandom 2000a).

state than the one being surpassed (Adorno 2007). Referring to tradition, Santiago Zabala offers a provocative and creative interpretation of how Heidegger views it, which aligns closely with Rorty's perspective. Zabala explains that the Latin concept of *traditio* originally meant "surrender" and "handing down." Heidegger chose this term knowing that *tradere* also means "handing over" a message (Zabala 2009: 40). But the root *tradere* comes from *transdare*, formed from *dare* (to give) and *trans* (beyond or over), which Zabala explains signifies a sense of "beyond," implying a transcendence of something. Zabala cites a passage from Heidegger's *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, which is particularly illustrative of Rorty's position on liberation from philosophy with a capital "P." Heidegger states:

"*does not mean somehow pushing it aside and leaving it behind us. Rather all liberation from something is genuine only when it masters and appropriates whatever it is liberating itself from. Liberation from the tradition is an ever new appropriation of its newly recognized strengths."* (Heidegger 1994: 352).

Post-philosophical culture does not aim for the destruction of philosophy but rather opens new pathways. As Zabala puts it, post-philosophy "…serves to appropriate the tradition in order to free ourselves from it" (Zabala 2009: 40). Rorty's efforts center on how new reconfigurations and the 'delegitimization of grand narratives' (Lyotard 1984; Salihu 1997) help reveal tradition as a tool for liberating from it. Post-philosophy marks the moment when tradition can no longer claim self-evident legitimacy, as its reserves of authority are exhausted. It signals the point of this liberation and the arrival of a pluralist ethos.[68]

---

[68] Note: It is important to clarify the distinction between pluralist ethics and the ethics of pluralism, as this removes the traditional misunderstanding that pluralism is synonymous with relativism. Perhaps with some disdain, this formulation could be attributed to the "fundamentalist" realists, and here, realism is not used in its vernacular sense akin to Goethe's phrase 'there is nothing more real than reality,' but rather in the epistemological sense that reduces all our knowledge and truth to correspondence or coherence. However, even within this epistemological direction, transgressive developments are found. Recently, there has been discussion of a new position called 'immanent realism.'

Pluralist ethics first appears within the theoretical context being discussed, with pragmatist philosopher William James, who sees the distinction between monism and pluralism as crucial for philosophy. He continues by asserting, 'Prima facie the world is a pluralist,' and the consequence of this view is that James sees the form of the world through the lens of radical empiricism. James perceives all our relations, connections, and transitions as part of the continuous flow of experience, which echoes the notion of the "stream of consciousness" in Joyce's works. The difference

The question arises: what is post-philosophy, and could it be a variant of anti-philosophy? To answer the second question first, as a gateway to understanding the first, a somewhat cynical answer would be "yes," anti-philosophy is to philosophy what Dadaists are to art or jazz and punk are to music. The concept of anti-philosophy, as developed by philosopher and art critic Boris Groys, bears similarities to the notion of post-philosophy found in the work of Richard Rorty.[69] Groys draws inspiration for the concept of anti-philosophy from the history of art, specifically referencing the idea of anti-art as discussed in Hans Richter's book *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*. Just as anti-art transgressed the limits of traditional art, leading to its transcendence through a secular

---

between traditional empiricism and radical empiricism lies in the latter's emphasis on the creative, imaginative, and selective dimension of our experience. The second dimension of this difference is that James does not justify the duality or internal diad between subject and object in experience, or the distinction between consciousness and content (Bernstein 2010: 57). James' pluralism differs from traditional usage, which is often ambiguous and sometimes takes on a fundamentalist character (Connolly 1995), in that his perspective is both critical and ethical. Absolutism and monism, with their totalizing character, deny both freedom and novelty. The pluralist universe is open (Bernstein, 2010), a key element since when faced with real excesses in the form of possibilities and contingencies as potentialities. Contingencies as potentialities produce (Agamben 2000) both ecstasy and excess in the form of amelioration and tragedy. This leads to the conclusion that James' pluralism aims to engage others critically with differing perspectives, which can be defined as 'engaged pluralism.' There is an 'ethics of cultivation' (Connolly 1995) which demands that pluralism reach a point where it fosters engagement between individuals. This brings the discussion to the next point—the ethics of pluralization by the philosopher William E. Connolly. In his brilliant book of the same title, echoing James but with a longer reach, he similarly calls for the abandonment of the traditional concept of pluralism. He sees the politics of pluralism as being in an immanent tension between pluralism and pluralization. He offers an ethos of critical responsibility that can save pluralism from slipping into the trap of fundamentalism. The ethics of critical responsibility lie outside transcendent forms of ethics and view relationships with others as engaging and transformative. In short, the ethos of pluralization means: "pluralizing culture ethically responsive to constitutive conditions of contemporary life" (Connolly 1995). The pluralist ethos and the pluralization of ethos are the most human-all-too-human ways of facing our ongoing confrontation with contingencies and the burden of life-worlds. See: (James 1907) ; (Bernstein 2010); (Connolly 1995) ; (Agamben 2000).

[69] Note: Thanks are due to philosopher Astrit Salihu, who was the first to emphasize the connection between post-philosophy and anti-philosophy. As part of his reflections on Rorty's post-philosophical culture, he identified the tangents connecting this conceptual matrix with that of anti-philosophy. Some fragmented connections have been made between post-philosophy and anti-philosophy due to the need for this conceptual matrix not to be seen as the Achilles' heel in Rorty's philosophy or *vox clamantis in deserto* but rather as a condition now affirmed by other voices in the global reflexive areal.

metanoia—a radical shift in thinking—anti-philosophers, by turning toward praxis, the ordinary, and local narratives, have deconstructed grand esoteric narratives, thereby liberating themselves from them.

A common thread linking anti-artists and anti-philosophers is that, despite the prefix "anti," which suggests opposition, their acts of resistance have saved their disciplines from the dementia of isolation. Traditionalists have often viewed these creative reinterpretations through an apocalyptic lens, seeing them as signs of the end of art and philosophy. Alternatively, they have been treated with toxic pretension, dismissing these innovative forms of discourse with the criticism that they are neither art nor philosophy. The weight of this reaction has been more pronounced among the latter, as they have experienced the speculative significance of philosophy as monks experience faith. Initially, anti-artists enabled the existence of art by expanding it into new media and forms of expression, and similarly, anti-philosophers, by transcending metaphysically oriented philosophy, have opened new discursive forms, affirming more pluralistic practices and removing the burden of self-evident universal truths. As Groys puts it: "*That is why antiphilosophy — like anti-art — not only does not destroy philosophy as an institution but, rather, offers the only possible path for its survival*" (Groys 2012: xiv).

One definition of the anti-philosopher is that they observe ordinary practices and experiences, which can be interpreted as universal. Their discursive strategies do not aim to remain within the realm of self-evident truths but to open up to a multiplicity of truths. This shift can be marked by a simple formula: the abandonment of the narrow space of logic for a permanent rhizomatic decentering. This approach aligns with Rorty's neo-pragmatism, which affirms the ordinary and emphasizes the primacy of practice over theory. Post-philosophical culture, like anti-philosophy, seeks to highlight that it is not theory that precedes and dictates practice. Instead, *poiesis* and *praxis*, with their historical contingencies, determine theory. Boris Groys, like Deleuze before him, belongs to a tradition of thinkers attempting to rewrite traditional philosophical vocabularies. He uses universal and transcendental terms within his conceptual framework in ways that do not align with traditional usage. While these concepts, in their classical reading, are problematic for Rorty, Groys' application of them would likely be acceptable to him. A shared point between anti-philosophy and post-philosophy lies in the democratization of philosophy, as expressed by both Rorty and Groys:

"The modern Western "culture critic" feels free to comment on anything at all. He is a prefiguration of the all-purpose intellectual of a post-Philosophical culture, the philosopher who has abandoned pretensions to Philosophy." (Rorty 1982: xi).

And:

"A traditional philosopher is like a traditional artist: an artisan producing texts. An antiphilosopher is like a contemporary art curator: he contextualizes objects and texts instead of producing them. Production of philosophy can be interpreted as an extraordinary, mysterious, 'poetic' process that is accessible only to a chosen few. Antiphilosophy does not abolish philosophical metanoia, but rather democratizes it" (Groys 2012: xiii).

The 'democratization of philosophy' should not be taken literally; this concept, if it must be termed so, implies the introduction previously discussed. It suggests moving away from fixed vocabularies and entering the phase of redescribing current vocabularies—from the pretension of production to the contextualization of discourse. In short, this means philosophy with a small *p*. From the transcendental, ahistorical homogeneity to the historical, heterogeneous contextualization. Another point where the concept of post-philosophy aligns with anti-philosophy is that both projects mark the final stage in the evolution of philosophy:

"*In a post-Philosophical culture it would be clear that that is all that philosophy can be"* (Rorty 1982: xi).

And:

"*Thus, one often tends to think that antiphilosophy is only a temporary illness of philosophy that will be overcome by the future return of great, robust, vital philosophical production. However, it seems to me that this hope is doomed to remain forever futile, because antiphilosophy is the final, absolute stage of philosophy"* (Groys 2012: xiii).

The post-philosophical culture and the anti-philosophical variant operate within post-metaphysical discursive strategies, closely tied to the process of democratization. A pluralist ethos is central to these strategies, and the rhizomatic node where these heterogeneous manifestations of reflective instances spread is their anti-essentialism. These strategies do not believe that once the mask of humanity is removed, its essence will be revealed. Rather, in a more radical version, they affirm Pierre Klossowski's thesis that after removing one mask, another appears, and so on. It is a continuous return of Nietzsche's masks (Klossowski 2005). Klossowski's call, within the Nietzschean registers, affirms an 'apocryphal humanism' (Starčević 2015: 21-38), a humanism that is both pre-metaphysical and post-metaphysical. The 'ism' of metaphysical humanism, in its quest for a primordial essence of humanity, has ended up transforming that human into the

gatekeeper of Auschwitz and the Gulag (Lyotard 1992). Thus, 'apocryphal humanism' highlights our all-too-human aspects, where there is no need for a transcendent authority to face our immanent challenges. Gombrowicz's human, with a lowercase 'h', confronting recursive powers, seeks to show that humans are actors (Goffman 1956) in the *mise-en-scène* of everyday life. In the vertigo between birth and death that is called human life, there is nothing but the practices of everyday life (de Certeau 1980) or, in the American variant, the romanticism of 'ordinary life' (Cavell 1994). In an ontological framework, Heidegger would describe this as 'average everydayness.' Finding an essence would mean entering the prison of the given and the arche, resulting in the loss of freedom. Post-philosophers and anti-essentialists emphasize not speculative horizons but practical, current ones. As Brandom states: "*In fact, Rorty sees philosophy as having an absolutely crucial cultural role to play in the current situation—a role far more significant than that envisaged by most analytic philosophers*" (Brandom 2000a: x). In other words, only post-philosophical culture, through social ontologies, enables philosophy to play an active role, complementing democracy in offering a more human, all-too-human version of the manifesto for improvement (Sloterdijk 2013: 423).[70]

After the explanation of the second question, it is time to break down what constitutes post-philosophical culture. Initially, it can be said that post-philosophical culture begins precisely when the grand narratives of modernity collapse, making postmodernism, as a philosophy, post-

[70] Note: Peter Sloterdijk, in his book *You Must Change Your Life: On Anthropotechnics*, defines Rorty's effort to interpret the discursive plane and political practice in America as a manifesto of improvement, stating: "*It is in this language that Rorty formulated the most intense manifesto of the late twentieth century for a renaissance of the idea of world improvement, drawing on the American civil religion of Whitman and Dewey*" (Sloterdijk 2013).

However, according to Sloterdijk and Rorty's later writings, following the populisms of the "Iron Age" and the "Golden Age," this approach appears as a liberal utopia. In this post-heroic *thanato-politics*, while Sloterdijk remains reserved, he applauds Rorty's approach, which through inspiring thought, specifically its romantic aspect, offers hope for improvement and responds to polarizing extremes by advocating for a middle path. Sloterdijk sees Rorty's perspective as crucial in this "El-Dorado" of the age of extremists. Many contemporary writings, in fact, highlight Rorty's prophetic analysis regarding what would unfold in the American political landscape after September 11, 2001. See: (Sloterdijk 2013); (Rorty 1999).

philosophical (Rorty 1990: 202),[71] in the sense that it turns towards small local narratives, affirms heterogeneity and pluralism, and blends philosophy and non-philosophy into the simplicity of everyday life. In what way does postmodernism intersect with post-philosophy? Both oppose the juridical aspect embedded in the modern project and its obsession with legitimating knowledge and science through epistemological machinery. The second complementing the first is the monomania with 'the self' in the sense of narratives legitimizing themselves (Lyotard 1992: 32) or self-evident truths (Rorty 1982). This intention, perhaps described as futurological in modernity and its legitimacy in the future rather than the present, is elegantly explained by philosopher Salihu when referring to Lyotard's philosophy: "Lyotard does not consider these narratives of modern philosophy as myths because they do not seek legitimacy in the act of first foundation but instead project everything into the 'future,' into the 'Idea that is to be realized'" (Salihu 2009: 340). These discursive exhibitions in futurology and eschatology are also dismissed by Rorty, who emphasizes historical contingencies and the perspectivism of the pluralist ethos. These normativities, projected into the future, are merely a discursive arsenal that can lead to totalitarianism. However, there is a difference that Rorty highlights between himself and Lyotard, which may be fruitful in understanding the context of the discussion. Rorty, in a response to Lyotard's text on his provocative formulation of 'postmodern bourgeois liberalism,' states that while he (Rorty) agrees with Lyotard in abandoning meta-narratives, the difference lies in the need to edify first-order

[71] Note: For accuracy, in one of his interviews, Rorty mentions that the term "postmodernism" has little value. He sees that the term has devalued and failed to deliver on its original promise. Rorty expresses his view on postmodernism in the interview as follows:

"*I cannot find any good use for the term postmodernism. Lyotard's book The Postmodern Condition did not succeed in giving the term a useful sense, nor have later attempts. If one reads ten books with postmodern in the title one will emerge with at least five or six different meanings for that flexible term. I would prefer to talk about Foucault, Derrida, and the rest individually, rather than trying to lump them together as representatives of something called postmodern philosophy. I have no idea what is supposed to make a painting, or a novel, or a political attitude, "postmodern."* " (Rorty 2006 95).

In his later years, it appears that Rorty harbored some resentment toward the cultural left in America, seeing them merely as spectators in the grand spectacle of theoretical departments. He expresses this indignation in his book *Achieving Our Country*, where he notes that he aligns with a leftist tradition deriving from the Frankfurt School, not from the "libidinal left." Despite this, he still enjoys respect as a philosopher from voices within this spectrum. See: (Rorty 2006); (Rorty 1999).

narratives (Rorty 1990; 211-12). This process of edification, as mentioned earlier, aligns with that romantic impetus for improvement, which Rorty inherits from the democratic ethos of Whitman and Dewey. This arises as a consequence of Rorty being one of the most vibrant debaters in contemporary philosophy, engaging with the entire philosophical spectrum, whether analytic or continental. It seems he expresses a certain distrust towards the anarcho-liberalism of that period in Lyotard's thought. Although, at first glance, there may appear to be divergences between these thinkers, both share an internal drive for improvement and a distrust of eschatological projects or discursive altars. This can be seen in the preface to the Albanian edition of *The Postmodern Condition*, where, despite the concept of 'ontological emptiness,' Lyotard is not in the spectrum of the 'blind positivity of delegitimation' (Salihu 2009: 353). Lyotard himself expresses: "I believe that it is up to us to embrace the truth of our condition's emptiness: it opens (?) in confrontation with the act that must become work" (Lyotard 1996). Abandoning meta-narratives and the epistemico-metaphysical machinery of legitimacy leads to 'cultural politics,' a term synonymous with Rorty's social ontology, which connects to the post-philosophical condition.

From what has been discussed, it is clear that the substrate of post-philosophy is the inherent critique of the metaphysical-epistemological binary. The first point that distinguishes philosophy in this context is the rejection of the binary nature of truth: 1. The first level: truth-as-correspondence-with-reality, and 2. the second level: truth-as-something-that-is-good-to-believe. This critique is constructed on the premise that traditional philosophy has become lost within its academic métier. These vocabularies, as mentioned earlier, represent the final sigh of traditional philosophers who, through positivist temporality, use epistemology and logic to solve linguistic crosswords. All these sighs function to reconfigure the old nostalgia for philosophy with a capital P, inherited from Platonism in philosophy. These reconfigurations are in sync with final vocabularies and a monolithic approach that is totalizing, placing one within a predetermined register. Against this, Rorty's neo-pragmatism, as well as the post-philosophical context, are dismissive, as he himself states:

"*The urge to make philosophy into Philosophy is to make it the search for some final vocabulary, which can somehow be known in advance to be the common core, the truth of, all the other vocabularies which might be advanced in its place. This is the urge which the pragmatist thinks should be repressed, and which a post-Philosophical culture would have succeeded in repressing*" (Rorty 1982: xlii).

As Rorty views it, post-philosophy as the democratization of philosophy aligns with his belief that the hegemony of philosophy over culture should end. Hence, post-philosophical culture is: "neither the priests nor the physicists, nor the poets nor the Party were thought of as more 'rational,' or more 'scientific' or 'deeper' than another" (Rorty 1982: xxxviii). This reveals the coordination of various registers to confront life, with no transcendent criterion for navigating its labyrinth.

Post-philosophical culture exists outside the rigid schematism of the theoretical realm; it is an entry into cultural and political wandering. Abandoning the static position of philosopher and philosophy is the bridge to open cultural forms, where debate is not undermined by epistemological chewing . As Bernstein puts it: "... in the post-philosophical world – both private and public values are contingent features of our lives and cannot be rationally established by appeal to any more fundamental principle" (Bernstein 2020: 139). Social hope, non-theoretical solidarity, and democracy form the triptych of post-metaphysical and post-philosophical culture.[72] Post-metaphysical culture complements the post-philosophical liberal culture, as both aim to abandon the intrinsic nature of reality and promote a classless, casteless, egalitarian society (Mendieta 2006: xxix). This implies creating a space outside rigid logic that helps contribute to the strengthening of democratic society.

At times, the process of democratizing philosophy may seem utopian, especially considering the academic "Stalinism" in which it operates, to borrow Bloom's phrase, making such changes seem distant. In the post-philosophical context, as the final philosophical stage, there remains the

[72] Note: It is well understood that the phrase characterizing Rorty's philosophy is "democracy before philosophy." For Rorty, democracy is closely linked to post-philosophical culture, as Mendieta points out:

"*Rorty's democracy is indeed that of Thomas Jefferson, Walt Whitman, John Dewey, James Baldwin, and principally, I would say, that of Abraham Lincoln. In fact, Lincoln both embodies and illustrates Rorty's democratic pragmatism and postphilosophical politics. For Lincoln transformed America by regrounding it in a new narrative, a new proposition*" (Mendieta 2006: xxix).

Democratic pragmatism and post-philosophical culture are interwoven, not as part of a spectator terrain, but as affirmations of action. However, the version of democracy Rorty offers can be found within his discursive neo-pragmatism. In this version of democracy, dialogue is permanent and unending, where the possibility of improvement cannot be halted. A similar idea is present in Hans Jonas's imperative of responsibility, which serves as an imperative for life. Both thinkers, one through ethics and the other through pragmatism, aim to revitalize hope. See: Mendieta 2006); (Sloterdijk 2013); (Jonas 1984).

‘scar of the philosopher’ with which many still identify, much like Ulysses with his scar. A brief excursus is necessary here, beginning with the premises raised by renowned literary theorist Erich Auerbach in his book *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Thought*. In his analysis of Ulysses’ scar, Auerbach explains how, after his long journey, Ulysses returns home, unrecognized even by his maidservant. She washes his feet according to the tradition of ancient Greece when unknown guests entered the house. However, at one point, she notices a scar from Ulysses’ childhood, recognizing him by this mark, even though he attempts to remain in the shadows (Auerbach 2003: 1). Similarly, contemporary philosophers may wander through concepts, create new vocabularies, and develop more democratic forms of expression, but they are still betrayed by the philosopher’s mark. Despite attempting, like Ulysses, to distance themselves from the heliopolitical machinery, they are still identified as philosophers. Perhaps being a philosopher, within the late Heideggerian worldview, as Rorty observed, no longer distinguishes between poetry, science, or philosophy, as the visions of these distinctions have become outdated (Rorty 2006: 21). The philosopher should now be engaged in the process of thinking, as Heidegger suggests, but the only intervention needed is to remove the nostalgia for the glorified Greek past found in his work. Instead, new forms of expression on earth should be affirmed, revitalizing hope. Post-philosophy affirms a “ready-made” philosophy (Groys) or a philosophy of difference: a post-metaphysical difference rather than a metaphysical dichotomy. Immersing oneself in new vocabularies directs one toward the permanent tension between the ‘infinite demand’ (Critchley 2007) and the ‘infinite resignation’ (Thacker 2018), between public reform and private irony, between Apollo and Dionysus. There is no room for choosing between them, as both are integral parts of the tension that drives post-philosophical culture. Therefore, the post-philosophical endeavor must be viewed through these lenses. As Rorty also notes, post-philosophy in liberal culture must continue the human-all-too-human conversation with humanity (Rorty 2006: 27), as the only way to revitalize hope as a response to the absence of absence (Sloterdijk 2016; van Tuinen 2010: 58) of homo-escapists (Starčević 2013,) in the post-heroic age of Thanatos.

4. CONTINGENCY

4.1 Contingency: Break On Through (To Contingency)

"Contingency is amply a truth too awful for the philosopher to bear"

Keith Ansell-Pearson

If a devotee of rock music were to encounter the title of this chapter, they might immediately trace it back to The Doors and their song "Break on Through (To the Other Side)". The refrain issues a heretical incantation, echoing Ginsberg's primal howl, steeped in its own parable, utilizing conceptual tools that resonate the gestures of anti-foundationalist philosophy. The imperative of the song manifests into a mantra of 'libertine' delirium, the Freudian life drive in the form of an erotic excess: "Break on through to the other side". Discursively, this rupture aligns with Michel Foucault's reflection on Maurice Blanchot: "thought from the other side."

The similarity between these spheres, in Sloterdijk's sense of using, lies in the fact that counterculture manifests as an exit from the mainstream and traditional cultural norms, similar to how anti-foundationalists, through contingency, attempt to offer new paths beyond the "security" of metaphysical-epistemic certainties. Both efforts can be understood through the dictum of Damo Suzuki, singer of the band Can, who asserts: 'if you wish to find truth ... you must break from tradition.' An inherent tension exists when discussing freedom within post-Hegelian frameworks, as it is consistently tied to contingency. The culmination of freedom appears to always involve a movement toward contingency. There is a symbiotic relationship between philosophers focused on freedom and the concept of contingency. From the outset, this work interprets contingency in a dual sense: selfhood as the 'non-constitution of self from self', and resonating under the timbre of the Dionysian flute, existence is laid bare, in its raw immediacy as 'existence as it is' (*telle et rinisi*) (Anders 2009: 281). The tension, articulated as a distinction between freedom and contingency, creates a bridge between the realm of rock or alternative music—rooted in its vernacular idiom—and the domain of post-philosophical culture. These spheres converge through a conception of freedom that consistently traverse the terrain of contingency.

The post-metaphysical context established here affirms a relational ontology, or what Nobel Prize-winning chemist Illya Prigogine terms the 'ontology of becoming' (Prigogine 1981). Contingency, as a fundamental component of this constellation—what is increasingly referred to

as a complex theoretical network—can no longer be reduced to the language of predetermined concepts. Instead, it becomes part of human reflection on what is emerging and in the process of becoming. Thus, the challenge of contingency is inextricably linked to becoming, as determinisms, from Plato onward, have been centered on affirming being. Adorno's elaboration encapsulates this insight: "*No matter where contingency arises, it gives the lie to the universal mastery of spirit, its identity with matter*" (Adorno 2013: 83). Adorno's insights provide a new framework for understanding the issue of contingency. Affirmatively, contingency stands as the antagonist to pure a priori forms. The impulses found in 'Negative Dialectics' are markers for capturing this nuanced approach. The 'problem of contingency' serves, on one hand, as a negational marker of philosophy founded on the metaphysical-epistemological binary, while on the other hand, this critique ensures the survival of this tradition within the reflective sphere. Only through the acknowledgment of this problem can philosophers focused on metaphysics and epistemology legitimize their arguments. The 'problem of contingency' is closely linked to thinkers of negation, who are critical of dichotomies and dialectics. This reflective network begins with Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, extending through the work of their philosophical successors. Derrida emphasizes the tension within the 'problem of contingency' by referencing Kierkegaard, particularly the agony of decision and indecision, captured by his statement: 'the instant of decision is madness' (Kierkegaard).[73] This formulation, which continually maintains hesitation toward decision-making, is manifested in Derrida's discourse as the space between possibility and impossibility. It is precisely in this zone—between possibility and impossibility, the realm of radical potentiality—that contingency resides. This agonistic process reaches what is termed perfect potentiality, which, through Agamben's lens, becomes: 'absolute contingency,' or *contingentia absoluta* (Agamben 2000). Contingency, as an expression of potentiality, is consistently embodied both narratively and

[73] Note: In his text *"A Moment of Madness: Derrida's Kierkegaard,"* Geoffrey Bennington provides a significant explanation regarding Derrida's engagement with Kierkegaard. Bennington suggests that the epigraph Derrida uses is presented in an elliptical form, as something unfinished, aligning with Derrida's lecture on madness in the context of Michel Foucault's philosophy. This epigraph relates to Derrida's positions and simultaneously functions as his 'signature in discourse.' The epigraph, often cited in various works and by scholars of Derrida, appears as a slogan. For further exploration of this issue, see: (Bennington 2011). A similar explanation can also be found in (Critchely 1999. Derrida's first use of this idea can be found in: (Derrida 2001).

conceptually in Herman Melville's[74] character Bartleby the Scrivener, encapsulated in his phrase: 'I would prefer not to.'

Returning to the thematic exploration of the problem of contingency, this theme appears inherently within philosophical efforts to arrive at a secure system in the pursuit of truth. The only way traditional philosophers could abandon contingency, which was inherent in their thought, was to construct a discursive framework supported by four secular pillars: certainty, objectivity, essence, and foundation. It seems that whenever philosophy affirmsits reign, contingency is there to oppose it. From Adorno's perspective, contingency always manifests when foundationalist philosophy aligns itself with the claim to lordship. Using Weiner's conceptual tools, this proposition can be simplified as: a) the deterministic universe resembles theoria in Rorty's critique, which always pursues the extraordinary and affirms the intelligible and a-historical as its argumentative domain; b) the contingent universe, like praxis and pragma, will always be oriented toward context because that is where it resides. As Prigogine states: "*our everyday experience suggests that we should prefer the contingent universe*" (Prigogine 2000). The very fate of reflection appears to be intertwined with this dialectic. Prima philosophia, as the spirit of truth manifested in the ancient Greek maxim *bios theoretikos* and the Latin *homo intellectus*, is

[74] Note: Herman Melville belongs to the cohort of American writers who embody the essence of social democracy, or, in other words, the legacy of the American democrat. Melville's literary approach, much like Richard Rorty's philosophical one, merges critiques of 'metaphysical villains' with the affirmation of that Whitmanesque trope of 'democratic vistas.' Melville represents an inspiring literary figure, where through the narrative voice, he exposes social anomalies to encourage their detection and improvement, thus further democratizing society without descending into 'the mass as the annihilation of society,' as Baudrillard puts it. In line with the argument for the parliament of literature, literary figures, through their sensitivity, raise awareness about the fields of human enterprise more effectively than certain theoretical frameworks. The narrative voice, which, according to Blanchot, lies between the author and the character in literature, brings awareness to the 'ethical laboratory' (Paul Ricoeur), aiming for the life imperative, which means the continuous improvement of life itself. The formula mentioned above has further explanations provided by philosophers and theorists such as Gilles Deleuze regarding 'suture' and contingency. The interpretation of the aspect of social poetry, which is intricately linked to contingency, is especially relevant. Rorty's formula for affirming social poetry aligns with this effort. It seems that Rorty's narrative voice translates into his formula: democracy before philosophy. For more on the concept of the narrative voice, see: (Blanchot 2003). For essays on Melville's stories, see: (Deleuze 1997); (Agamben 2000). For additional references, see: (Ricoeur 1992); (Rorty 2022).

complemented by contingency, which it cannot manage and thus seeks to sever all ties with, condemning it to silence. Philosophy must enact a 'great exclusion' to safeguard its primacy and claim to purity, as Adorno puts it: "*As the claim to be a priori is interpreted more rigorously, less corresponds to it and more gets stuck in the realm of chance . Hence, the universal lordship of spirit always also includes its own resignation*" (Adorno 2013: 83).

The citadel of *prima philosophia*, by excluding contingency, has also removed the vital impulse of being "human, all too human." The life-centered impulse enables the emergence of social ontology as a guide for democratic existence, vital for the realm of abstract action, to avoid disconnecting from practical sentiment and creative beauty, otherwise risking becoming an exclusionary machine. Like philosophy, democratic society cannot construct any horizon beyond contingency. Thus, contingency continually returns to challenge and undermine theoretical constructs, rendering them *caput mortuum* in comparison. In the post-metaphysical context, democracy and pluralism are sustained through contingency, as outlined by Vattimo, who argues that contingency supports the process of democratization. Ernesto Laclau expresses it succinctly: "*The only democratic society is one which permanently shows the contingency of its own foundations – in our terms, permanently keeps open the gap between the ethical moment and the normative order* " (Laclau 2000:86).

Beyond democratic horizons, the post-metaphysical context affirms an opening—a "break on through"—through contingency, balancing nominalist and historicist aspects, akin to Hegel, but without his grand system. Contingency manifests in those empirical variables that are nominal but can only be grasped through a historicist approach (Laclau 2000: 201). This formula is also found in Rorty's contingentism, which intersects nominalism and historicism. Through the affirmation of contingency, Rorty enables the emergence of what can be called 'nominalist historicism.' In a retrospective view of philosophy, contingency has always manifested itself in the tension between being and non-being, or between occurrence and non-occurrence (Agamben, 2000). This interpretive space links contingency with nominalism, tracing back to the first nominalist philosopher, Duns Scotus,[75] and his concept of *Haecceitas*, or in simple terms, *this-now-hereness*.

[75] Note: The same perspective on Duns Scotus's nominalism is shared by Safranski and Agamben, who both view him as a proto-nominalist laying the groundwork for other thinkers, even though his approach would only be seriously taken up in contemporary philosophy. Safranski suggests that, like contemporary nominalists, Duns Scotus presents

In this conceptual framework, contingency is embodied as the unrepeatable moment, or *kairos*. The diad of contingency and nominalism consistently appears through historicism. Duns Scotus offers a significant definition that may serve as a guide for understanding this diad, stating: "*By contingent....I mean not something that is nor necessary or eternal, bur something whose opposite could have happened in the very moment in which it happened*" (Scotus).[76]

The history of contingency has often been perceived by humanity as a burden beyond its capacity to bear (Heilbroner 1994: 77). The attempts, whether conceptual or techno-scientific, to achieve absolute certainty have remained nothing more than a rhetorical flourish in human history. As Bergson foresaw in his *magnum opus Creative Evolution*, science itself has become contingent.

Rorty stands as one of the unique voices in philosophy who has grasped this impulse, making contingency an integral part of his reflection. Perhaps one of the central components of his fourfold framework is contingency. He sees it as an essential part of his nominalist-historicist approach, emphasizing the 'universal history of contingency,' which manifests in language, selfhood, and community. In an interview, he explicitly and, in a somewhat banal register, defines it as follows:

"*Seeing yourself as an historical contingency is the opposite of seeing yourself as linked to something fateful (...) Thinking of yourself as a contingency means thinking of what matters most to you as mattering most for no deep reason, but simply due to the kind of parents you happened to have, the kind of society you grew up in, and so on*" (Rorty 2006: 30).

---

a phenomenological division similar to Husserl's distinction between *noesis* and *noema*, where concepts are regarded as nothing more than names or *noema*. This can be seen across a wide spectrum of thinkers, from Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Derrida, and Foucault to Rorty.

[76] Note: The citation here is taken from Agamben's essay "Bartleby, or On Contingency," and we have left it as is, due to its profane tone and because it aligns more effectively with the text. However, for the sake of academic correctness and discipline, the original passage from Duns Scotus's *Ordinatio*, Book I, Distinction 2, is also provided, where he states: "*I do not call here "contingent" everything that is not necessary or not eternal; instead I refer something opposite of which is possible even at the very moment it actually exists or occurs.*"

It remains unclear whether this modification was intentional by Agamben or the translator, given the limited proficiency in Italian and Latin, making it difficult to fully pursue this linguistic expedition. However, Agamben's phrasing resonates with the text, and thus it has been retained. A more detailed linguistic investigation may be undertaken in an expanded version of this dissertation. For the English translation of this citation, reference has been made to the following work: (Marrone 1996).

Contingency, along with irony, belongs to the private sphere, while social poetry and solidarity belong to the public sphere. However, this division is not a dichotomy but reflects a difference in the Heideggerian sense. In the tension between the two, there is an affirmative vibration of life, along with the challenge of sustaining it. Rorty seeks to reveal the contingency of our beliefs, whether moral or political, and emphasizes the historical situating of these beliefs as something that does not lead to ethical relativism (Mendieta 2006: xii). On the contrary, he affirms an ethics without metaphysics, or what Stout calls an "ethics after Babel" (Stout 1988)—an ethics of sentiment that, through contingency, emphasizes its pluralism.

There are three integrated moments essential for grasping contingency in Rorty's thought: a) contingency in language, which highlights its reifying aspect, viewing concepts as merely words derived from the contours of our contingent history; b) the dimension of selfhood, where contingency manifests in creative powers; and c) the community, as a form of immanent democratization, necessary for challenging our foundations. This integrative process opens the door to understanding post-philosophical culture, which is anti-foundationalist and connected to the revival of intellectual culture in contrast to the pure academic specialization that often prevails. The philosopher, as an intellectual, stands against the current trend found in many academic settings, where one is reduced to a narrow specialist of a *Fach*.

To conclude, Keith Ansell Pearson provides an insightful interpretation of the relationship between contingency and philosophy, diving into the depths of Delos, in a Heraclitean manner, to expose the inconsistency in the narrative of philosophy as a specialized field. He offers a monumental formulation of this relationship, stating: "Contingency is amply a truth too awful for the philosopher to bear" (Pearson 1997: 155). This formula encapsulates the desideratum of prima philosophia, silencing it and pushing it toward its annihilation (contingency). Thus, the affirmation of contingency can easily be grasped through the phonetic-sonoristic image of "break on through (...) to the other side."

4.2 The Contingency of Language

In a discursive exploration of his theoretical fate, philosopher Raymond Geuss eloquently elaborates on the concept of *amor fati* in a universe closely tied to contingency. He expresses this connection as follows: "if one wants to understand our world it is best to approach it through the

late-ancient idea that tuchē—contingency—rules all" (Guess 2022: 13). The universe, in its entirety, is a manifestation of contingent pathways, or as he suggests, "perhaps the cosmos as a whole is merely an abstract system of formal relations, flickering randomly in and out of existence" (Guess 2022: 13). From a theoretical standpoint, through the lens of academic heterotopias, contingency affirms a 'rule to follow' (Wittgenstein) in relation to the worldhood of the world (Heidegger). From a philosophical and social anthropology perspective, Ernest Gellner, in his book *Plough, Sword, and Book: The Structure of Human History*, deconstructs what he terms a naive and myopic reading by language theorists who treat all discursive actions as experiential acts. He posits that much of what people say is not necessarily tied to the concept of nature. In this claim, Gellner traces the historical development of language, demonstrating its contingent character from the beginning. He affirms that language, in its contingent nature, functions as a ritual, stating: "Language is not merely rooted in ritual; it is a ritual. Grammar is the set of rules of a ritual performance. Language is the most pervasive ritual activity" (Gellner 1989: 51). Gellner, much like Rorty, under the influence of Wittgenstein's critique of private language, views language as part of language games and social interaction. In short, a particular language game cannot be separated from or viewed apart from its specific social practices. This suggests that language cannot be subjected to a theoretical authority. In Gellner's theoretical extract, one can observe the secular attitude of Rorty, who attempts to de-divinize language, a point that will be revisited later in this work. Contingency in language aligns with the efforts to liberate it from the metaphysical structures that encapsulated epistemology, ethics, and politics (Edwards 1990: 217). Contingency in language seeks, through a combination of historicism and nominalism, to liberate thought from singular vocabularies or the overarching meta-linguistic framework. Pierre Guiraud, through a semiological lens, provides an intriguing analysis of meta-linguistics, which functions to guide signs into codes, thereby giving them meaning (Guiraud 1983: 12). Simply put, meta-language attempts to create singular philosophical vocabularies, trapping individuals within a semantic framework from which escape is impossible. This attempt to place language within natural schemes and, consequently, to claim a kind of epistemological-semantic objectivity over it, is a dangerous trend. This engulfing tendency is also addressed by linguist Louis Hjelmslev, who warns against the absence of a clear demarcation between the philosophy of language and the theory of language, urging instead that they be seen as complementary. He offers a critical view toward language theorists who base their approach on the philosophy of language, reducing language to

either logic or psychologism, thereby denying its multi-dimensionality. According to Hjelmslev, these two discursive coordinates have created a central problem, making a theory of language impossible. The pretentious attitude of treating language as property prevents a full appreciation of its horizons. By placing language in an entirely a-historical and intelligible realm, it becomes confined to laboratories accessible only to experts. This critical stance in Hjelmslev's approach is aligned with the views of philosopher of language Donald Davidson, a key figure for Rorty. Davidson criticizes the patronizing approach of philosophers toward language, stating that:

"*There is no such thing as a language, not if a language is anything like what philosophers, at least, have supposed. There is therefore no such thing to be learned or mastered. We must give up the idea of a clearly defined shared structure which language users master and then apply to cases . . . We should give up the attempt to illuminate how we communicate by apped to conventions*" (Davidson 1989: 466).

This epigraph from Davidson is important for understanding the critique of meta-linguistic approaches. At the same time, within this theoretical gesture, the affirmation of contingency in language is made explicit. Davidson's critique is aimed at the 'meta-vocabularies' found in the disciplinary matrix of analytic philosophy, which hide behind the labels of realism or anti-realism, but ultimately serve a kind of representationalism in language. Highlighting the contingency of language means recognizing that even philosophical activities are situated within the groundlessness of historical contingencies. As Rorty notes: "... philosophy as a subject ... has varied and will continue to vary in unpredictable ways depending upon contingencies" (Rorty 1979: 390-392). Throughout the development of culture, religion, science, and philosophy, new metaphors have emerged due to historical contingencies, creating new zones for reflection and critique while gaining support in their respective circles. In Rorty's terms, these new zones or metaphors can be described as 'abnormal' in the Kuhnian sense. These new metaphors tend to replace a fading tradition, yet they often face barriers, being denied originality or dismissed as neither 'genius' nor 'serious' enough to be part of the philosophical canon. However, these new expressions consistently open new pathways in philosophy (Bernstein 1992: 20). The affirmation of these new metaphors is thus in sync with contingency in language, which seeks to open and form new spheres where new vocabularies can manifest. Contingency is an inherent part of philosophical development, as well as cultural and scientific advancement. This dependence on contingencies helps foster the human-all-too-human development of philosophy and thought. Thinking cannot be confined to a temple of absurdity fed by self-satisfaction stemming from hubris

within the realm of reflection. In Rorty's philosophical view, new metaphors or paradigms are enabled by philosophy's dependence on contingencies. As Bernstein explains: "The crucial point for Rorty is to realize that a philosophical paradigm does not displace a former one because it can better formulate the legitimate problems of a prior paradigm; rather, because of a set of historical contingencies, it nudges the former paradigm aside" (Bernstein 1992: 20). Rorty seems to see that new paradigms in thought do not aim to reformulate old problems but rather to push the old paradigms out of the game. While this perspective is partly in agreement with Bernstein, Rorty always emphasizes the importance of transgression as a conceptual tool. By making contingency an integral part of his thinking, he consistently accepts the possibility of transgression. It can be freely said that certain philosophers who have reflected on the contingencies of life and history—such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Adorno, and Derrida—have enabled the view of philosophy as what Sloterdijk would call an 'exercise in existence.' From this, it becomes clear that reality and language are inseparable. Hence, there cannot be a strictly adequate representation that could be imposed through an epistemological apparatus or an 'algorithmic mind' (Bernstein 2010). Rorty encapsulates this sentiment simply: "*The world does not speak, we speak*" (Rorty 1989).[77]

---

[77] Note: In this passage, the influence of Martin Heidegger on Rorty's philosophy is evident, particularly as Rorty borrows the concept of the world from Heidegger. If one seeks to delve into the depths of Heidegger's notion of the world, despite the centrality of temporality in his reflections, the deciphering of this concept is only achieved by focusing on its spatial aspect. In his magnum opus, *Being and Time*, Heidegger emphasizes the importance of Dasein's spatiality, always seeing it in relation to being-in-the-world (Zahavi 2019: 75). The significance of being-in-the-world lies in two directions: first, it demystifies and dismantles the notion of a world detached from human existence, instead drawing individuals into it and making them aware of their own finitudes. Thus, the essence of being-in-the-world is grasped only through the unravelling of this mystery, which unfolds from its ambivalent character. On one level, it is marked as 'innan' (wohnen), which means to live or residue, and on another, it is signified as 'habitare' (sich aufhalten), meaning to dwell as a result of being, in proximity to the world as something (heimlich) familiar, indicating care and protection. This care is contrasted with the feeling of being abandoned, silent, and strange, or unfamiliar (unheimlich), as Freud expressed. Regarding this, Heidegger states: "Being as the infinitive of 'I am': that is, understood as an existential, means to dwell near [wohnen bei] ..., to be familiar with ... Being-in is thus the formal existential expression of the being of Dasein which has the essential constitution of being-in-the-world" (Heidegger). When discussing space, for Heidegger, it is 'existential space', and as Malpas highlights, it is 'quite distinct from the (non-topological) mode of spatiality as extension that is part of the modern Cartesian understanding of space as well as world' (Malpas 2021). Existential space is always active and relational, which brings into play the concept of 'ready-at-hand', closely linked with practicality. This existential space is always relational and dynamic. It evokes the notion

This shift in Rorty's thought can be seen as a transition from theory-centric visions to a more world-historical narrative framework. In the introduction to "*Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*", he states: "*That recognition would be part of a general turn against theory and toward narrative. Such a turn would be emblematic of our having given up the attempt to hold all the sides of our life in a single vision, to describe them with a single vocabulary*" (Rorty 1989: xvi). The establishment of this intermediate position—merging private self-creation with public solidarity—can be observed not only in his works but also two decades later, in his debate with the philosopher Hilary Putnam. Due to the polysemic nature of Rorty's philosophy, which continuously expands and opens new forms of expression, it has at times been confronted and, in some cases, oddly identified by academic circles. All these reflexive labels appear vague when considering the richness of his oeuvre. It seems that such critiques are trapped in the very identity and identification traps that Derrida warned about in his interviews.[78] This is the price all thinkers pay when attempting to offer new vocabularies and non-circular forms of argumentation, which often face unparalleled resistance from academic circles. A consistent trajectory throughout Rorty's diverse perspectives is his abandonment of the 'egological life' (Derrida) of epistemology in favor of a more solidaristic and culturally sensitive political perspective. Rorty beautifully elaborates on this position in his debate with Putnam, stating: "*move everything over from epistemology and metaphysics to cultural politics, from claims to knowledge and appeals to self-evidence to*

---

of the 'ready-at-hand,' highlighting its practical aspect. Within this framework, the world can be understood through the metaphor of a container filled with objects, or as Zahavi notes: "Space, then, is primarily experienced through non-thematic familiarity with the ready-to-hand" (Zahavi 2019: 76). Heidegger sees these two states as intertwined and in necessary relation. However, as Malpas observes, Heidegger prioritizes the 'ready-at-hand' over the 'present-at-hand,' attempting to give precedence to the former (Malpas 2021). This prioritization of practicality found in Heidegger is mirrored in Rorty's social ontology and pragmatism. Many interpreters and followers of Heidegger's philosophy notice a pragmatic impulse within his thinking, despite Heidegger's eurocentric disdain for America. To return to a fundamental definition: the world is not the sum total of objects but, rather, a familiar context of meanings that Dasein inhabits (Zahavi 2019: 76).

[78] Note: Derrida's interview on identity and the trap can be found in the collection *Points ... Interviews 1974-1994*. In his characteristic elegance, Derrida states: "Each time this identity announces itself, someone or something cries: lookout for the trap, you're caught. Take off, get free, disengage yourself (...) I do everything I think possible or acceptable to escape from this trap" (Derrida 1995). Theoretical identifications can sometimes resemble the trap of identity, from which liberation, as Derrida suggests, becomes necessary. Often, these provocative labels have sparked more debate than his actual philosophy. See: (Derrida 1995).

suggestions about what we should try" (Rorty 1998: 57). This stance on political culture, as mentioned earlier, stems from his initiative to reorient philosophical debate, not merely toward a meta-vocabulary but to cast light on forms expressed through a nominalist and historicist culture. This turn toward narrative is what he calls "contingency in language," which is closely tied to the trope of literary criticism, as he sees it within philosophical reflections. Concerning contingency in language, Rorty states:

"*I call the "contingency of language" - the fact that there is no way to step outside the various vocabularies we have employed and find a metavocabulary which somehow takes account of all possible vocabularies, all possible ways of judging and feeling. A historicist and nominalist culture of the sort I envisage would settle instead for narratives which connect the present with the past, on the one hand, and with utopian futures, on the other*" (Rorty 1989: xvi).

This approach is closely tied to an intellectual culture found in Rorty's work. This intellectual culture exists at the intersection of theoretical reflection and an awareness of ethical sensitivity. Central to this culture is a democratic ethos. In short, it is not life and existence that should imitate a particular ideology, but rather life that should create an inexhaustible source of democratic vitality, continuously driving improvement and critique of any form of resentment. Therefore, Rorty's philosophy is not oriented toward epistemology or any project aiming to discover absolute truth. Instead, it affirms freedom. Within a worldview that embraces the romanticism of everyday life (Critchley 2004), truth is seen as something to be made rather than discovered. Similarly, Rorty's notion of freedom parallels Heidegger's concept that "freedom is the essence of being." In Rorty's social or ontological view, this idea is encapsulated in his famous formula: "Take care of freedom, and truth will take care of itself." The philosophical shift toward freedom leads to paths that, within the context of Rorty's philosophy, Sloterdijk defines as a "manifesto of improvement," which, in simple terms, represents a sensitivity to the otherness of others. Community, solidarity, and democracy are more important than the pursuit of objective certainties. The notion of "being-with" (*mit-sein*) is the nexus that connects contingency, irony, and solidarity. Returning to a key episode from Rorty's archives, this initial triptych—formed by literary criticism, politics, and culture—becomes evident. In some of his notes, he expresses this as follows:

"*I don't want to say that 'where we're going is literary criticism' but rather that something like 'culture criticism'—illustrated by Carlyle and Goethe and Arnold and Mill (in the parts of Mill which don't get assigned in philosophy courses) [—] is an all-embracing genre within which it doesn't pay to divide out the lit. crit. from the philosophy. If*

both literary criticism and philosophy get dissolved into this wider thing, that would be fine with me" (Rorty, Box 3, Folder 2).

Political culture appears as the only aperture through which hegemonic dominance in the discourse of mainstream political thought can be addressed. Drawing inspiration from the "unpolitical" as a discursive tool used by philosopher Massimo Cacciari, which marks a radical critique of political reason, political culture can similarly be seen as a critique of political pathologies. It is important to clarify here that "unpolitical" does not mean apolitical; rather, it is supra-political, as it distances itself from traditional registers of political thought, creating an autonomy that can assess the political situation and context without being troubled by the myopic dichotomy and dialectic of political spectrums (Cacciari 2009). This autonomy is not rooted in Enlightenment thought but finds its origins in Italian philosophy, especially in the version represented by Cacciari, distinct from the more extreme version found in Toni Negri. At first glance, political culture represents the utopian liberalism of Rorty, a vision of an emancipatory and progressive politics, which implies replacing the pursuit of truth with the quest for freedom and the pursuit of objectivity with un-theoretical solidarity. The future democratic prospect must integrate freedom and solidarity as driving forces to create a better world, one that halts institutional degradation and public cruelty. This worldview carries a critical tone toward both the "caviar left" and the "libidinal left." Rorty's approach offers a new possibility to become immune to political diseases that manifest through ideological mutations.

Thus, this triptych of contingency, irony, and solidarity can be translated into other terms: speech act, gesture, and sensibility. Rorty's social ontology is democratic because it offers final vocabularies, with solidarity being an inseparable part. To be fair, even Rorty is not immune to the nostalgia that emerges from the history of philosophy, which seeks to reconcile ontology with ethics. The *sine qua non* of contemporary ontology is always its relationship with an ethics of sensibility, an "ethics after Babel" (Stout 1988), one devoid of metaphysics. The *passe partout* of this entire endeavor is what Rorty himself expressed as "private perfection and human solidarity, in a single vision" (Rorty 1989: xvi).

In this section, the interpretation of what is meant by "contingency in language" will be examined in greater detail. The attempt to explain this concept must be set within a broader historical framework of philosophical development. After the crisis of modern meta-narratives

(regarding subjectivity, mind, and history), language came to replace the role of mind in the order of things. The crisis that metaphysics-oriented philosophy underwent created a space, especially after World War II, for the replacement of reflective philosophy or self-consciousness with the philosophy of language (primarily in the Anglo-Saxon tradition known as analytic philosophy). Rorty's strategic decision to focus on vocabularies and contingency in language aligns with his contingentism. In Rorty's view, vocabularies serve a function akin to Wittgenstein's language games or Lyotard's discursive regimes (Salihu 2024). These are gestures and moments in the history of discourse that allow avoiding being imprisoned by any rigid and fixed vision. Rorty's contingentism consists of the constructive role of linguistic practices and socio-cultural dynamics (Calcaterra 2019).

Every analysis of Rorty begins with provocative subtleties. In this case, the provocation is his assertion that academic philosophy has confined itself to a set of scientistic premises, claiming that truth is discovered. This approach views science as the apex of human activity, but relying on these assumptions, it attempts to denigrate any other philosophy that affirms the play of metaphors or the formation of narratives, and that sees truth as created. Consequently, this philosophical perspective attempts to label any creative philosophy as disorienting. For example, they often ignore political and artistic spheres, considering the truths that arise from these endeavors as weak and unconvincing, even though the truths from these areas are crucial for shaping our future life-world. In this argumentative framework, there are philosophers who view science as an apprentice of technology (Rorty 1989: 3).

In line with this, one often encounters anecdotes from analytical philosophers who view continental philosophers as nothing more than artists or religious clerics, while the analytical philosophers see themselves as professors of mathematics and physics. This anecdote, when put through a therapeutic scanner, reveals the orientation of academic heterotopias.

The worldview that posits an essential dichotomy between certain facts and subjective ones leads toward representationalism. This "metaphysical violence" (Derrida) has always needed to be countered through negative thinking, which means adopting the reflective tropes of non-dialectical thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida. Suspending dichotomous thinking creates a zone where thought becomes possible outside the yoke of metaphysical dichotomy. Rorty masterfully accomplishes this, even while understanding the risks involved. In short, this position

is critical, negational, and skeptical of any "ultimate determinant" (Salihu 2024). It offers a way to escape the dichotomous errors that praxis constantly challenges. To find a reflective space free from positivist and metaphysical thought, a new logical space must be created. This new logical space should be a logic of praxis. It seems the distinction between these two forms of logical thought is encapsulated in sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's statement: "Practice has a logic which is not that of the logician" (Bourdieu 1990: 86).

Rorty sees all these representationalist descriptions as a direct consequence of worldviews shaped by German idealism, which sought to give science its place by hammering the vague idea that human beings create truths rather than discover them. Kant, according to Rorty, attempted to position the truth of science in a secondary realm of truths—truths about the phenomenal world. Meanwhile, Hegel, under the banner of the philosophy of spirit, regarded the natural sciences as less important, viewing them as descriptions of spirit that are unaware of their own nature. This act grants poets and revolutionary politicians the status of the first-order truths. Explicitly, this establishes the dichotomy inherited to this day between truths that represent strict, rigorous thought and those that embody the productive truths of the metaphorical areal.

Next, the narrative of analytic philosophy's worldview will be dismantled, as this narrow conception traps language within predetermined conceptual schemes and frameworks. As Rorty notes, their understanding of the world is of something that "is out there," a definition of the world that Heidegger would recognize as *Vorhanden*—the world as theoretically arranged, linked to Cartesian thought. This view seems to overlook or entirely ignore the existential or practical space (*Zuhanden*), which, for both Rorty and Heidegger, is crucial for understanding life-worlds and forms of life. Rorty uses the tricks of analytic philosophy's argumentation to overturn the very postulates on which it is founded. With keen insight, he moves from the worldview to the problem of language, stating that if truths are not "out there" somewhere in the world, it implies that if there are no sentences, then there are no truths. As Rorty himself emphasizes, "Truth cannot be out there—cannot exist independently of the human mind—because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there" (Rorty 1989: 5). From this, it can be concluded that language is a human creation, and the essential element of this creation is sentences. This view is complemented by linguist Hjelmslev in his *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, where, in the introduction to a chapter, he beautifully recapitulates the idea that language is a human creation, stating:

" *Language—human speech—is an inexhaustible abundance of manifold treasures. Language is inseparable from man and follows him in all his works. Language is the instrument with which man forms thought and feeling, mood, aspiration, will and act, the instrument by whose means he influences and is influenced, the ultimate and deepest foundation of human society. But it is also the ultimate, indispensable sustainer of the human individual, his refuge in hours of loneliness, when the mind wrestles with existence and the conflict is resolved in the monologue of the poet and the thinker*" (Hjelmslev 1961: 3).

In short, language is the creation of *being-in-the-world*, and as Nietzsche shows, truth is nothing but a mobile army of selected metaphors. Language is the core where private perfection and public solidarity shelter within a single vision. It is a human creation, the result of various historical contingencies. Therefore, no one can act as a patron of it, be they the *homo academicus* model of analytic philosophy. The world cannot determine which descriptions are truer than others, as it exists as an existential space—it does not speak; humans speak. We, who are beings-in-the-world, are its inhabitants. The world cannot be seen as something "out there" or reduced to a totality of objects. Rather, it is a context that expresses social dynamics and linguistic practices that must be familiar, or as Zahavi puts it: "to the meanings and significances that Dasein inhabits" (Zahavi, 2019: 76). If this is translated into the context of Rorty's philosophy, it would be: "*The world can, once we programmed ourselves with a language, cause us to hold beliefs. But it cannot propose language for us to speak. Only other human beings can do that*" (Rorty 1989: 6). This marks the beginning of a profoundly human sensibility in Rorty's approach to language. As he further states: "*my claims that only sentences can be true, and that human beings make rruths by making languages in which to phrase sentences*" (Rorty 1989: 8). Viewed from this perspective, it can be concluded that Rorty's *deep humanism*, as noted by Bernstein, resides within language.

With unmatched zeal and the rhetorical strategy he is known for, Rorty argues that the Romantic idea of created truths is not entirely misguided. This stems from their attempt to merge philosophy with poetry, replacing the faculty of the mind with that of imagination. This shift pushed them toward a realism of talents and offered an opportunity to speak differently from previous discourse. This position appears natural, as it is also found among the pragmatist thinkers who inspire Rorty, such as Emerson, Whitman, Dewey, and James. The type of "romanticism of everyday life" that Critchley refers to can be understood through the combination of vitalist impulse and the imperative to experience life as a poetic engagement with human activity. When discussing poetics in this context, it seems that for Rorty, it holds a meaning similar to Heidegger's concept of

Dichtung—creation.[79] This alignment with Romanticism gives Rorty the necessary space to once again sever the connection between language and truth. With great subtlety, he asserts: "*the Romantic idea that truth is made rather than found. What is true about this claim is just that languages are made rather than found, and that truth is a property of linguistic entities, of sentences*" (Rorty 1989: 25-26). Rorty's linguistic pragmatism views linguistic agency and freedom as contingent, as an opportunity to alter vocabularies. He seeks to reject intellectualist approaches to language, viewing them as patronizing and pretentious. Thus, Rorty embraces anti-intellectual approaches such as Wittgenstein's view of language within forms of life and Dewey's notion of language as a form of human behavior or a "tool of tools" (Calcaterra 2019). This embrace of anti-intellectualist approaches is central to Rorty's discursive trajectory. In short, his insistence on the semantic characterization of linguistic practices, intertwined with anti-intellectualist approaches to language, is the only way to support the normative aspect embedded within the forms of life in which these linguistic practices occur (Calcaterra 2019).

The recognition and manifestation of the transformative power of contingency, according to Rorty, lead to the contingency of consciousness. Under a Romantic lens, this recognition shapes the conceptual framework of the intellectual and moral progress as a history of the use of necessary metaphors to make the world a better place. This approach contrasts with the epistemological pursuit of objectivity regarding the way things are. Highlighting the diversity of language games and interpretive communities allows, in some way, the observation of various responses to causal pressures. In Rorty's linguistic pragmatism, or his methodless approach, metaphors are seen as catalysts for causal effects, as he notes: "*But if that metaphor goes, so does the traditional notion of an ideal language, or of the ideal empirical theory, as an ultrathin cushion which translates the brutal thrust of reality into statement and action as directly as possible*" (Rorty 1989: 81). Here, it can be said that by embracing contingency as a framework for human development, linguistic pragmatists avoid falling into the trap of arguing about their metaphors in an epistemological

[79] Note: The connection between poetics and the normative approach is key to unraveling the discursive knot in Rorty's philosophy. Returning to the use of poetics, the 'romantic poetics' Rorty employs aligns with his narrative turn and final vocabularies. By affirming the realm of metaphor within poetics, Rorty recognizes its inexhaustible creative potential and inherent heterogeneity. As Nancy asserts: "The poetic ... turns out to be in itself heterogeneous" (Nancy 1996). Romantic poetics encapsulates an amphibious character that converges with Rorty's philosophy: 1) truths are created, and 2) poetics as heterogeneity, which, in effect, represents the plurality of truths.

manner. Instead, like literary critics, they offer narratives that open space for diverse human practices. Rorty, in the style of Geoffrey Hartman, does not attempt to draw a strict line between philosopher and critic. His anti-philosophical and anti-academic impulse is always in sync with the opening of new forms of expression in human endeavors, or as Rorty himself might frame it, "ondoyant et divers"—the hope of culture.

The most significant thinker to make a break in his treatment of language and metaphor is Donald Davidson. In his treatment of truth in relation to language and metaphor, Davidson systematically introduces the notion that language is neither representative nor expressive but rather something that is either adequate or inadequate for the world and oneself. As Rorty states: "human beings are not simply networks of beliefs and desires but rather beings which have those beliefs and desires" (Rorty 1989: 10). This arises because Davidson was aware that, after the apotheosis of the subject and the philosophy of consciousness, language was the next candidate to inherit the crown once held by the mind. As Derrida notes, the apotheosis of metaphysics is always replaced by the apotheosis of language. For Davidson, this treatment of language is unacceptable because, for him, linguistic communication penetrates and offers Kafka's "third world" that intervenes between the self and reality, as well as between persons and culture. Following this line of argument, outlining this effort according to Rorty suggests that, as in Nietzsche's *gay science*, the dividing line of *chorismos*—the separation between knowing language and knowing the world—must be erased. Rorty cautions against treating language and mind as mediums between individuals and reality, suggesting instead that they serve as signals reflecting a desire for particular vocabularies when engaging with specific types of organisms. This aligns with Davidson's attempt to shift questions about mind and language away from the dichotomy between representationalism and expressionism toward inquiries on the plane of causal effects.

Accepting the argument of historical contingency, it inevitably leads to the provocative claim that intellectual history is nothing but the history of metaphors. This provocation aligns with the Nietzschean undertone found in Rorty's philosophy and corresponds with his effort to affirm contingency in language. Viewing the development of human history through the lens of art, science, and the very history of language itself provides the opportunity to understand it as nothing more than the history of metaphor. This suggests that the conceptual framework that interprets language and mind through meta-narrative lenses must be discarded or abolished. Supporting this

position, philosopher of science Mary Hesse argues that all scientific revolutions are "metaphorical re-descriptions of the field of explanation."[80] This metaphorical break is an intriguing combination of Nietzsche's eccentric genius, which emphasizes contingency in metaphors, and Davidson's [Holzweg], which views metaphors as tools that work better in some contexts than others, thus embodying normativity. Davidson does not focus on the selection of metaphors but constructs his worldview such that metaphorical expressions cannot be distinguished from the meanings of literal expressions. In this context, meaning is determined by one's place in a language game. Davidson expresses this as follows: "the thesis that associated with a metaphor is a cognitive content that its author wishes to convey and that the interpreter must grasp if he is to get the message" (Davidson, 1978, 1984, 217). Although Davidson might seem, at first glance, to downplay the significance of metaphor, in many parts of his work, he affirms the positive role metaphors play in shaping our relationships with the world. In one particularly striking formulation, he refers to metaphor as the "dream-work of language."

The rapid developments of modernity, under the banner of progress, have led to an expansion of linguistic repertoires. However, this expansion has simultaneously placed people in situations where these changes in life are not easily articulated (Rorty 1989: 170). In a reduced sense, this means that they have not acquired new beliefs expressed in a new set of sentences. The use of adequate metaphors is in sync with the rapid development of language due to historical contingencies. Observing the sphere shaped by technological and scientific developments reveals a deficiency in the linguistic arsenal when the new metaphors embedded in the social body are not fully grasped. The network of transformation runs parallel across language and culture, in sync with contingency. As Rorty states: "*Our language and our culture are as much a contingency, as much a result of thousands of small mutations finding niches (and millions of others finding no niches), as are the orchids and the anthropoids*" (Rorty, 1989). The Romantic impulse that runs through Rorty's philosophy leads him to view the development of human history as a successive

[80] Note: Inspired by Habermas, philosopher of science Mary Hesse attempts to affirm a new approach called the "cognitive claims of metaphor." For Hesse, cognition—the ability to know—is a concept broader than our technical interests or "the practical interest of personal communication and the emancipatory interest of critique of ideology" (Hesse 1988). Within these discursive practices, metaphor is an essential form of speech, simultaneously challenging our contemporary ways of thinking. Therefore, she proposes revisiting ontological, epistemological, and truth frameworks to do justice to metaphor as a cognitive expression. See (Hesse, 1988).

history of metaphors. This opens the possibility of expressive horizons, allowing the poet, in the generic sense discussed earlier, to be seen as a creator of new words, a shaper of new language, and thus the avant-garde of humanity. As Rorty puts it:

"*...Harold Bloom's notion of the "trong poet." But I shall end this first chapter by going back to the claim, which has been central to what I have been saying, that the world does not provide us with any criterion of choice between alternative metaphors, thar we can only compare lanuages or metaphors with one another, not with something beyond language called "fact"* (Rorty 1989: 20).

The explicit consequence of this approach is to abandon, in Wittgenstein's style, the view of language as representation, thereby achieving the de-divinization of the world. This discursive register implies that language, consciousness, and community should be approached as opportunities and temporalities. After all, new metaphors have always brought with them a radical emancipatory program in politics and morality. Through this metaphorological shift, Rorty seeks to inscribe freedom within human contingency, which should be embraced as both an individual and social condition for the possibility of changing perspectives on knowledge and ethics, intertwined with the potential for new vocabularies (Calcaterra 2019). Davidson's phrase "metaphor is the dreamwork of language" should not be seen as a messianic call, but rather, it resonates with a vitalist impulse to envision individual perfection and social solidarity within a single vision. Only through the poetic creation of new metaphors can ethical and political progress be realized.

4.3 The De-Divinized Poem: Contingency and Selfhood

"… (Freud) *showed us that poetry is indigenous to the very constitution of the mind; he saw the mind as being, in the greater part of its tendency, exactly a poetry-making faculty*"

(Rorty 1989).

With the effortless ease of a carelessness found only in poetic labyrinths—historically in inherent conflict with theory-centric approaches—Pessoa conveys a message in his collected writings and diaries, where he declares:[81] "*I was a poet animated by philosophy, not a philosopher with poetic*

[81] Note: The references to Fernando Pessoa in this thesis are derived from a collection of texts and diary entries compiled by writer Antonio Tabucchi, who states: "This book of quotations is absolutely arbitrary, a sort of collection composed of isolated samples, lost exemplars, stolen jewels. One could even argue that its compiler has acted as a

faculties" (Pessoa 2003). This archetype of the poet, in the language of Yale literary criticism, would be called a "strong poet" (Bloom 1997). According to Bloom, the "strong poet" strives not to be a mere replicator of past poetic efforts, but rather to offer a new form of expression. Adapting a thesis from Pessoa, it would modify as follows: "a creator in the poetic spirit of the universe" (Pessoa 2003). In the context of Rorty's thought, it becomes clear that he is not a philosopher with poetic abilities but rather a poet of philosophy. He suffers from the same anxiety and fear that Bloom identifies in all poets: the horror of being a mere copy of someone else. [82] Rorty's effort presupposes a desire to carve out his own paths, distinct from previous efforts, breaking with established discursive practices to create new horizons. Two key components of this poetic endeavor are heterogeneity and perspectivism. With these two elements embedded in the poetic act of self-creation, the creative freedom of the poetic act should not be viewed through the lenses of contract theory, utilitarianism, deontology, or ideological masking. Instead, it should be understood from an anthropo-ontological perspective, as an acknowledgment of contingency.

In this case, contingentism aligns with the Romantic thinkers' desire to break away from Platonic philosophy, as it emphasizes the primacy of freedom over truth. The ancient conflict between philosophy and poetry, inherited from Plato, has been addressed by contemporary philosophers through the concept of freedom as an acceptance of contingency. For example, in response to the dichotomy between subject and structure, contemporary French philosophers have introduced the concept of practice. The new challenges presented by the contingent network of practices have produced both subjects and structures (May 1994: 77-78). As previously noted, freedom here is not subject to any theory-centric construct, but rather it is understood as the creation of new forms and vocabularies that break the dominance of current discursive regimes, while attempting to escape traditional dichotomies. The dynamism and creativity of freedom, which presupposes a kind of mobility, is aptly described by Peter Sloterdijk as "philosophical kinetics" In this context, philosophical kinetics is marked by the creative concept of freedom. This

genuine thief." The citations used from this book are taken from the Albanian version titled *The Poet is a Pretender*. (Pessoa 2003).

[82] Note: Harold Bloom is one of the most respected literary critics in the academic realm, associated with the renowned Yale School of Criticism. In his monumental work *The Anxiety of Influence*, which is referenced here, he describes the creator's sublime temptation to preserve a certain authenticity of poetic power as the "strong poet's anxiety of influence." This refers to the "horror of finding oneself to be only a copy or a replica." See: (Bloom 1997).

worldview functions as a key to open a third dimension of difference, which, in this case, refers to the philosophy of difference discussed earlier. It is a difference that precedes both the logical difference between true and false assertions and the ethical difference between good and bad actions (Sloterdijk 2017:18). Kinetic philosophy or poetic freedom here serve as a form of transgression, which has been a foundational element of contemporary French philosophy. When freedom is the priority of reflection, it always seeks to create new autonomous spaces beyond the primordial yoke of truth and goodness, a yoke inherited from Socrates. In this framework, being is true, and because it is true, it must be good. In the language of traditional philosophy, this means that ontology is subordinated to epistemology, and consequently, ethics is also subordinated. This is the reduced form of the grand metaphysical stage against which contemporary philosophy has rebelled, using play as its countermeasure.

From the above points, it can be concluded that both Rorty and Bloom use the term "poet" to refer to the creative potentials that have shaken the foundations of human endeavors through their creations. They employ poetics in a broad, Heideggerian sense. This idea can be recapitulated through a particularly instructive passage from Harold Bloom, where he writes: "every poet begins (however 'unconsciously') by rebelling more strongly against the fear of death than all other men and women do" (Bloom 1997: 80). Referring to Rorty's position, the concept of death signifies the failure to create more works than anyone else. Consequently, death and nothingness are synonymous with empty notions. Skillfully invoking Epicurus' famous phrase, "When I am, death is not, and when death is, I am not," Rorty attempts to equate the self with an empty notion, just as death is. This is not an incidental observation; it is the result of the theoretical legacy to which he belongs. This legacy is rooted in the radical critique of subject-centrism, beginning with Descartes. Many of his interpreters label his philosophy as linguistic pragmatism, which aligns with Wittgenstein's attack on private language, rooted in Descartes' subject-centrism. He also agrees with Derrida's semiological and ontological difference, both of which deconstruct the turn toward subject-centrism. Following this line of reasoning, Wittgenstein's language games and the ontological character of the text—where nothing exists outside the text—can be interpreted as revealing subject-centrism to be a fantastical creation of the Enlightenment. This critique of subject-centrism also gives rise to the contingency of selfhood, which contemporary philosophy defines as "post-deconstructivist subjectivity" (Critchley 1999), standing in contrast to the metaphysical creation of the self.

To continue with another provocation from Harold Bloom, he writes: “Critics, in their secret hearts, love continuities, but he who lives with continuity alone cannot be a poet” (Bloom, 1997: 88). For Bloom, the critic is interchangeable with what Rorty calls the metaphysician. Just as the metaphysician, the critic is driven by the same force—a dogmatic defense of doctrine, preventing them from seeing the creative potential inherent in poetic thought. Derrida offers a significant definition of this monomania in *Writing and Difference*, describing it as: “a centered structure... the concept of play as based on a fundamental ground, a play constituted on the basis of a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which is itself beyond the reach of play” (Derrida 2001: 279). As previously outlined, the philosophers of difference, or post-metaphysical philosophers, have sought to develop new vocabularies that break free from the dominance of the same metaphysical heritage inherited from the Greeks in Western civilization. These philosophers have attempted to envision a new horizon of extension beyond metaphysical oppression. For them, metaphysics is the source of all oppressive systems, as Derrida expresses: “an oppression certainly comparable to none other in the world, an ontological or transcendental oppression, but also the origin or alibi of all oppression in the world” (Derrida 2001: 83). The attempt to break free from the yoke of totality has been a necessity, emerging as a result of historical contingencies and reconfigurations to which contemporary philosophy had to respond.

The dominant maxim in Western thought has long been Hegel’s assertion that “the truth is the whole.” However, in light of the reconfigurations in discursive practices mentioned earlier, there has been a reaction originating from Adorno’s “negative thinking,” which counters with the statement: “the truth is not the whole.” The consequence of this shift is the movement away from the totalities of Olympus to the harsh realities of the *vulgus*—from perfect geometric forms to the labyrinth of life, from *Weltanschauung* to micrology, from politics to micropolitics, and so forth. Thus, Levinas’s observation becomes particularly apt for the historical trajectory that has dominated the West: a metaphysical obsession with totality, which he describes as being “fixed in the concept of totality which dominates Western philosophy” (Levinas 1979:21). The poetic mode seeks to open horizons and explore spaces where the unspoken and the unthought are encountered; where, in the tension of facing finitude, the momentum for creating new metaphors arises. In this poetic sphere, Deleuze’s call to abandon the hegemony of the history of philosophy and to chart new paths aligns with this approach. Paul Patton identifies an alliance between Rorty and Deleuze in his essay in the collection *Deleuze and Pragmatism*, noting that they share, along with Lyotard,

a similar view on language, emphasizing re-description and the creation of new metaphors.[83] To outline the shared assumptions these philosophers hold regarding language and its nexus with the contingency of selfhood, philosopher Todd May detects an interesting moment in Lyotard's philosophy: for Lyotard, language is composed of competing "genres," which are not merely subjective capacities or interests but integral to social structures and historical contingencies. In this sense, Lyotard joins Rorty and Wittgenstein in their critique of private language and the "I-God eye" that represents subject-centrism. Through this critique of subject-centrism, the contingent nature of selfhood is highlighted, a nature that cannot be fully understood through semantic or syntactic analysis of language. Instead, it requires a kind of linguistic pragmatism, as May explains: "*Unlike the semantic or syntactic approach to language that characterizes Anglo-American philosophy, Lyotard (like Deleuze) turns to a pragmatic approach, one that emphasizes the politics of linguistic appropriation rather than the meaning or structure of linguistic units*" (May 1994: 85). This perspective complements Rorty's effort to view new metaphors not as discoveries of some linguistic unit's meaning but rather as part of a historical and dispersed contingency that helps drive our efforts toward freedom, not truth. The distinction is clear: language is not in the service of truth but rather allied with a philosophy that prioritizes freedom.

Post-Nietzschean philosophers such as Heidegger and Wittgenstein have emphasized the importance of *play* in alignment with the "imperative of life" (Lingis 1998). They aim to exercise the necessity of selfhood and contingency while attempting to harmonize philosophy with poetics. The same idea of contingent selfhood, a derivative of Nietzschean philosophy, is shared by Peter Sloterdijk. Through the elliptical discourse integral to his thought, Sloterdijk observes that Nietzsche identifies the tangled relationship between metaphysics and *ressentiment* (bad conscience). Nietzsche's effort is to emancipate contingency, tracing it through the historical journey from the Greek *hypokeimenon* to the modern *subjectum*, culminating in the will to power. In more practical terms, this means that throughout the historical development of the subject, which had to rely on some epistemico-metaphysical foundation, Nietzsche sought to emphasize that the only way to grasp selfhood is to highlight its contingent nature. On this point, Rorty notes:

[83] Note: The text being referenced by the philosopher Paul Patton is titled "Redescriptive Philosophy: Deleuze and Rorty," which is part of the edited collection by Simone Bignall, Sean Bowden, and Paul Patton, titled *Deleuze and Pragmatism.* See: (Bignall, Bowden, Patton 2015).

"*More generally, they have tried to avoid anything that smacks of philosophy as contemplation, as the attempt to see life steadily and see it whole, in order to insist on the sheer contingency of individual existence*" (Rorty 1989: 26). Rorty's intention here is to express that existential space, the life-centered imperative, involves the contingent exercise of presence in existence. Here, "the individual" does not carry the classical connotations assigned by traditional social philosophy but rather reflects a notion of being or individuation found in anthropo-ontological readings of life philosophy. This notion exists in the everyday, not in some speculative theory-centric realm. Hence, the historical trajectory of philosophy has been to create hyperbole and exaggeration, which both Sloterdijk and Rorty share as heirs to Nietzschean philosophy. They believe that the hyperbole of logos has been replaced by the hyperbole of art. In this way, metaphysical exaggeration is met with a "reality check" (Sloterdijk 2017).

The question must be asked: What does Nietzsche aim to achieve with the emancipation of contingency? After descending from the metaphysical heights, the process of accepting the exercise of existence is underway. At this point, it must be stated that the subject is no longer subject to any transcendent consolation but instead seeks immanent transformation through the technologies of the self. In the discourse of Richard Rorty, Nietzsche saw self-knowledge as self-creation—a process that involves both concern for oneself and understanding of oneself, confronting the contingencies that arise in the discovery of new language, implying the creation of new metaphors. This poetic and creative experience of life does not allow others to impose their descriptions of how one should live life. Nietzsche would have considered this defeat, as Rorty highlights with a term borrowed from philosopher Gajo Petrović, "authentic living" (Petrović, 1986). Rorty expresses it as follows: "*To fail as a poet - and thus, for Nietzsche, to fail as a human being - is to accept somebody else's description of oneself, to execute a previously prepared program, to write, at most, elegant variations on previously written poems. So the only way to trace home the causes of one's being as one is would be to tell a story about one's causes in a new language*" (Rorty 1989: 28).

To recap this, both Harold Bloom and Nietzsche praise those "strong creators" who, through their words, have changed and challenged dominant vocabularies by creating new forms of expression never articulated before, all while being acutely aware of their contingent nature.

The greatest challenge in this cultivation of self-creation is the risk of falling into the tragic spiral of self-experience or the hyper-modern variant of this hyper-narcissism. As Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* may suggest, this could translate into a tragic affirmation of life or the fatal *mythopoeisis* (Levi-Strauss 2014) of Antigone, a motif found in many post-Kantian philosophers. Perhaps the neo-pragmatist approach attempts to replace Antigone with John Cleese of Monty Python, or at least it strives to find a homeostasis between these different forms of expression and the confrontation with finitude. The poet should not be content to remain enclosed in the bubble of internal experience but should attempt, through the creative act, to de-divinize the self. For Harold Bloom and Rorty, such a poet in the human endeavor is represented by Sigmund Freud's work. What is meant by de-divinization here is the process of disillusionment with the subject-centered constitution of traditional metaphysics. In this regard, the American reading of Freud differs from the European approach. American thinkers tend to portray Freud as a moral philosopher who helped humanity improve by revealing the dark corners of the unconscious. Through his philosophy, Freud has enabled a transformation that parallels the "art of living" ideal from ancient philosophy. Lacan echoes this reading in his famous seminar on ethics, responding to student questions about whether psychoanalysis has an ethical foundation with the maxim of psychoanalytic ethics: "Do not give way to your desires" (Lacan). Here, a reinterpreted reading of Freud's oeuvre emerges, distinct from that of libidinal philosophers. This transformative impulse is also seen by Peter Sloterdijk, who states:

"*Even in psychoanalysis of the 20th century, incidentally, one can still hear echoes of the ancient conversio. From a distance, the Freudian maxim 'Where there was id, there shall be ego' reveals its membership in the group of practice where the change of the living habits is accompanied by a change of the subject. That is to say a reallocation of the guiding figure to the place of the Great Other*" (Sloterdijk 2013: 305).

Where Sloterdijk and Rorty's views on Freud converge is in their recognition that Freud, by shifting the focus to the unconscious, strikes a blow to the metaphysical foundation of reflection. This shift makes it possible to see moral consciousness as historically conditioned, as a product of temporality and chance, much like political and aesthetic consciousness. This is the shift from subject-centrism to forms of discursive practices, situated in political and social struggles for progress and emancipation. From this perspective, Freud's role in the cultural domain is that of a moral philosopher, according to Rorty. Freud contributed to the de-divinization of the concept of the self, which, alongside the ideas of Copernicus and Darwin, represented one of the significant

wounds inflicted on Western thought. The process of de-divinizing the self involves tracing the origins of consciousness, leading to the conclusion that contingent education is part of the process of becoming, as Harold Bloom expresses: "*inescapable, since more even than Proust his was the mythopoeic mind of our age, as much our theologian and our moral philosopher as he was our psychologist and our prime maker of fictions*" (Bloom 1982: 43-44). Thus, the Anglo-Saxon reading of Freud spans two dimensions: (1) the creative potential of his *mythopoeisis*, and (2) the potential of a psychoanalytic ethics as a technology of the self. According to Rorty, Freud, through his "hyper-morality" (Bataille 2012), dissolved the classical tension between ethics and poetics. As Rorty states: "Freud helps us to end this war. He de-universalizes the moral sense, making it as idiosyncratic as the poet's inventions" (Rorty 1989: 30). For Freud, the self is not part of a perfectly arranged metaphysical generator but is rather a matter of contingencies. Moreover, Freud equips the self with a private vocabulary for moral deliberation. He even attempts to bridge the gap between science and poetry, genius and psychosis, and, most importantly, between morality and maturity. Humans are not the byproduct of some transcendental metaphysical regulator; rather, they exist within an alternative vortex of states, as Rorty puts it: "*Freud thus helps us take seriously the possibility that there is no central faculty, no central self, called "reason" - and thus to take Nietzschean pragmatism and perspectivalism seriously*" (Rorty 1989: 33) It seems that Rorty reads Freud's effort through the lens of an ontology of process. The present can be shaped, by delving into the authentic parts of the past. This represents a departure from the earlier readings of moral philosophy, particularly those of the Plato-Kant canon, which attempted to place particular actions on the platform of general principles through rationality. Freud, however, examines present particular situations, embedded within a specific historical context of our being. In summary, employing Sloterdijk's discursive trope of exaggeration, the shift has occurred from a mystifying exaggeration of "reason" to a mystifying exaggeration of "will." According to Rorty, Freud offers a moral psychoanalysis akin to Nietzsche's and Bloom's efforts to view the poet as the archetype of human beingness. A small distinction between Freud's and Nietzsche's approaches is that the former does not reduce humanity to the tragic experience of a mortal animal. As Rorty states:

"*What makes Freud more useful and more plausible than Nietzsche is that he does not relegate the vast majority of humanity to the status of dying animals. For Freud's account of unconscious fantasy shows us how to see every human life as a poem - or, more exactly, every human life not so racked by pain as to be unable to learn a language nor so immersed in toil as to have no leisure in which to generate a self-description*" (Rorty 1989: 36).

In the context of this explanation, it is pertinent to understand that Freud's intervention occurred within a specific historical situation, tied to a particular historical community, at a particular time. Much like James, Freud attempts to intervene in the *ereignis* (event) of a particular existential space, engaging with an "idealized reality" in the exercise of existence. At times, his tone is mythic and literary, but these are tools for the faculty of imagination to create metaphors in a time of fantasy. In other words, it is the social dynamic of literalizing a metaphor that doubles in the fantasy of an individual's life.

Rorty's effort, in this regard, is to reconnect the triptych that metaphysics has divided: the link between ontology, ethics, and poetics, which were complementary elements of the second-order structure of the metaphysical castle. Rorty, as a romantic of everyday life, sees that the artificial divisions created by metaphysics make little sense in the praxis of daily life. For him, *ousia*, *pathos*, and *ethos* are integral parts of the trajectory toward the human-all-too-human vision of the world, or, as philosopher Gajo Petrović describes it, "authentic beingness" (Petrović 1986). To invoke Shakespeare's famous phrase, "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players," this suggests that humans cannot be viewed as part of a fixed metaphysical, ahistorical, or non-linguistic vision. Authentic existence, the imperative of life, can only be grasped through play. Language games and life games are integral parts of the forms of life. By "form-of-life," Agamben's interpretation is referenced, which, in its reduced reading, implies that life can never be separated from its form, nor can it be isolated as a discursive formation known as "bare life." Life that cannot be separated from life itself implies that the only real danger it faces is life itself. The definition of human life, therefore, extends beyond the empirical realm of actions and processes and enters an anthropo-ontological approach to *becoming*, which implies, above all, the possibility of living (Agamben 2000a: 3-4). *Homo Ludens* inherently possesses potential because it is a product of the collective ability to valorize the power of re-description—the power of language to make different things possible. This becomes feasible only by capturing the vitalist impulse that allows for alternative expansions of new descriptions, preventing life from being trapped by a single, correct description. Here, Rorty shares something with Deleuze: they both see pluralism as the most important achievement of human endeavor.

The poet is the individual capable of wielding language, even though they use it to bring forth images that could never have been produced by others (Lyotard 1989: 136). The process of de-

divinizing poetics involves a shift from metaphors of revelation to metaphors of self-creation. Its intertext revolves around accepting that the only power over the world lies in shaping the kind of world one aspires to live in. As Lyotard expresses, the poet's language is sometimes inaudible, leaving the audience stunned and unable to ascribe meaning. As Bloom states, "the meaning of the poem can only be another poem" (Bloom 1997: 94). The core of this entire desideratum is the notion that life should not be lived as mere replication, but rather through a deep engagement with re-description in the forms of life. The exercise of existence becomes a poetic act, embodying the "authentic meaning of existence" as both ecstasy and excess. In conclusion, this presents a trio of de-divinization that illuminates the contingent nature of selfhood, comprising Bloom's de-divinization of poetry, Nietzsche's de-divinization of truth, and Freud's de-divinization of the self.

4.4 Literalizing Liberalism: The Contingency of Liberal Community

> "*I see the strength of the democratic society in the multiplication of these public spaces and its condition in the recognition of their plurality and autonomy. This recognition is based on the essential discontinuity existing between those social spaces, and the essential character of these discontinuities makes possible its exact opposite: the contingent-hegemonic articulation, a certain democratic common sense. We see here a second paradox of community: it has to be essentially unachievable to become pragmatically possible* "
>
> (Laclau 1996:12).

Community is one of the fundamental issues that preoccupies scholars in the humanities. Despite the wide spectrum of conceptualizations surrounding it, a definition that reconciles the various sides of the broad debate on this topic remains elusive. The rapid changes and shifting dynamics in how society is understood and conceptualized—along with the new narratives encountered daily—have made it challenging to reach a consensus on what community truly represents. This challenge is not a recent phenomenon; rather, it is a problem inherited from the earliest reflections on community. The complexity of contemporary discursive practices has opened the door to Jean-Luc Nancy's ontological-phenomenological provocation, in which he asserts that "we have not yet thought of community." This provocation, through an inner voice, invites consideration of community as dwelling in the realm of the unthought. This situation arises because our discursive practices remain entangled in an unresolved dialectic between the organicist approach, which views community as something natural, and a socio-political approach, which

sees community as a product of contingent historical and social dynamics.[84] Additionally, it must be considered that there is an unresolved tension embedded in current worldview, as Ferdinand Tönnies described, between "two opposing collective systems of social order" (Tönnies 1999: 247)—*Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society). These two social systems can be traced back to concepts found in Roman law: *communio* and *societas*. Thus, the community presents a paradox: its impossibility in *praxis* is what makes it possible.

The modern understanding of this dichotomy is best exemplified by the work of philosopher and sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, who, under Hegel's influence, distinguished between community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*), a division that remains problematic to this day. Transcoding Tönnies' thought, he defines community as something that has an organic, real life, with social bonds at its core, while society is seen as a mechanical construct of the mind. While the community represents *terra cognita*, society represents *terra incognita*. The community embodies the warmth of the hearth; it is a thermo-political concept, not ideal or free from tensions. It is best represented by forms of organization such as family, village, neighborhood, and the German concept of the *Stadt* (city) (Heffernan 2013). In contrast, society represents the cold, relentless nature of the metropolis, vividly portrayed in Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis*. It is important to note that these two systems should not be viewed as a dichotomy but rather as existing in dialectical interaction. Exploring the historical variations in the conception of community would require a deeper exegesis of texts, worldviews, and thematic discussions on the subject, which lies beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, this chapter will outline a few pertinent historical moments that provide a broader context for understanding how the idea of community has been constructed within the realm of reflective thought.

---

[84] Note: The literary critic Julián Jiménez Heffernan, in his brilliant article titled "Togetherness and its Discontents," detects an anomaly and an inherent tension between the mythic/mystical reconstruction of the natural community and the historical construction of its moral possibility. Additionally, another literary critic, J. Hillis Miller, in his book *Communities in Fiction,* examines two contrasting approaches that have influenced contemporary thought. One approach views the community as a natural-social continuity, associated with the literary critic Raymond Williams and his eccentric Marxism. The other approach, which might be attributed to Heidegger, focuses on two problematic concepts: *das Man* or "the they" and *Mit-sein* (being-with). For further reference, see...

4.4.1 Community and its Discontents

I will begin this explanation with a premise from Greek antiquity, as philosopher Roberto Esposito does in his book *Communitas*. With the characteristic sharpness of his thought, Esposito draws a connection between the Roman *communitas* and a problematic Greek synonym, *koinonia-polis*,[85] which is most often translated into Latin as *communitas* rather than *societas* (Esposito, 2010: 6). In light of this Greek-Roman exchange, several dissonant semantic registers emerge, relating to the relationship—or rather, the homologous foundation—between *res-publica* and *communitas*. When unpacking this relationship, as Esposito highlights, a conceptual ambiguity arises surrounding the attribute of the term *publica*, while simultaneously, a conceptual-semantic issue surfaces regarding the nature of *res*. Consequently, a whirlwind of definitions is found within dictionaries concerning the concept of community during antiquity. Amidst this conceptual turbulence, Esposito, with the lucidity of a sharp thinker, provides an adapted definition of *communitas*, which reads as follows:

"*that communitas is the totality of persons united not by a property" but precisely by an obligation or a debt; not by an "addition" [piii] but by a "subtraction" \meno\: by a lack, a limit that is configured as an onus, or even as a defective modality for him who is "affected," unlike for him who is instead "exempt" [esente] or "exempted*" (Esposito 2010: 6).

It is necessary to clarify here that Esposito is discussing the pre-political meanings of the term community. According to him, the pair *communitas-respublica* and *koinonia-polis* are equivalent pre-political concepts (Heffernan 2013: 5). For Esposito, the concept of *communitas* takes on a different form when intersecting with the notion of *koinonia*, particularly as seen in the New Testament (Esposito 2010: 9). In a more reduced discourse, the form that *communitas* assumes is that of belonging, meaning: a) community is something that belongs to the collective, and b) it pertains to the essence of selfhood in its essential prototype.

---

[85] Note: Roberto Esposito highlights that the binomial *koinonia-polis* in Aristotle's philosophy appears in the form of the *koinonia-politike* binomial. This might explain why it was translated into Latin as *communitas* rather than *societas.* Referring to the online etymology dictionary, etymologyonline.com, *koinonia,* which is also found in its Christian form, derives from *koinos,* which in ancient Greek means "common, public, shared, and customary" (Esposito 2010). See: (Esposito 2010).

In modernity, two opposing approaches are encountered: the Anglo-Saxon perspective, which attempts to render the problem of community non-existent, and the communal approach, which sows the seeds of radical democratic politics, associated with Hegel's conceptual framework. The former is built on Hobbes's favoring of the concept of *civitas* or commonwealth over that of community. This extreme continuity of natural law philosophy is reflected in the harsh assertion of philosopher Bentham, who described the community as a "fictitious body" (Heffernan 2013: 7). The negation of community during modernity coincides with developments stemming from the Enlightenment, which can be seen, particularly in philosophy and art, in the following: 1) the rise of subject-centrism with Descartes, 2) the problematization of identity by Anglo-Saxon empiricism through *idem* and *ipse* identity, and 3) the significant development of the authority of the author and the emergence of taste in art. The second approach, linked to the philosophy influenced by the French Revolution, is represented by Hegel. He reintroduces the concept of community as a form of thought in response to fragmentation, atomization, and the unorganized mass that he attributes to political thought derived from Kant's philosophy. Jacques Derrida provocatively refers to Kant as a philosopher of Judaism and Hegel as a philosopher of Christianity in his book *Glas*.[86] The following argumentation will demonstrate that Derrida's provocation is not entirely baseless. Returning to Hegel, he presents a vision of community constructed within an ethics of life, or *Sittlichkeit*, which is rooted in intra-subjective relations. This represents a democratic republican intervention into Protestant practice, aptly defined by Heffernan as: "*it promoted a turning away from private piety towards civic engagement, the stimulus that prompted its construction remained*

[86] Note: *Glas* is regarded by many interpreters of Derrida's oeuvre as one of his masterpieces. It has significantly influenced the reanimation of Hegel's figure, particularly in circles derived from the deconstructionist school. In philosophy, this is often encapsulated by the phrase *Hegel after Derrida,* which hints at a re-interpretation of Hegel intertwined with Genet. The same influence extends to literary criticism, where the common conclusion is that *Glas* is a "hypertextual, multi-layered work." There is also another connection between Derrida and Hegel, where, according to Sloterdijk, Derrida is frequently referred to as "the Hegel of the twentieth century" (Sloterdijk 2006: 1). For Derrida, Hegel here is not just a name but, as Sloterdijk emphasizes, a marker of the culmination of archival depth and imperial unification. This relationship between Derrida and Hegel is elegantly summarized by Sloterdijk's remark: "While Hegel is speaking, we see that Derrida, who had been listening motionlessly until now, is beginning to take notes" (Sloterdijk 2006: 53). Finally, it is worth noting that in 2021, a new translation of *Glas* was released under the title *Clang,* translated by two of the most serious scholars and translators of Derrida's work, Geoffrey Bennington and David Wills. See (Derrida, 1986); (Barnett 1998); (Sloterdijk 2006); (Derrida 2021).

essentially religious" (Heffernan 2013: 7). Hegel's view aligns with his republican convictions, in which community is regarded as part of the state, and through civic engagement, society gravitates toward an ethical democracy. However, because civil society is part of the vectors of the community, it cannot be political. According to Hegel, once civil society becomes political, it contributes to fragmentation and unorganized accumulation (Heffernan 2013). Derrida sees this theoretical moment as the triumph of *Moralität* over *Sittlichkeit*. Philosopher Robert Wallace, in his book *What Can We Learn from Hegel Today?* (co-authored with Blerim Latifi), shares a similar perspective, arguing that Hegel emphasizes the need for a social order that arises from contingencies and historical ethos, termed *Sitten*. This ethical life must also embody rational freedom to be acceptable. According to him, ethical life or *Sittlichkeit* "*does embody such freedom, and thus does justice to the essential features of Kantian "morality" and rational freedom, while being more habitual and less overtly "intellectual" than morality appears to be in Kant*" (Wallace, Latifi, 2021). This transition marks a shift from an ahistorical, intelligible realm to a more terrestrial, historical realm, moving from individual atomism to a more communal relationship. For ethical life to manifest, there must be a gradual transition from civil life to the political sphere. In his distinctive style, Derrida portrays this ethical life as a marriage between politics and ethics, a movement from the family to civic engagement. This union also aligns with Hegel's concept of love as "the consciousness of my unity with another" (Hegel 2005: 139/158). It represents a unity where one gains self-consciousness only by denying personal independence or isolation. This moment of love, for Hegel, has two meanings: 1) where one does not wish to remain an independent person, experiencing autonomy as a lack or defect, and 2) where one maintains independence but "finds oneself in another person" (Hegel 2005: 139/158) in the beloved (Critchley 1999: 5). This Hegelian trope is echoed in an intriguing interview with Derrida, where he discusses love and the Other. He argues that love is an affirmative desire toward the Other. Through love, responsibility for the Other is assumed, accepting their otherness without seeking to destroy it, as Derrida asserts:

"*When you address the Other, even if it is to oppose the Other, you make a sort of promise – that is, to address the Other as Other, not to reduce the otherness of the Other, and to take into account the singularity of the Other. That's an irreducible affirmation, its the original ethics if you want. So from that point of view, there is an ethics of deconstruction*" (Derrida 1997).

A similar line of argument can be found in the thought of Vattimo and his concept of *caritas*. In his non-religious Christianity, Vattimo claims that there is and should be nothing more than *caritas*, or hospitality toward the Other. Rorty follows the same line of the "faith of the faithless" (Critchley 2012), seen in his concept of non-theoretical solidarity. This can be termed *agape*,[87] which in Rorty's case, is influenced by the Hegelian tradition in America, most notably represented by John Dewey's civil religion.[88] Dewey sees fraternity as an integral part of democracy, describing it as "the consciousness of communal life." In the Hegelian communal spirit, Dewey presents his famous concept of "common faith," articulated as follows: '*the idea of community could inspire a non-sectarian, common faith*' (Dewey 2008). Despite the atheistic tone of his philosophy, Rorty accepts this Deweyan premise, stating that our interrelations, through social hope, should be both our beginning and our end. This intervention reveals the wide array of derivatives stemming from Hegel's thought on community. Hegel sought to find a horizon beyond metaphysical tension, especially with his critique of objective spirit, which Rorty sees as the final blow to subject-centrism and a shift toward a more historical realm of exploration. It is crucial to emphasize once again that contemporary debates on community are deeply influenced by Hegel's thinking on the subject. From the theoretical expressions outlined here, it can be concluded that thinkers from the French school, such as Nancy, Bataille, and Weil, communitarians like Taylor and McIntyre, the direct democracy school represented by Laclau and Mouffe, along with the democratic community of Rorty and Vattimo, as well as the Italian paradigm represented by Agamben and Esposito, all form part of the legacy of Hegelian thought infused with Heideggerian premises. The only thing

[87] Note: In his work *Political Agape: Christian Love and Liberal Democracy,* Professor of Christian Ethics Timothy P. Jackson provides a compelling analysis of the concept of agape. According to Jackson, liberal thinkers who have not abandoned the egalitarian roots of liberalism seek to employ this concept of love to achieve what he calls an "authentic togetherness." Among these thinkers, he includes Richard Dworkin, John Rawls, Richard Rorty, Martin Luther King Jr., and Abraham Lincoln. They place the concept of agape within a process of secularization, about which Jackson states: "Agape is the political virtue, rather than merely a private excellence, and that agape must correct as well as uphold liberty, equality, and justice, and other social desiderata" (Jackson, 2015, 8). See: (Jackson 2015).

[88] Note: It is important to emphasize that the American interpretation, particularly that of Dewey, seeks to naturalize Hegel's efforts through Darwinian premises. As Bernstein highlights, they agree with the critique and consequences of individualism in modernity. This Hegelian influence can be observed in Dewey's famous metaphor of the "social organism" (Bernstein 2010: 144). See in: (Bernstein 2010).

that differentiates these thinkers is their exteriority: some view social justice through the lens of Marx, others through Dewey, and still others have chosen their own idiosyncratic positions. What unites this diverse network of thinkers is their belief that community must be heterogeneous, plural, finite, contingent, and democratic. All of these thinkers revolve around Hegel's maxim that one day humanity will feel "at home" (Vattimo 2011). This was a modest introduction (lemma) to a problem that spans a vast historical scope and is too voluminous to encapsulate within a single subchapter.

4.4.2 Toward the Democratic Community

The *inter-bellum* anxiety in reflections on community (Heffernan 2013) seems to have permeated all corners of the academic heterotopia. In response to the consequences of fascism, communism, and totalitarianism, the *Homo-Academicus* had given itself the task of avoiding the "sacrilege" of discussing community. The focus was on the individual, who had become the star that dominated the post-World War II academic and social landscape. However, as the individual exhausted all its tricks and could no longer dazzle with the power of its spectacle, new reflections on community began to emerge as a form of resistance. In the following, some of the most important ones will be outlined. Hannah Arendt, a critic of totalitarianism, sought to reflect on community by highlighting the tension between law and will in conceptualizing community. She favored Kant's version over Hegel's—why? Arendt positioned community in relation to one another in a mode of mutual difference (Esposito 2010: 79), borrowing from Kant's philosophy, which emphasizes "respect" rather than Hegel's notion of love (Kant 1991: 38). Living together, for Arendt, means that there are things between those who share something in common. Esposito uses the metaphor of a table placed between two people sitting together. The world, like any intermediary, establishes relationships and simultaneously separates people. Decoding Arendt's thought into a simple formula, she favored distance over closeness (Esposito 2010: 79). Another paradigm for thinking about community is that of communitarianism, which emerged as a response to the individualist perversion within liberal theory. Communitarians attempted to make a fundamental distinction from classical liberalism by not seeing the individual as constituted in a transcendent, ahistorical formula, but rather situated within history. It is clear that they preferred Hegel's formula and John Stuart Mill's "social utopia" over Kant's autonomist version. For communitarians, humans do not possess an inherent essence but, as Taylor notes, "the modern self is historically constituted" (Taylor 2001). While classical liberalism emphasizes the nexus between

individual and state, communitarianism has responded by defending the intermediary role of community. Taylor and MacIntyre have both critiqued, from philosophical positions, the stance of classical liberalism, with its apotheosis in Rawlsian thought (Heffernan 2013: 27). A more radical rejection of Rawls' philosophy is found in the anarchist variant of Wolf.[89] To maintain fairness, it should also be noted that thinkers like Taylor and MacIntyre do not entirely agree. Taylor's version of communitarianism remains within liberalism, which he terms "holistic liberalism." This form, according to Taylor, seeks to reconcile the pursuit of collective objectives in liberal society by distinguishing between fundamental citizen rights and less important privileges (Taylor 2001). On the other hand, MacIntyre, with his Thomistic-Aristotelian stance, is more local, contextual, and communal. His critique of liberal individualism is succinctly expressed in his maxim: "*the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity*" (MacIntyre 1984: 205). Life unfolds within a communal life-world, and as a result of embodied contingencies that manifest through histories and narratives, the pursuit of the good emerges from within them. His worldview can be summarized simply: selfhood is embedded in the community to which one belongs. One of the most provocative and interesting paradigms for thinking about community is that of the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy and his emblematic essay, "La Communauté désoeuvrée" (The Inoperative Community)."[90] It could be said that this paradigm

[89] Note: In his book *In Defense of Anarchism,* philosopher Robert Paul Wolff offers a critique of Rawlsian philosophy from an anarchist perspective, defending the positions of philosophical anarchism. It is important to note that Wolff later acknowledged revising some of the views held in the book due to evolving dynamics, debates, and societal developments. See in: (Wolf 1998).

[90] Note: This paradigm begins with the intellectual exchange between Jean-Luc Nancy and the philosophies of Georges Bataille and Simone Weil. It explores the possibility of discovering community outside of the disillusionment caused by ideological messianisms. The *tour de force* of this paradigm lies in the trans-coding of two key maxims: one from Nancy, stating, "We have not yet thought the community," and the other from Bataille's concept of "The community of those who have no community." These two ideas are synthesized in a concise work that responds to and affirms these authors, Maurice Blanchot's *The Unavowable Community*. Blanchot, with his creative capacity to produce new vocabularies, metaphors, and discursive gestures, brings these efforts together by unpacking the notions of negativity, silence, ecstasy, and love, which delineate the possibility and impossibility of community. For Blanchot, community can be understood as belonging to those who are unmentioned. Using Wittgenstein's theoretical fragment, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent," Blanchot implies that community exists in silence and is therefore a negation—the community of those who have no community. This agony is encapsulated in the concluding passage of his book, where Blanchot states: "[community is] exacting political meaning and that it does not permit us

has kept the reflection on community alive in the context of contemporary philosophy. To grasp Nancy's provocation, his famous maxim must be mentioned, which is also a *tour de force* in understanding community: "community has not yet been thought." This maxim encapsulates two crucial presuppositions in Nancy's reflection on community: that community is an event [*ereignis*], not a project (contingency), and that it possesses finitude, thus not transcending time. Christopher Fynsk, in his introduction to this essay, highlights something essential to Nancy's thinking, particularly his concept of freedom. Nancy's concept of freedom is situated within his broader framework, which he calls 'the experience of freedom.' This conceptualization of freedom operates on an ontological plane and is derived from Heidegger's thought (as is the case with Rorty). Hence, a relation emerges from the experience of freedom, which enables the experience of community, as the latter is an experience of the real. This implies the deconstruction of individuality and the staging of singularity. Another fracture that aids in better understanding Nancy's thought is his view of the experience of freedom as love, understood as the ecstasy of existence (Fynsk 1986: xiii). As mentioned earlier, this is a transfer between Hegel and Heidegger, a connection that pervades contemporary discussions of communitas. This debate addresses key problems of community in the context of contemporary thought, as reflected in the works of thinkers like Bataille, Agamben, Blanchot, and Esposito. Returning to Nancy's essay, Heffernan explains that it revolves around four main motives: motivation, circumstances, supposition, and argument. In Jean-Luc Nancy's case, the motivation is Bataille and the failure of communism. The circumstances involve Nancy's exegesis as a response to some of Bataille's political fragments, the supposition is the opening of a new space as a counter-response to inert conceptions that failed to grasp the equivocal nature of community, and the argument is divided into seven categories inherited from Bataille: death, alterity, transcendence, singularity, exteriority, communication, and finitude (Heffernan 2013). It is worth noting that Nancy would later expand on his approach by

---

to lose interest in the present time which, by opening unknown spaces of freedom, makes us responsible for new relationships, always threatened, always hoped for, between what we call work, *oeuvre,* and what we call unworking *désœuvrement*" (Blanchot 1988: 56). Here, a pertinent aspect is highlighted: community does not possess any essence or original *arche*—what in political theory is known as an "original point of departure." It remains mobile, existing in the tension between its possibility and impossibility. This dynamic, as described, makes community democratic. The hypertext of reflecting on community is that it is contingent, plural, and subject to finitude. See more in: (Blanchot 1988).

developing new forms of expression, but his starting point remains the same, encapsulated in one of the most important formulations of his view of community: its possibility and impossibility. The condition of community is its imperfection; hence, it is always in a state of transformation. It must be emphasized again: the imperfection of community is both its possibility and its impossibility. Nancy's onto-phenomenological approach is crucial, but cannot be exhaustively explored in this brief exposition. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged as one of the most significant attempts to think about community within contemporary philosophy. Finally, one of the most interesting paradigms regarding community is the post-Marxist perspective of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. They, too, view community as imperfect and contingent, a space where the call for social justice, the affirmation of inclusive social practices, radical democracy, and the concept of hegemony must manifest.

How do these contemporary efforts converge with Rorty's democratic community? Nancy, Laclau/Mouffe, and Rorty share a common thread: they all reject the horizon-closing, immanentist projection of the operational community. In the context of our discussion, this includes the nation, the absolute text, foundationalist society, or pre-modern association—these projections must be surpassed by differential competition on the plane of exteriority. As Heffernan notes: "*Fish and Rorty seem to rest satisfied with the (liberal) balance paradoxically secured by conflict. In a response to the latter, Laclau suggests instead an asymptotic logic of deferred fulfillment, the very logic of desired (im)possibility that informs the essays by Nancy*" (Heffernan 2013: 31). Despite disagreements on the nature of exteriority, these three approaches agree that only the internalization and embodiment of contingency and finitude can bring the concept of community to light. Another key aspect is that they reject both a) brutal immanentism and b) metaphysical and ideological mercy. These zones of resistance, these *becomings*, this new prospect can be succinctly summarized in Esposito's lucid definition when he states: "*that community is nothing other than the limit that separates and joins them*" (Esposito 2010: 149). The next section delves into Rorty's vision of the democratic community.

Rorty's democratic community represents his effort to extend his anti-essentialism into the political and social arenas. He aims to apply his project of linguistic pragmatism, his contingency, and post-philosophical visions to the realm of political proposal. This version is known as "liberal utopia," marked by a departure from metaphysical liberalism rooted in individualism and as a

byproduct of rationalist Enlightenment. Rorty believes that the vocabularies of rationalist Enlightenment, while integral to the beginnings of liberal democracy, have started to hinder the preservation and progress of democratic societies. This interpretation, termed "authentic liberality," is the result of what is known in the American pragmatist tradition as "radical liberalism," constructed from several components: a) egalitarianism, b) pluralism, c) contingency,and d) democracy.[91] Authentic liberality is a direct response to the politics of

[91] Note: The concept of radical liberalism is closely associated with the name of the philosopher of ethical democracy, or democratic faith, John Dewey. In his book *The Public and Its Problems*, Dewey portrays the vitality of democracy through his well-known maxim of "common faith," which implies the active participation of citizens in communal life. This communal life, as philosopher Richard J. Bernstein observes, has been incompatible with laissez-faire liberalism and the fetishization of individualism, which he refers to as "pseudo-liberalism." Dewey's response, as Bernstein points out, was to assert that liberalism is not a fixed or static doctrine. This kind of dynamism within liberalism has served humanity in different ways across various historical periods (Bernstein 2010: 82). Radical liberalism, as defined by John Dewey, is as follows:

"*Liberalism must now become radical, meaning by "radical" perception of the necessity of thorough-going changes in the set-up of institutions and corresponding activity to bring the changes to pass, For the gulf between what the actual situation makes possible and the actual state of affairs is so great that it cannot be bridged by piecemeal policies undertaken ad hoc. The process of producing the changes will be, in any case, a gradual one. But "reforms" that deal now with this abuse and now with that without having a social goal based on an inclusive plan, differ entirely from effort at re-forming, in its literal sense, the institutional scheme of things. The liberals of more than a century ago were denounced in their time as subversive radicals, and only when the new economic order was established did they become apologists for t \he status quo, or else content with social patchwork. If radicalism is defined as perception of the need for radical change , then today any liberalism which is not also radicalism is irrelevant and doomed*." (Dewey 2008: 11:41).

It is important to emphasize that there is a tradition of social democracy within the liberal tradition in America. This tradition begins with figures such as John Dewey, William James, Sidney Hook, George Herbert Mead, James Baldwin, Martin Luther King Jr., and is represented in contemporary times through the reflections of thinkers like Richard Rorty, Harold Bloom, Mark Edmundson, Cornel West, Nancy Fraser, and, more recently, Judith Butler. These thinkers have viewed the "other" as an integral condition of sociability. Through their expressions, vocabularies, and authentic discursive interventions, they have forged a new terrain for understanding democracy, freedom, and community. These radical liberals have not seen liberalism as an immobile or fixed system but rather as a way of life. Central to their efforts are equality, social practice as the determinant of an interpretive community, and ethical democracy. Their efforts seem encapsulated in James Baldwin's call to "Achieving Our Country." Any system that removes ethics from democracy is destined to fail and become oppressive. This is the intertextual lesson of Dewey's philosophy. See: (Dewey 2008a).

forgetfulness,[92] creating new pathways for reforms that could be revolutions with a small "r." These reforms are not pursued for their own sake or through mechanical processes but arise from social practices, persuasion, dialogue, and the need for democratization. Revolution, in the form of reform, extends across the onto-anthropological, social, and political planes. Reform, despite its inherent dilemmas, is made possible through persuasion and dialogue, preventing the outbreak of terror, vandalism, and violence, as Rorty himself suggests:

"*A liberal society is one whose ideals can be fulfilled by persuasion rather than force, by reform rather than revolution, by the free and open encounters of present linguistic and other practices with suggestions for new practices. But this is to say that an ideal liberal society is one which has no purpose except freedom, no goal except a willingness to see how such encounters go and to abide by the outcome*" (Rorty, 1989).

Close attention to the fractures, fragments, and particular moments in the history of human endeavors reveals that many so-called revolutions have been little more than reforms, with a capital "R," aimed at improving human life.

Another distinctive component of "authentic liberality" is a form of anti-foundationalism that incorporates the plurality of narratives and cultural interventions, where the political horizon and climate exist on the plane of the thinkable (Laclau 1991: 83). To make a brief excursus, there is a very specific moment of convergence between the late approach of Lyotard's "melancholic anarchism" toward politics and Rorty's authentic liberality. Both criticize the ideological mutations and fantasies surrounding community. According to Lyotard, the ghost that haunts the sphere of

[92] Note: The concept of the "politics of forgetting" is introduced by the philosopher Jean-François Lyotard in his essay titled *"A l'insu (Unbeknownst)"*. For Lyotard, the politics of forgetting refers to a form of nostalgia that stems from the impossibility of reclaiming the lost revolutionary moment of the 1968 movement. He argues that this moment has become an obstacle for many left-wing thinkers, as they return to that date as a form of ceremonial remembrance, which in rhetorical or vernacular terms signifies an emancipatory moment. However, in reality, it manifests as a kind of anxiety over a missed opportunity. With a tone infused with weariness, Lyotard reveals that the movement of '68 was neither revolutionary nor did it bring about any true revolution because it lacked tragedy—no crime had occurred. Through a discursive play, he conveys the message that all politics is caught between forgetting and not-forgetting, and is thus captive to memory. Toward the end of the essay, from a stance of "anarchist melancholy," Lyotard offers a cold eros, stating: "Since it was not revolutionary, the movement of May '68 was not destined to fall into unfaithfulness. Once the 'demonstration' had shown that all politics is a politics of forgetting, it remained such as it was in our minds, serious and inconsistent, even as our minds forgot it" (Lyotard 1991:48). See: (Lyotard 1991).

reflection is the specter of '68, which no longer functions as an inspiration but rather as a ceremonial marker of failure. It engraves itself into the plaque of politics, reducing it to nothing more than the art of the possible (Lyotard 1991: 46). Despite this seemingly defeatist stance, Rorty does not experience it as a call for surrender but rather as an opportunity to fight against oppression, injustice, and to affirm a free and just society. The question is, how can this fight be carried out? Under the influence of Dewey's pragmatism, for Rorty, democracy is not an event that happens on election day; rather, election day is just the beginning of democracy. This version of democracy aligns with Derrida's maxim of "une démocratie à venir"—a democracy yet to come—or, more simply, they are allies of the same prospect. One could argue that where Laclau, Rorty, and Derrida converge is in their refusal to be disillusioned by the failure of revolutions and ideological mutations. Each, in their idiosyncratic way, has pushed the agenda of radical democracy into the public sphere. They have not been content with the state of liberal democracy as it stands and have sought to outline the call for justice as the possibility of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "authentic togetherness" Their critical approach has created the necessary reflective distance, neither to celebrate liberal democracy uncritically nor to be dismissively cynical about its achievements. The plural, egalitarian, and freedom-centered projections are integral to the works of these thinkers. One could say that the point where they agree is on social democracy as radical democracy in Dewey's sense.

Delving deeper into Rorty's concept of the democratic community, it rests on several fundamental prerequisites: 1) the concept of language as offered by Davidson and Wittgenstein, and 2) the combination of Freud's and Nietzsche's views on selfhood and truth. According to Rorty, these conditions provide "philosophical foundations for democracy." These combinations enable the manifestation of social practices that allow for the re-description of democracy and the democratic community, or as Rorty puts it, "*These accounts do not ground democracy, but they do permit its practices and its goals to be redescribed*" (Rorty 1989: 44). Rorty builds a bridge between the egalitarian roots of the "authentic togetherness" and post-metaphysical culture, as Vattimo emphasizes: "postmetaphysical thought must be, may also be qualified as democratic thought" (Vattimo 2011: 42). The post-metaphysical prospect is crucial to understanding the democratic community, whether in its Italian or American form. Both forms of discursive practice view existence as expressed in history and in the event of being, while simultaneously recognizing the plurality of manifestations and the multi-form exercise of presence in existence.

By emphasizing that the democratic community is part of post-metaphysical culture, Rorty seeks to 4.4make the question of relativism irrelevant and to devalue the rational-irrational dichotomy. Looking back through intellectual history, new expressions have consistently been accused of irrationality, excluded, and denigrated for their perceived irrationality. These forms, narratives, and discursive practices have challenged past hegemonies. Through Foucault's historical-nominalist lens, many established epistemes and disciplinary matrices, when confronted with new expressions, have defended themselves by claiming ownership of indisputable truths, labeling these new expressions as irrational. Understanding human development as a "history of discontinuity" (Bachelard) suggests that major epistemic shifts have always been, in Rorty's terms, a dialogue between interpretive communities. This leads to the conclusion that no truths are ahistorical—all truths are contingent on the community that upholds them. This aligns with Bachelard's concept of *sur-congnitans*, as mentioned earlier. While this may appear to advocate relativism, it is, in fact, a call for pluralism and perspectivism, along with the inherent risks they entail. As Rorty argues, relativism exists only in relation to absolutism. By abandoning the notion of absolute validity, relativism is also discarded, along with its inevitable counterpart.

4.4.3 The Parliament of Literature

The question to address is how the connection between a liberal society and the democratic community is possible. In a simplified response, one could say that the liberal society embodies the authentic togetherness. But the next question would be: how does this embodiment function? The answer is that this embodiment is explicitly captured in several key points: a) The coordination of thought and the inspiring romantic narrative that truth is not discovered but made. b) The interweaving of romantic registers with naturalist ones. c) Both the liberal society and the democratic community view the spheres of politics and literature as spaces where contemporary intellectuals should not search for conclusions but rather for meanings. They must see politics and literature as their *sine qua non*. In fact, Rorty, with the fable-like quality of his thought, claims: " *I can now add the corollary that these e are the areas to which we should look for the charter of a liberal society. We need a redescription of liberalism as the hope that culture as a whole can be "poeticized" rather than as the Enlightenment hope that it can be "rationalized" or "scientized."*" (Rorty 1989: 53). d) It is a turn toward a poetics of fulfillment, serving as a permanent critique of instrumental rationalism, which has become a significant burden in contemporary contexts due to the rise of techno-dominance as a replacement for metaphysics. This poetics of fulfillment

emphasizes a vitalist passion and an advocacy for hope. As Rorty puts it: "*That is, we need to substitute the hope that chances for fulfillment of idiosyncratic fantasies will be equalized for the hope that everyone will replace "passion" or fantasy with "reason*" (Rorty 1989: 53).

From the points emphasized, it becomes clear that Rorty's poetic culture arises from a post-metaphysical condition. This post-metaphysical culture affirms a multitude of tropes, which, in this context, include: the philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*) represented by Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, the vitalism and life force (*élan vital*) of Bergson, pragmatic pluralism (from Emerson and James), all aligned with a democratic ethos and the pursuit of social utopia found in philosophers advocating for social justice (the exchange between Hegel and Dewey). This tableau, despite the criticisms from those who represent the "republic of dichotomies," seems well-suited for what could be called Rorty's "literary parliament."

There is a recurring concern from proponents of Kantian institutionalism and the "caviar Marxists" over how a pluralistic, colorful liberal society can be justified. Rorty, with class and calmness, responds that the justification for a liberal society is historically situated compared to other forms of social organization (Rorty 1989). By "historically," he refers to what Oakeshott calls the "practical past," where the new studies in history reveal a lack of consensus on what constitutes the historical. Rorty suggests that this comparison should not remain nostalgic but extend to the anticipation of future utopias.

Several critical responses, complementary in some respects, have emerged toward Rorty's vision of the democratic community and authentic liberalism. While not all objections can be addressed here, they can be distilled into two main critiques from Ernesto Laclau against Rorty's "liberal utopia": 1) The abandonment of a metaphysical foundation, which is seen as the backbone of liberal societies. From a functionalist reading of politics, a metaphysical foundation ensures the continuity of free institutions. 2) From a psychological perspective of introspection, Rorty's liberal ironist, having abandoned belief in a unified metaphysical system, may lack sensitivity to human nature.

Rorty's response to the first critique, delivered in the direct style reminiscent of Hemingway, is that society does not cultivate solidarity, empathy, and community on the basis of a philosophical foundation but rather through shared vocabularies and communal hopes (Laclau 1991: 88). He views the protectionism expressed by metaphysical circles as an extension of the historical

lamentations that follow the triumph of a new paradigm over the old. This fear dissipates when one grasps Heidegger's message that the end of philosophy does not imply the end of thinking (Heidegger 2003). In simpler terms, this is a "cold shower" for the defenders of metaphysics.

Taking a brief detour into Rorty's idea on the democratic community, it seems that Peter Sloterdijk later affirms this within his concept of co-immunization. Sloterdijk argues that cultural altruism, in the style of Rorty, is essential for co-immunization, stating that individuals can only maintain their private immunity when it is embedded within a framework of social co-immunization (Sloterdijk 2013).

As for the second critique, it must be said plainly that ironists may initially appear elitist and might not directly contribute to the growth and maintenance of community (Laclau 1991: 88). However, they are the ones who tackle issues that academic specialists often consider secondary, such as the everyday problems and concerns—topics that Groys and Critchley refer to as "anti-philosophical" themes. Questions like "What does football mean?" or "Why are we cruel?" are explored by these ironists, who, in a post-philosophical milieu, act as creative engines, revealing perspectives, pluralism, and new narratives. In such a milieu, there is no need for "academic techno-bureaucrats"; instead, the focus must shift to the realm of the ordinary and everyday, transcending it—not in a metaphysical sense, but in the sense of going beyond. These are the two issues identified by Laclau and other interpreters of Rorty.

Another critique that challenges Rorty's democratic community and liberal society concerns the issue of justice. In a simplified reading, the answer to this dilemma would be that the democratic community views justice as deconstructive. A legal scholar or academic might ask how justice can be deconstructive. The answer lies in Derrida's notion of justice, as presented in one of his most provocative texts on legal philosophy, *Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority*. In this text, Derrida offers the provocative thesis: "*Justice in itself, if such a thing exists, outside or beyond law, is not deconstructible. No more than deconstruction itself, if such a thing exists Deconstruction is justice*" (Derrida 1992: 14-15). Rorty's reasoning about justice follows a similar path. He does not view justice as something given or inherited but rather sees it in alignment with our communal life and aspirations. In short, justice must be in harmony with communal life. This reading of justice suggests that it is not a rigid norm but rather a rule to follow (Wittgenstein), which means its limits can be transgressed. The function of justice as deconstruction is to intervene

in the law when it obstructs or hinders human progress. This intervention is a form of transgression—pushing and redesigning the boundaries of the law so that it does not become an obstacle to an emancipatory communal politics.

To recap this subchapter, it is important to outline two of the key components that constitute the democratic community: a) finitude, meaning it is not timeless, and b) it lacks an origin or essence, being instead the product of historical contingencies. Consequently, it is not ideologically pre-designed as past communities were. The democratic community, by integrating *onto-anthropological* emancipation within itself, emerges as the product of an [*ereignis*](event or occurrence). If an inversion is allowed, the democratic community should not be viewed as Bruno Latour's "parliament of things," but rather as a literary parliament.[93] This literary parliament seeks to view language, consciousness, morality, and the highest hopes of the individual/being as products of contingencies. In this literary parliament, the democratic community is an accidental

[93] Note: The concept of the 'Parliament of Things' is found in Bruno Latour's book *"We Have Never Been Modern."* Latour introduces this concept through an intriguing reference to the disciples of philosopher Robert Boyle, who had defined the laboratory as a "parliament of mute things," where scientists, acting as ordinary intermediaries, speak solely on behalf of objects. According to Latour, we have never had the kind of specialists presumed by modernity; instead, in human endeavors, hybrid forms have always emerged. He even describes modernity as "not an illusion, but an active performance" (Latour 1991: 144). Latour asserts that there are neither bare truths nor bare citizens; instead, the space has been overtaken by mediators. This phenomenon of mediators is particularly pronounced in contemporary art, where it is often unclear who the mediator is, not even the curator. To delve deeper into the essence of the concept of the Parliament of Things, it is essential to refer to an extended passage from Latour, where he expresses the following:

"*I have done my job as philosopher and constituent by gathering together the scattered themes of a comparative anthropology. Others will be able to convene the Parliament of Things. We scarcely have much choice. If we do not change the common dwelling, we shall not absorb in it the other cultures that we can no longer dominate, and we shall be forever incapable of accommodating in it the environment that we can no longer control. Neither Nature nor the Others will become modern. It is up to us to change our ways of changing. Or else it will have been for naught that the Berlin Wall fell during the miraculous year 1989, offering us a unique practical lesson about the conjoined failure of socialism and naturalism*" (Latour 1991:145).

Latour cynically suggests that the 'Parliament of Things' will not emerge from a revolution, but rather through a process of ratifying certain things as we have done in the past, by convincing one another. The Parliament of Things unites politics and science, epistemology and ethics, as a sign of acceptance, thus bringing together Hobbes and Boyle. See in: (Latour 1991).

literary construct, shaped by the metaphors employed, which are suitable for an individual as a citizen of an ideal liberal state. Rorty envisions the citizen of this liberal utopia as an individual/being who is marked by the gestures and touch of their linguistic contingencies, with a contingent sensitivity in their moral deliberations, and a contingent sense of community that helps them combat cruelty and embrace responsibility towards the other. In this context, as philosopher Martin Hagglund highlights, the desire for democracy does not imply a drive towards total ideality but rather towards living as finite beings (Hagglund 2008).

5. LIBERALISM AND SOLIDARITY

5.1 Rorty: Liberality as the Pathway for Authetic Liberal

To grasp the weight of grounding a problem as complex and delicate as this, genealogical lenses would be necessary to provide clarity on one of the main phenomena in the field of political philosophy, namely, liberalism. One of the questions that must be posed in any inquiry into an "ism" is, what does this ism signify? Thus, the initial question would be: What is liberalism? The next question, then, would be whether any coherent argumentative thread can be traced through history regarding the term and its variants: liberal, liberalism, liberality. Before attempting to answer these questions, a clarification of the historical context concerning the relationship between liberalism and democracy is necessary. This examination reveals that the pairing of these concepts does not originate as an equivalent or primordial unity. Employing history as a discipline, which Hayden White describes as inherently ironic because it is always and explicitly situated in the past—expressed in the phrase "says" (White 1973: 375)—it becomes evident that only towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth do these two ideas begin to complement one another.[94] The fusion of democracy and liberalism, when elaborated further in a

[94] Note: The origins of the term "liberalism" can be traced to Spain around 1810-11, attributed to a group seeking to limit the power of the king and establish a parliamentary monarchy. Theoretically, this starting point aligns with Montesquieu's proto-liberal reflections, although many scholars, including Alexander Lefebvre, do not categorize him as such, a view shared here. This early approach to liberalism—which should also include Locke—appears, for the liberal philosopher Judith Shklar, as misanthropic. In her seminal work *Ordinary Vices*, she offers a psycho-political interpretation, viewing these thought frameworks as misanthropic, as they consider the nocturnal side of human beings and remain unshaken by their darker facets. Lefebvre notes that this detachment is referred to as constitutionalism. This phrase stands out in the history of thought, distinguishing the conceptual frameworks of early manifestations of exteriorities like liberalism, socialism, and other movements, which sought a place on the historical world stage, from the post-Gulag, Auschwitz, and atomic bomb era. This pivotal phrase belongs to historian and philosopher Jacob Burckhardt, who, according to Lefebvre, ignited "critical liberalism." Burckhardt's mistrust of all ideologies led him to label them as "terrible simplifiers." This phrase seems to encapsulate the spirit of post-World War II liberal thinkers, driving them to rethink their positions, reconfigure in response to new contexts, and create new forms of engagement, expression, and sensitivities in facing emerging challenges.

In his highly original analysis of liberalism as a way of life, Alexander Lefebvre identifies the main point of fusion between democracy and liberalism as the moment it becomes an "ethical project of learning to navigate modern life as best as possible" (Lefebvre 2024: 48). This shift marks the point at which liberalism incorporates a more egalitarian

historical context, is evident in Tocqueville's concept of *homo democraticus*, and to some extent in Mill's notion of "social utopia." The contours of this fusion, set to reverberate across contemporary thought, first emerge in John Dewey's pragmatism and the effort to extend Tocqueville's spirit. Implicitly, this alignment hints Rawls's concept of "non-egological liberalism," a move away from individualist anchoring, toward a collective liberal ethos.[95]

---

agenda, or, in Rawls's terms, views "society as a fair system of cooperation." Historian Helena Rosenblatt, in her book *The Lost History of Liberalism: From Ancient Rome to the Twenty-First Century*, shares this perspective, suggesting that her work has been a "game changer" for this discourse. Similar to Rorty, she distinguishes between classical liberalism, which Rorty describes as metaphysical, and the more egalitarian, democratic form of liberalism. Lefebvre and Rosenblatt agree on the presence of liberality and liberalism, not as a juridico-political doctrine but as an exercise in existence, within a tradition that includes Tocqueville, Dewey, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Baldwin, Rawls, Trilling, and Rorty. To this list, others such as Judith Butler, Gianni Vattimo, Norberto Bobbio, Cornel West, Martha Nussbaum, Alasdair MacIntyre, Alexander Nehamas, and others could be added. This dispersed network of thinkers shares several common components: (a) a foundational premise of freedom, (b) responsibility toward the otherness of the other, (c) solidarity, (d) democracy, and (e) a clear demarcation from totalitarianism, fanaticism, and the politico-social consequences they produce. See: (Lefebvre 2024); (Rosenblatt 2020).

[95] Note: Many contemporary and earlier interpreters of the history of liberalism see a major turning point in this tradition with Rawls. Even Rorty considers his efforts significant in establishing his vision of authentic liberality or a "liberal utopia." Raymond Geuss, one of the most perceptive critics of liberalism, views Rawls as a pivotal figure in rethinking the tradition, attributing a similar importance to Rorty's approach despite various disagreements. Geuss explores these ideas in his remarkable essay, *Liberalism and its Discontents*, where, even through his critical tone and detachment from this tradition—particularly evident in his book *Not Thinking Like a Liberal*—he still perceives vitality within it. He argues that the strain of the liberal tradition oriented toward action, while inhibited by an anti-utopian reflexive stance, relies on the presupposition that no system of action or thought is a candidate for perfection. Geuss contends that this perspective is valuable not only for liberalism but for other domains as well. He interprets this friction with liberalism, which he understands in a Freudian sense, as a productive force for its advancement, stating, "This kind of discontent, then, might be not necessarily an objection but a sign of the continuing vitality of this tradition" (Guess 2005:28). Further, two recent books reflect Rawls's influence on reflective liberal thought. Their aim is to establish a reconfigured form of liberalism, distinct from neoliberalism, extending Rawls's philosophy of justice. These works are *Liberalism as the Way of Life* (2024) by philosopher Alexander Lefebvre and *Liberalism Against Itself* (2023) by historian and jurist Samuel Moyn. A similar interest in Rawls's theories of equality and critiques of inequality can be observed within the economic left-liberal spectrum or economic philosophy, whether represented by neo-Keynesian or neo-Marxist variants, in the works of economists such as Paul Krugman, Thomas Piketty, Daniel Chandler, and Ha-Joon Chang. See (Guess 2005); (Lefebvre 2024); (Moyn 2023); (Chandler 2023); (Piketty 2022).

At this point, the genealogical expedition begins, serving as a catalyst to grasp Rorty's vision of a liberal utopia, or what might be termed and authentic liberality. This expedition unfolds allong two trajectories: (1) tracing the genealogy of authentic liberality, and (2) probing the concept of democracy. Each genealogical observation, by necessity, treads an etymological path. Attention will first be directed to the etymological observation of the term "liberal" in history, as it provides a broader perspective on the term itself. The first linguistic and conceptual usage appears in Latin as *liber*, meaning freedom and generosity (Lefebvre 2024: 47). The term *liberalis* among the Romans signified "a person born free," implying someone neither enslaved nor bound by the control of others. In Christianity and the medieval period, the concept of liberalism takes the form of *caritas* or charity, appearing frequently in the King James Bible in the sense of a sensitivity toward the poor (Rosenblatt 2020). A brief excursus will place these earlier worldviews of *liber* and *liberalis* in the context of current liberal thought. These perspectives are skillfully interwoven into Peter Sloterdijk's anarchical-liberal reflections. His characteristic style highlights the intellectual regenerative potential of political liberalism, suggesting a pathway to understanding humans not solely as beings displaying the bestial aspects of possession and dependence but through the lenses of power deficit and hunger. This approach implies that within their experience of freedom, individuals inherently possess the potential for behavior that is both generous and self-governing (Sloterdijk 2018: 55). Here, self-governance functions as a kind of self-technology crucial to sustaining the democratic community through the *thymos* of authentic liberality. This spirit is similarly layered throughout the history of liberal thought, as evident in the enactment of *civitas*, a concept essential to maintaining freedom and generosity, with a discursive trajectory beginning with Tocqueville and culminating in Arendt's reflections. Continuing this excursus, attention turns to the concept of charity, or *caritas*, regarded by many thinkers as a precursor to solidarity. Within contemporary philosophy, *caritas* and the acceptance of otherness are explored in Vattimo's *ecce-comu*.

Liberal democracy, as viewed by numerous interpreters, is seen as a product of post-metaphysical culture. Through a left-Heideggerian lens,[96] Vattimo perceives liberalism as an

[96] Note: In an essay dedicated to Gianni Vattimo's thought, Richard Rorty encapsulates his philosophy by describing it as "leftist Heideggerianism." Vattimo is a figure who, through lucid insight and creative poetics, has opened highly

affirmation of plurality, responsibility towards being, and charity. Through his creative eloquence, Vattimo occasionally translates Rorty's concept of solidarity into his own notion of charity. His "weak thought" allows him to elevate solidarity and charity by stating, "charity is God Himself/ *Deus caritas est*" (Vattimo 2011:140). For Vattimo, charity is understood as hospitality toward the other, revealing that the development of the exercise of existence emerges through sensitivity and hospitality toward others.[97] This line of thought suggests that Rorty's authentic liberality should be viewed in the ongoing interrelation of three components: *civitas*, *thymos*, and *caritas*.

Following this brief etymological exploration, a consensus among historians of liberal thought can be highlighted, indicating that the initial proto-liberal sparks appear in the eighteenth century, while the vernacular usage and ambiguous physiognomy of liberalism fully emerge in the nineteenth century. A constant across all periods of liberalism, including classical liberalism, is the absence of a conceptual and practical consensus on the meaning of liberalism and the universal reflective framework it represents within political philosophy. Examining a few thinkers of classical liberalism reveals its broad diversity. For example, comparisons between the reflections of thinkers like Locke and Bentham with those of Mill, Tocqueville, and Rousseau emphasize the diversity and discrepancy inherent in liberal thought, which is instructive in illustrating the claim that no coherent stance on liberalism exists for the historical period under discussion.

In this context, Tocqueville's attempt to unite freedom and generosity in a vision that encapsulates the democratic community could be singled out as a continuation of the Roman legacy. This unity is observed to be somewhat inhibited in his thought, especially in the second part of *Democracy in America*, where Tocqueville astutely identifies anomalies and excesses that might disrupt the resonance of the liberal-democracy binary. These anomalies or excesses take three forms: individualism (whereby the democratic citizen may retreat into their shell and avoid responsibility toward others), materialism (the drive for possession fostered by everyday life), and comfort (the submission to the logic of the *vulgus*, or the crowd, resulting in indifference and the

idiosyncratic pathways in thought. Rorty's characterization is apt, as it encapsulates the vibrant intellectual enterprise of Gianni Vattimo. See in: (Rorty 2006).

[97] Note: The development of this tradition within Christianity is evident in the reflections of Meister Eckhart. Simultaneously, as an extension of this same spiritual sensitivity, this worldview is found within the Western canon in thinkers such as Tillich, Schurman, Illich, Buber, Bergson, Hamvas, and Cohn.

quelling of one's inner critical potential). Within this triad lies the potential for democracy to be misused against itself. Such misuse provides fertile ground for populist autocrats, bureaucrats of cold-blooded finance, and totalitarians masquerading under the banner of the *vulgus*, puritanism, and justice. These anomalies risk diverting a radical emancipatory democratic politics toward a kitsch politics that is brutal, regressive, and dehumanizing in every aspect of life. Aligning with Lefebvre, Tocqueville's critique can be viewed as an observation of the psychological transformation of the everyday life of the citizen within the democratic *habitus*. In this regard, Lefebvre even states that:

"*I will pay special attention to Tocqueville—were extraordinary observers of modern everyday life. They knew not only that democracy was about universal suffrage and legal and political equality but that it also triggered an epochal set of social, moral, cultural, and psychological transformations*" (Lefevbre 2024: 46).

It must be noted that Tocqueville's democratic vision is not solely characterized by a misanthropic element. He perceives the vibrancy of "democratic vistas" in several American cities, especially in New England. According to Tocqueville, these cities can be described by a local autonomy in governance, constituted by two primary aspects: the election of governmental leadership and an exceedingly active citizenry (Lefebvre 2024: 56). In the spirit of Tocqueville's thought, the alternative to the previously mentioned anomalies is the affirmation of communal life, democratic vitality, and non-theoretical solidarity. In simpler terms, this formula could be expressed as follows: against private isolation, there is a shift toward public engagement; against possessiveness, solidarity; and against comfort, active involvement in the world.

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, there is a broad range in the interpretation of what it means to be liberal. Thinkers within this tradition are products of the internal friction found within it, yet in contemporary contexts, these ideas have taken on new, hybrid forms in Latour's sense. These new hybrid forms have generated fresh vocabularies, which are not static but deeply engaged in social dynamics. One example illustrating this hybridity is the conceptual formation of "anarcho-liberalism."[98] The implications of these explanations lead to the necessity of answering

[98] Note: This definition is derived from two thinkers, each expressing it in a distinct way. First, the philosopher Hrvoje Jurić describes Peter Sloterdijk's philosophical endeavor as an "anarcho-liberal" effort, in the sense that he perceives Sloterdijk's work as a unique form of liberalism that diverges significantly from contemporary liberal trends—particularly Kantian variants and, even more so, neoliberalism. Sloterdijk's "anarcho-liberal" stance, according to

the initial question raised above; the response would be as follows: liberalism is an exteriority for which there remains no consensus on its exact meaning even today (Lefebvre 2024; Geuss 2005; Moyn 2023). Within this description, there is heterogeneity not only conceptually but also in practical manifestation. The practical dimension of this manifestation can be further explored in the works of historians of liberalism. The summation of these modest explanations reveals a broad

---

Jurić, is evident at the conclusion of his book *Stress and Freedom*, which presents a plea for society combined with an "anti-state" anarchist element (Jurić 2021). In a more practical context, this conceptual formulation appears in philosopher Shkëlzen Maliqi's biographical interview with journalist Baton Haxhiu, where he recounts being part of an anarcho-liberal group at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade. This group was critical of Yugoslavia's self-managing communism and was essentially anti-Titoist, directing its critique at the ruling party establishment, which it called the "red bourgeoisie" (Maliqi-Haxhiu 2011). However, this movement did not abandon Marxist teachings or the Frankfurt School's influence, as Maliqi himself notes: "*But we were not dogmatic Marxists, even less so Stalinists, because we believed in a Marxism and socialism with a human face, where we had much respect for the early Marx, the philosophical Marx, who in his youth wrote some truly brilliant works*" (Maliqi-Haxhiu 2011).
A third usage can be suggested: the occasional reference to Rorty's endeavor as "anarcho-liberalism" or "anarcho-liberal." This is due to his commitment to contingency; one might ask, in what sense? In the sense that Rorty embodies an ontological anarchism that extends Heidegger's legacy in philosophy. This stance arises from a rejection of the *arche*, placing freedom as the essence of being, thus aligning with an anarchical perspective (*an-archai*), as noted by Schürmann (1987, 2003). In this style of anarchism, heterogeneity and the absence of a foundational origin are affirmed; if praxis precedes all else, there is no need for essence, as existence is shaped by contingencies, events, and temporality. This line of thought includes Schürmann, Vattimo, Derrida, Levinas, Nancy, Agamben, and, in certain contexts, Rorty. In her recent book *Stop, Thief!: Anarchism and Philosophy*, philosopher Catherine Malabou discusses this ontological anarchism, particularly in the chapter "Being an Anarchist," where she refers to it as "anarchy without anarchism" (Malabou 2023). Within this framework, Rorty's anti-essentialism, aimed at deconstructing metaphysics and the myth of the given, is also evident. This approach to pragmatism did not originate with Rorty; it is also found in James, who remarked, "The rationalist mind ... is of a doctrinaire and authoritative complexion: the phrase 'must be' is ever on its lips. The belly-band of its universe must be tight. A radical pragmatist on the other hand is a happy-go-lucky anarchistic sort of creature" (James).
Thus, anarchism here is connected to the critique of rigid systems and essentialism, affirming the contingent status of "being-in-the-world." The liberal aspect connects to normativity, rooted in his nominalism and Wittgenstein's notion of "rule-following." In theory-centric readings, these positions might seem contradictory, but Rorty's turn toward narrative, metaphor, and new vocabularies—alongside the pragmatist legacy that resists traditional academic philosophy—allows these two positions to coexist in what Calcaterra calls "contingentism." According to Calcaterra, this contingentism reconciles contingency with normativity. Translated into the current context, this would signify "anarcho-liberal." See in: (Juric 2021); (Maliq-Haxhiu, 2012); (Malabou 2023) ; (Schürmann 1987, 2003).

discursive and practical scope for liberalism. Thus, there is no coherent, ahistorical approach to this phenomenon within the milieu of political philosophy. In this context, Rorty's authentic liberalism appears to be embedded more in forms of life and value systems than in a fixed system with a static, intrinsic formula for practical functioning.

A similar fate meets the definition of democracy. Responses to this concept, whether in practice or contemplation, vary according to context and historical contingencies. It is worth reiterating that liberalism and democracy are not co-primordial. At a certain historical juncture, these two concepts converged, more out of practical necessity than as a result of theoretical development. Delving into the etymological roots, in ancient Greece, the word "democracy" carried negative, pejorative connotations. The Greek term *demokratia* implied the rule of the *demos* (people), which, in the ancient context, suggested that governance by the populace (*vulgus*) could easily lead to tyranny. It is enough to recall Socrates as the first martyr of philosophy who suffered at the hands of the *vulgus*-driven democracy.

Much later than the Greeks, the philosopher John Stuart Mill would, with his characteristic discretion, express concern over whether democratic society might encourage mediocrity (Bernstein 2010:70). In Tocqueville, as outlined earlier, democracy takes on an affirmative form and worldview. It raises the question of which worldview or historical context Rorty aligns with. Sharing views with Tocqueville and Hegel, he sees the American variant of democracy, which, for him, is represented not by official politics but by John Dewey's philosophy of radical democracy. The maxim of this version of democracy is: "the ability to believe that the future will be unspecifiably different from, and unspecifiably freer than, the past" (Dewey). In brief, Dewey's worldview regarding democracy includes two integral components: it must be ethical and communal. He does not see democracy as an overlay of norms or a calculus of voting mechanisms. For him, democracy is not just a functional system outside of individuals; rather, it is a way of life. Regarding his version of democracy, he states that:

"*To say that democracy is only a form of government is like saying that a home is a more or less geometrical arrangement of bricks and mortar; that a church is a building with pews, pulpit and spire. It is true; they certainly are so much. But it is false; they are infinitely more Democracy, like any other polity, has been finely termed the more of an historic past, the consciousness of a living present, the ideal of a coming future . Democracy, in a word, is social, that is to say, an ethical conception, and upon its ethical significance is based its significance as governmental.*

Democracy is a form of government only because it is a norm of moral and spiritual association." (Dewey 2008a: 240).

Belonging to a pluralistic, communal, historicist heritage (not in the sense critiqued by Popper), Rorty's version seeks to transcend the impoverished, infantilized, and inert functionalist conception of democracy, which, in his view, does not embody democracy's vitality. For Dewey, democracy is the only possible exercise of existence that broadens the imperative of life. As Richard J. Bernstein highlights, ethical democracy is an extension of the Hegelian concept of *Sittlichkeit* (ethical life) combined with the Greek *ethos*, encompassing the rules, manners, sentiments, values, and aspirations that define the life imperative (Bernstein 2010). The romantic poetics characteristic of early pragmatist thought leads Dewey to argue that without its accompanying ethos and culture, democracy—if confined solely to the political swamp—would remain hollow. Democracy as a way of life and existence is a catalyst for creative power and the progressive, emancipatory potential that complements liberality. Ethical democracy's critique unfolds on two levels: (1) ideological totalitarianisms and dogmatic fanaticism, and (2) the inert and coercive functionality of bureaucracies. For ethical democrats, these manifestations reinforce each other and must be critically examined in progressive politics.

After briefly exploring the genealogy of liberalism and democracy, it is necessary to pose the question: What is authentic liberality or liberal thought? This provisional framework is not explicitly found in Rorty's thought, nor among his loyal interpreters. To address this, another question must be raised: Why prefer liberal thought or liberality over "liberalism"? The answer unfolds on two levels: (1) liberal thought and liberality do not reduce Rorty's vibrant and provocative thinking to a rigid conceptual framework, but instead, express an inhibited critique of dogmas; and (2) Rorty's anti-essentialist philosophy resists definition through *isms*. Liberality and liberal thought best capture this anti-essentialist endeavor by placing freedom, not truth, at the center. Anti-essentialism inherently confronts isms and moves beyond the realms they occupy. Understanding this anti-essentialist rejection of isms sheds light on several of Rorty's idiosyncratic positions. Philosopher Richard Bernstein, at the beginning of *The Pragmatic Turn*, offers a clear analysis of these points. According to Bernstein, isms have an infamous status in philosophy, as their main advantage is allowing for the superficial identification of a philosophical position or orientation. The concern with isms is that they can lead to a myopic view, creating the illusion that

there is an "essential hard core to a particular 'ism'" (Bernstein 2010: 1). Isms, by their nature, can lead to closed readings of specific contexts, as Heidegger sought to make apparent. In his work *Letter on Humanism*, which Peter Sloterdijk describes as a radical critique of "the militant theater of humanism" (Sloterdijk 2017: 204), Heidegger demonstrates that humanism, as an ism, produced and extended forms such as Christianity, Marxism, and Existentialism. According to Heidegger, these manifestations have displaced the radical question of what it means to be human. Here, his experimentation with vocabulary and the creation of new ontological terms is apparent, as essence for Heidegger does not lead to truth but to freedom, as in his famous expression: "the essence of being is freedom." This displacement of the question of being has made these isms, to use neurologist Oliver Sacks' term, "color-blind" (Sacks 2011), and trapped them in essentialism. Every "ism" limits its view of the "truth of being" and reduces it to the inherited metaphysical formula of "being as truth." Thus, the rejection of isms is essential for grasping the anti-essentialist milieu. Heidegger, in his characteristic poetic depth, states: "'-ism' indicates that the essence of the human being is meant to be taken essentially" (Heidegger 2010: 226). The critique of isms complements the search for an authentic form beyond the ism trap, manifesting today in the academic heterotopias of scientism and professionalism. This is what unites Heidegger, Rorty, and Latour in their critique of "laboratory life." Isms are little more than competitors vying for dominance in the public sphere (Heidegger 2010: 242). There is an internal drive within scientists and professionals to produce ever more isms for the marketplace of public opinion. This stems not from creativity but from the public's immediate need for a new ism. In reflecting on this, it becomes evident that isms signify the end of authentic thought for philosophy as poetry. Rigid objectivity seeks to quench the inner murmur of poetic thought, which Heidegger masterfully expresses: "*Thinking comes to an end when it slips out of its element. The element is what enables thinking to be a thinking*" (Heidegger 2010: 241).

The path opened by abandoning isms compels a definition of the concepts of liberality and authentic liberal thought. This definition points to two key components: (1) solidarity, and (2) freedom, or as philosopher Alexander Lefebvre states: "the ideal of liberality, understood as a free and generous way of living, in the face of new challenges posed by the modern world (…) that being a liberal person was as much about generosity (liberality) as freedom (liberty)" (Lefebvre, 2024: 60, 127). A similar reflection to Rorty's is found in Peter Sloterdijk, who views the revival of liberalism as dependent on the twin pillars of generosity and freedom, essential to understanding

liberality as a way of life. Another aspect that unites these thinkers is their belief that the fundamental aspects of liberality cannot be entrusted to political parties. Constant critique of tyrants, in all forms, is crucial to understanding liberal thought, enabling the rejection of two forms of tyranny: (a) the one manifesting as a despot's face, and (b) the anonymous form that imposes itself as the dominant force of necessity. Liberalism, lacking any eschatological prospect or ontological-teleological provenance, serves as a reminder that predicting outcomes when people are freed from collectively constructed constraints is beyond reach (Sloterdijk 2018: 56). In Rorty's language, this reflects an exchange between chance and contingency. Liberal thought implies a re-description or reconfiguration of the term "liberal," as it now occupies the "gallery of possessions" (Sloterdijk 2018). Through re-description, liberalism may regain its rightful place as freedom, generosity, and solidarity. In the dialogue between these thinkers, authentic liberal thought or liberality emerges. Sloterdijk's conclusion in *Stress and Freedom* best encapsulates this effort: "the word 'liberality' is a cipher for sympathy with everything that emancipates people from tyrannies of every kind" (Sloterdijk 2018: 56-57). For Rorty, this aligns with Jonathan Ree's dictum, "pragmatism as anti-authoritarianism."

Using a discursive map, Rorty's liberal thought and liberality can be encapsulated as follows: (a) authentic liberal thought and liberality are anti-authoritarian, neither submitting to the intrinsic nature of epistemology nor to any perverted ideological variation. Epistemological totalitarianism is akin to ideological totalitarianism, as both subjugate or ignore humanity due to transcendent, ahistorical ideals. (b) This thought must affirm un-theoretical solidarity as an expression of human betterment, or what Sloterdijk calls the "imperative of improvement." (c) Authenticity must be contingent, historical, and nominal, as only through the "universal history of contingencies" (Deleuze) can the social dynamic and experience of freedom be understood—not as *Erlebnis* in Descartes' sense, but as *Erfahrung* in Hegel's sense, which implies a historically articulated social ecology (Brandom 2021). (d) The figure driving these changes is the liberal ironist, whom Rorty defines as: "people who include among these ungroundable desires their own hope that suffering will be diminished, that the humiliation of human beings by other human beings may cease" (Rorty, 1989, xi). Authentic liberal thought has no fixed doctrine or universally applicable form of social theory and practice. Its starting point is an ontological/anthropological or anthropo-poetic emancipation, where humanity's foundational premise is self-liberation, development, and improvement through the triptych of *civitas* (freedom), *caritas* (solidarity), and *thymos*

(generosity). In short, Rorty's authentic liberal thought or liberality is not confined to the theoretical-centric domain but is instead a dance between philosophy and non-philosophy, committed to improving human life. His books can be seen as manifestos for improvement, grounded in the life imperative. To conclude, consider Sloterdijk's nuanced remarks on authentic liberality and "improvement manifestos" in *You Must Change Your Life*:

"*It was Richard Rorty who promoted this translation work most coherently and appealingly in the last decades - appealingly primarily because, despite his Dewey-inspired advocacy for the priority of democracy o ver philosophy, he made no secret of his sympathy for the exaggerations of heroic thought (which he also called romantic or inspiring thought). What places the American Rorty in the better traditions of European Baroque philosophy and the British/French-German Enlightenment is his unshakeable fidelity to the idea of world improvement, a fidelity that finds its most old-fashioned and stimulating manifestation in his book on the improvement of America. Rorty was, next to Hans Jonas, the only thinker of the last half-century from whom one could learn why a philosopher with an understanding of the times must have the courage to strive for simplicity; only in a j argon-free language can one discuss with one's contemporaries why we, as members of modern civilization, may not have entered a Golden Age, but should not still view ourselves as citizens of the Iron Age either. When discussing this subject, philosophy and non-philosophy become one, and historico-philosophical theories and everyday intuitions merge into one another. The grandiloquent conservatives, who continue to cultivate the idiom of the Iron Age as if nothing had happened, must be challenged in a language of the middle.*" (Sloterdijk 2013: 423).

The distinguishing feature of Rorty's reflective stance is that it strives to express itself within life forms, not as part of any theory-centered or ideological agenda. It resists ideologies that determine life, instead opening paths through continuous dialogue to create a world that is less socially cruel and that reduces institutional degradation. Embracing this form of liberality means fighting for self-freedom and accepting the other's otherness. This way of being liberal is "generosity within the context of a society that sees itself as a fair system of cooperation" (Lefebvre 2024: 134). Regarding this form of liberal expression and engagement, Mouffe emphasizes that it: "*It has to do with the mobilization of passions and sentiments, the multiplication of practices, institutions and languages games that provide the conditions of possibility for democratic subjects and democratic forms of willing*" (Mouffe, 1996: 5-6).

Rorty's authentic liberal thought and liberality drive the pursuit of a deeply human world. Being an authentic liberal means engaging in daily life to affirm self-freedom, non-theoretical solidarity, acceptance of the other's otherness, maintaining discursive practices centered on the communal life of democratic ethos, ethical pluralism as an expression of diverse voices, and continuous

dialogue as a value fostering ongoing improvement. Integral to liberal thought is irony, a critical lever against the illusion of rigidly theoretical or practical agelasts.

5.2 Against the Agelasts: Irony as an Ethical Alternative

"*Man thinks, God laughs*"[99]

Hebrew Prowerb

In an essay titled *The Theater of Memory* for *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Milan Kundera revisits the concept of the agelast. He begins this exploration with elegance, referencing Parson Yorick, a character from Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, who represents the concept itself. "Agelast," a term coined by Rabelais from the Greek, refers to people who do not laugh. Although Rabelais wrote nothing specifically about them, Kundera suggests that those who ideologically anathematized Rabelais (in his case, theologically) were driven by something deeper than loyalty to an abstract dogma. In Kundera's words, their reaction was a visceral discordance with the non-serious, "anger at the scandal of a misplaced laugh" (Kundera 2003). Thus, for agelasts, every joke is sacrilege, for every joke itself is sacrilege. People who sanctify life deeply resent humor, as Kundera notes, because they see humor as an insult to the sacred nature of life. These "saints" are not only found among the religious but also among ideologues who cannot tolerate jokes about their icons, patriotism disguised as toxic nationalism cloaked in the "national values" slogan, which Umberto Eco referred to as the "last refuge of scoundrels" (Eco 2010), and in academic heterotopias, where their rigorously serious commitment to isms accuses and condemns as though in an *auto-da-fé*. For them, every smile is a sacrilege that disrupts the suffocating monotony of their severity. In reflecting on Rabelais and the demystifying power of laughter he instilled in European heritage, Bakhtin notes: "*Laughter has profound worldview significance and is one of the essential qualities of truth about the world, history, and humankind. It is a particular mode of understanding that sees the world differently, if not more profoundly, than seriousness. Some essential aspects of the world can only be attained through laughter*" (Bakhtin 1978: 80). Bakhtin,

[99] The New York Review in its English edition translated the speech given upon receiving the literature prize in Jerusalem. The phrase "Man Thinks, God Laughs" might serve as the most apt formula to capture the essence of this idea in the current chapter. We have adapted this expression from the The New York Review article. See: (Kundera 1985).

one of the most influential and dynamic theorists, highlighted in his works the importance of *Homo Ludens* (Huizinga 1955) in forming European culture. French philosopher Jacques Attali contrasts two modes of sociability: (1) that of the church and (2) that of the festival (Attali 1985). The former represents rigor, discipline, truth, dominance, and seriousness, while the latter embodies freedom, play, laughter, and art. It seems Bakhtin chooses the latter, describing it as the "European carnival," a balance for all hierarchical social structures, abolishing individual isolation in favor of the collective ecstasy of "the people's laughter." He derives his cultural theory from a Nietzschean model, suggesting that culture is an arena of ideologies rooted deeply in the life experiences of its bearers (Groys 2012: 183). Therefore, the only way to demystify the repressive forms embedded in social structures and discourse is to mock them, as Nietzsche mocked Kant and Socrates. For Bakhtin, this can be done only through the carnival, not tragedy, as it invites participants to engage in the artwork of the future (Groys 2012: 211). While this is a radical perspective, Groys insightfully points out that Bakhtin later attempts to balance his polyphonic novel with the Platonic dialogue, subordinating poetics to dialectics (Groys 2012: 185). Returning briefly to Kundera's aforementioned essay, his thought resonates with Bakhtin's, understanding humor as the greatest invention of modernity, as the writer Octavio Paz asserted. According to Paz, this is because *Don Quixote* by Cervantes is the most significant work of that period. With an approach reminiscent of onto-phenomenologists, Kundera argues that humor is not given to us; it is the cultured modern person's sublime attempt to grasp it. With a melancholic, despairing tone, Kundera observes that many still do not understand humor's liberating power (Kundera 2003). He signals this toward the socio-political climate, where recent events have been characterized by religious and ideological fanaticism. For agelasts, humor's creative potential has been silently condemned through "fearology" (Svendsen 2008).

If the promise of comedy has faded, as Kundera suggests, has society instead surrendered to tragedy? Tragedy is deeply rooted in European culture, especially in the reflections of canonical thinkers. The iconic figure of Greek tragedy is connected to a woman: Sophocles' Antigone. Creon, a ruler of a Greek city, realizes that the uncontrollable passions within the city pose a deadly threat. Driven by this, he confronts Antigone, who seeks to bury her brother and uphold individual rights. She dies, and Creon, overwhelmed by guilt, resolves "not to see another day" (Kundera 2003). Hegel's reading of the tragedy popularized Antigone, interpreting her as embodying the tragic state of modern ethical life, *Tragödie im Sittlichen*, which attempts to mark a demarcation from Kant

and Fichte's formalism. Hegelian tragedy, as philosopher Simon Critchley notes, diagnoses "the amphibious character of modernity, the diremption or, better, the self-diremption of the individual subject from the substantiality of Spirit" (Critchley 1999: 219). According to Kundera, Hegelian tragedy, embodied by Antigone, captures tragedy's essence: both sides are wrong in their respective righteousness, each willing to sacrifice life for their cause, leading only to the total annihilation of the other. For Hegel, it is the unsettling feeling of guilt that makes reconciliation possible (Kundera, 2003). Inspired by Hegel, the renowned psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, in his *Seminar VII*, sees Antigone as the embodiment of the sublime excess, prioritizing ethics over aesthetics. He reads this beauty as "splendor," described in French philosophy as "transgression"; thus, Antigone represents an aesthetic transgression (Critchley, 1999): "*that Antigone transgresses the laws of Creon, refuses to feel any guilt for her transgression and, in so doing, does not give way on her desire, which is to say, she does not give way on 'the laws of heaven'*" (Critchley 1999: 2003).

The significant influence of Hegel on Lacan's seminar is observed by philosophers such as Simon Critchley and Slavoj Žižek. For Žižek, Hegel situates Antigone within the social-symbolic order, while Lacan places her at the limits—penetrating beyond this order (Žižek 2016: xxii). Critchley notes that Lacan, in the penultimate paragraph of his seminar, reinterprets Hegel's premises on Antigone, translating the "laws of heaven" into the laws of desire (Lacan 1997: 375). Two prominent critics of metaphysics, Nietzsche and Heidegger, also engaged with this tragic impulse. This chapter will focus on Heidegger, given the expansive treatment required for Nietzsche. Heidegger introduces Antigone into his interpretive framework, transforming her into a tragic heroine in a perpetual tension between action and desire, creating the tragic space for the triumph of being, or *Sein zum Tode* ("being-toward-death")—death as the only possibility (Critchley 1999: 221). For Heidegger, humanity faces two paths: to be a tragic hero who finds freedom in nothingness (*Freiheit zum Tode*), or to fall into an inauthentic existence (das Man). The romantic traces in Heidegger's discourse are unmistakable; they align with Promethean interpretations of Antigone. In this second stasimon, Heidegger grants Antigone the epithet of "authentic definition of human being" and the basis of humanity's uncanniness (Critchley 1999: 222). In contrast to this romantic engagement with finitude, Simon Critchley proposes a de-romanticized version that challenges the tragic-heroic figure. For Critchley, this figure is the comic anti-hero, aiming to replace Antigone with Chaplin. Critchley offers a remarkable definition:

"*Tragedy is insufficiently tragic because it is too heroic. Only comedy is truly tragic. Comedy is tragic by not being a tragedy*" (Critchley 1999: 119). If the demystifying power of humor wanes and tragedy's ethical function deserts us, what remains? Perhaps the weakening of humor can be managed, as it leans toward the private sphere. But if tragedy abandons us, as Kundera suggests, this would be a "true punishment" (Kundera 2003). Rorty envisions a balance between the ironic sphere and the ethical liberating potential essential to preserving the democratic ethos. At the end of his career, he shared the same concern as his friend Kundera—that "the silent majority" (Baudrillard 1996) and indifference will lead to authoritarians rising to power through the machinery of voting.

5.2.1 The Bricolage of Irony: A Brief Reflective History

Following an exploration of tragedy and humor, another critical concept demands examination: irony. There exists no consensus on its definition, as irony, particularly in literature and philosophy, encompasses a broad range of interpretations, allowing it to take on layered meanings and a polysemous nature. For heuristic clarity, this exploration will address irony as follows: (1) its definitions as provided in dictionaries, (2) its etymological and philosophical treatment, (3) its literary treatment, and (4) how Rorty adapts irony in his liberal thought.

Beginning with dictionary definitions, irony will be considered across three languages—French, English, and German. Though these definitions vary, they share similarities found in dictionaries across other languages. In the French *Littré* dictionary, irony is defined as simulated ignorance, revealing a true ignorance (Socratic irony), and more broadly, as a kind of mockery where one says the opposite of what is meant, as in "the irony of fate." The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines irony as a figure of speech where the intended meaning is opposite to the expressed one, often taking the form of sarcasm or humor in contradiction to expectations and the nature of things. In the German *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, irony is defined as serious communication through which the opposite of what is thought is conveyed, thus expressing the true meaning, often leaving a lasting impression through this elegant, dominant form of communication.[100] In this

[100] Note: All of these dictionary definitions from major languages are sourced from *The Poetics of Irony* by literary critic Pierre Schoentjes, a book that dissects the literary-philosophical aspects of irony within historical contexts and theoretical frameworks. This study is as rigorous as other notable works by literary critics such as Linda Hutcheon's *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* or D.C. Muecke's *Irony and the Ironic* and *The Compass of Irony*.

bibliophilic exegesis, as Pierre Schoentjes observes in his book *The Poetics of Irony*, major dictionaries generally align in their entries on irony:

"The fact that the major dictionaries referenced above generally converge in their delineation of the entry on irony (...) aligns with each other; all dictionaries highlight two fundamental types of irony: verbal irony on one hand, and situational irony on the other ... verbal irony would be the first, followed by the irony of fate" (Schoentjes 2001: 15).

These two forms are also present in philosophical discourse, though expressed differently across periods. The etymology of the word irony traces back to the Greek *eironeia*, first used in Aristophanes' comedies to indicate deceit. According to philosopher and literary critic Claire Colebrook: '*Aristophanes, came to refer to a dissimulation that was not deceitful but clearly recognisable, and intented to be recognised, irony intersected with the political problem of human meaning*' (Colebrook 2003:1).

Eironeia acquired an ambivalent character through the influence of Socrates, who integrated it into his method. Philosophy's historical teachings reveal two primary methods associated with Socrates: maieutics and irony. *Eironeia* is ambivalent in that it can be pejorative, highlighting deception, while simultaneously affirming Socrates' capacity to reveal what he truly thinks. In a simplified view of Socratic philosophy, this method served to expose the ignorance of his interlocutors. Claire Colebrook insightfully draws attention to the political implications underlying Socrates' conceptual use of irony. He employed this method precisely to challenge established knowledge and wisdom, particularly at a time when small communities were threatened by political expansion and the introduction of foreign cultures (Colebrook 2003: 2). Historically, this tension between small communities and the *polis* contributed to the emergence of irony as understood today, or as Colebrook states: "*Eironeia is no longer lying or deceit but a complex rhetorical practice whereby one can one thing – such as Socrates' claim to be ignorant – but mean quite another, as when Socrates' exposes the supposedly wise as lacking in all the insight*" (Colebrook 2003: 2).

Given the intensive Greco-Roman exchange, Socratic irony seems to have taken a background role during the Roman period. Roman thinkers did not entirely abandon the Socratic perspective on irony but rather approached it as a secondary concept. Quintilian references Socrates only to distinguish between irony as a figure of speech and irony as a mental figure, though the rhetorical

tradition sought to minimize its role (Colebrook 2003: 6). To clarify this relationship between the Greeks and Romans, it may be helpful to consider their differing perceptions. While the Greeks viewed irony with suspicion, the Romans, particularly from Cicero onward, admired it (Schoentjes 2001: 64). Examining the history of thought reveals that Cicero's translation of *eironeia* as *dissimulatio* reflected a distinctly Socratic approach, incorporating irony into the rhetorical arts. This usage persisted into the Renaissance, where irony became a method for creatively expressing linguistic skill. Following Quintilian's reasoning, Isidore of Seville continued this line, defining irony as a figure of speech denoting linguistic exhibitionism, as well as mental irony that permeates the entire idea (Colebrook 2003: 9). In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Socratic approach to irony continued to be central, as seen in the work of Kierkegaard, who nonetheless added his own finesse in *The Concept of Irony, with Continual Reference to Socrates: Together with Notes on Schelling*. Unlike the Socratic approach, Romantic philosophers sought to define irony as an "attitude of existence." Romantic irony was seen as a human condition (Colebrook 2003: 47), embedded in a distrust of human enterprises, particularly as a way to delineate a boundary with the tribunal of reason. As Schlegel expressed, 'Irony is the clear consciousness of eternal agility, of an infinitely teeming chaos' (Schlegel). For Romantics, irony was an exercise in existence and a means of capturing philosophy as poetry. This approach sought to invert the use found among the ancients. Schlegel often viewed irony as synonymous with Romanticism (Schoentjes 2001: 85). Irony also appears in the work of contemporary philosophers like Nietzsche, Derrida, Deleuze, Critchley, and Butler. Though a detailed examination of each is beyond this chapter's scope, such figures deserve close study. This section, however, outlines two primary approaches: Socratic irony, which permits linguistic exhibitionism, thereby opening discursive practice, and Romantic irony, which is an exercise in existence, signifying poetics as a radical critique against the constraints of the tribunal of reason.

Irony in literary theory and literature occupies its natural *habitus*. This discussion will not pursue an in-depth examination, as was avoided in the etymological and philosophical sections. Instead, it will touch on select literary works and movements in literary criticism that have conceptualized irony. These discussions will not be treated as separate; rather, they will be interwoven. The *holzwege* of this discussion will follow the previous ones in the form of bricolage.

The most striking and frequently debated example of irony is found in the works of Shakespeare. His plays allow for a broad range of interpretations across various historical contexts. This interpretive radius reflects the differing historical perceptions of his work. For instance, Shakespeare's plays were once read as a 'sincere defense and representation of the well-ordered, pre-modern cosmos' (Bradley). As Colebrook observes, however, his plays can also be read as ironic, revealing him as a playwright who invents criticism of the dominant worldview or challenges it. The same perspective is found within New Historicism, and one of Shakespeare's most representative scholars, Stephen Greenblatt, explores this idea further. Examining the mythic power present in Elizabethan England, Greenblatt emphasizes that Shakespeare's texts should be seen within the common language of the time. However, when viewed through the lens of current criticism, the ironic potential of Shakespeare's work emerges: "mentoring a world-view, rather than intending that world-view" (Colebrook 2003:5). To summarize, D.C. Muecke writes: "Shakespeare's 'dexterous maneuver' and his 'ironical view' of human relations. He does not, I think, take the further step of seeing as 'objectively' ironic the fact that men are a mix of contradictory qualities" (Muecke 1982: 22). Muecke assigns irony solely to tragedy. In Shakespeare's work, a balance appears between ironic demystification and the ethical self-denial found in the tragic hero. Literature has its own chaotic wisdom, where text and context can override original intention and convention (Miller 1998: 72). Jonathan Swift also serves as a frequent reference for irony in both literary theory and philosophy. His texts are ironic not only for their excess but for their fanatical stance, as Colebrook notes: "*The very fact that its position is so objectionable forces us to read it as not saying what it appears to say… it draws both shared human values, insofar as we abhor injustice, and shared literary values*" (Colebrook 2003:16). In *A Modest Proposal*, Swift offers a provocatively morbid solution: to legalize cannibalism and consume the poor as an economically efficient option. Swift's modest proposal is intended to be read ironically. Employing Baudrillard's discursive tool, this reading occurs in the realm of symbolic exchange: "*that we know what our words mean because we share contexts and conventions, along with the general expectation of sincerity and coherence*" (Colebrook 2003:17). Swift's example demonstrates how the brilliance of irony depends on what Hutcheon calls the "discursive community" or Stanley Fish's "interpretive community." Swift's irony challenges and abolishes dominant assumptions, intimidating its audience. According to Linda Hutcheon, Swift's irony embodies the "trans-ideological nature of irony" (Hutcheon 1994: 43). D.C. Muecke echoes

this sentiment, noting not only the linguistic component of irony but also its dependence on a "common socio-cultural referential system" (Muecke 1982: 40). The map of authors employing irony across different cultural, historical, and canonical contexts is broad. Two critical literary movements also deserve attention for their treatment of irony. First, the American New Criticism movement regarded irony and paradox as defining elements of poetic or literary discourse. They asserted that poetry is ironic because it enriches everyday words with new meaning (Colebrook 2003:18). This rethinking of irony neutralized its ethical and moral implications, aiming to distance it from its satirical function (Hutcheon 1994: 50). For the New Critics, literary sensibility complemented by irony revitalized everyday language, which, without this approach, risks becoming lifeless and mechanical. This viewpoint opened a gateway for elite acceptance. The second movement is postmodern literary criticism, where irony is an existential condition of both literature and criticism. In this sense, the entire zeitgeist of the postmodern or "pop-modern" (Fisher) era is inherently ironic (Bertens 1994; Hasan 1987; Hutcheon 1988; Miller 1998; Apolloni 2020). According to Handwerk, postmodern irony is liberating, as it is freeing from the burdens of grand narratives, providing irony as a key to understanding (Handwerk 1985). In this line of reasoning, philosopher Astrit Salihu's reading of irony in Rorty's thought illuminates the work of Umberto Eco, particularly in Eco's monumental *The Name of the Rose*. In the postscript, Eco himself asserts, "The postmodern response is to accept the past; indeed, the past cannot be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, and, as such, it must be re-examined: with irony, not naively" (Eco 1984). In Eco's novel, Salihu identifies *agelasts*, those who reject laughter. How does this relate to Rorty's critique? Salihu, with careful reading, connects the essentialism of metaphysics with the dogma of Christianity, noting that, according to Heidegger, these two fall under the category of ontotheology (Salihu 2024: 16). This discursive trajectory links Eco's interpretation to Rorty's. Thus, irony serves as a radical critique against any kind of providence, whether metaphysical or religious. The entire ontotheological mode is embodied in the figure of Jorge and his contempt for laughter. In Jorge, there appears the uncompromising rigor of the metaphysical philosopher, who strives to banish non-seriousness from academia. According to Salihu, what unites the metaphysical philosopher and Jorge is a denial of art, laughter, and play. Both hold an aversion to *homo ludens*, as their form of seriousness presents good only through heliopolitical truth. Hence, the literary parliament and philosophy as poetic expression disturb them. As Salihu states: "*Philosophy and philosophers, who construct our reality based on*

foundational schemes, are those who regard reality with religious seriousness and, consequently, do not tolerate the presence of laughter. Laughter, an attitude of amusement, as in Rorty's view, becomes intolerable." (Salihu 2024: 16). In this context of release from the burdens of truth, seriousness, and ultimate goodness, Salihu views Rorty's post-philosophical project as a liberating endeavor.

To summarize the concept of irony, as found in postmodern poetics (Hutcheon 1988), two central components outline its framework: 1) it is "trans-ideological,"[101] in Hayden White's terms, and 2) it liberates from meta-narratives, embedding itself within the dialogics of the discursive or interpretive community. These two core elements support the theorization and thematic exploration of irony within the reflective milieu of postmodern thought.

Before delving into the authentic articulation of Rorty's liberal ironist, a recap of the preceding discussion is warranted. A heuristic summary of irony within literature and literary criticism reveals four primary facets: a) behavior, b) situation, c) discourse, and d) art. These forms, shaped over time and informed by continual philosophical dialogue, yield several categorizations: 1) Socratic irony, which, in the discursive realm, is dialectical, aimed at truth-seeking, expressed linguistically as "something other," with allegory as its figure; 2) situational irony, which, on a

[101] Note: Hayden White's concept of trans-ideology is closely connected to ironic thought in his magnum opus, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. He offers a highly idiosyncratic view, asserting, "Irony is in one sense metatopological, for it is deployed in the self-conscious awareness of the possible misuse of figurative language. Irony presupposes the occupation of a 'realistic' perspective on reality, from which a nonfigurative representation of the world of experience might be provided" (White 1973: 37). In this sense, irony marks a phase of consciousness in which the problematic nature of language, as Roland Barthes discusses, becomes perceptible. Capturing irony thus requires viewing it through trans-ideological lenses, as irony tends to dissolve the potential for positive political action. The ironist, in this context, remains trans-ideological, tactically speaking against both those who establish social norms and against "messianic" utopias attempting to abolish the status quo (White, 1973: 38). Irony seeks to frame reality such that it can be understood only through art and science. Linda Hutcheon adopts White's concept in her development of ironic politics. According to her, ironic politics must be trans-ideological in the sense that irony, for tactical reasons, may belong to a wide range of political spectrums, at times legitimizing and at others devaluing them, depending on context. This shift to a trans-ideological, ironic politics suggests that irony should not be reduced solely to a rhetorical trope or an attitude toward life, but rather seen as a discursive strategy operating on two levels: language (verbal) and form (musical, visual, textual). Discourse, as the field and location of discussion, targets irony's interactive and social dimensions (Hutcheon 1994: 10).

discursive level, is dramatic, intended to reveal truth, understood through reversal, and characterized by peripeteia; 3) verbal irony, rhetorical in discourse, oriented toward persuasion, marked by contradiction, and represented by antiphrasis; and 4) Romantic irony, aesthetic in discourse, focused on the presentation of artifice, understood through paradox, and embodied in parabasis (Schoentjes 2001: 20). This outline provides only a general physiognomy and navigational framework for an inherently polymorphic issue like irony. It appears across everyday practices to forms of human expression. As a final prelude to examining irony within Rorty's philosophy, it is fitting to consider Roland Barthes' perspective on irony, which he vividly describes through his semiological lens, highlighting its weight and influence on the constitution of life forms. Barthes articulates it thus: "*Irony is nothing other than the questionwhich language puts to language. The habit we have adopted of giving a religious or poetic horizon to the symbol prevents us from seeing that there is an irony of symbols, a way of calling language into question by apparent, declared excesses of language*" (Barthes 2007: 37-38).

This observation underscores the permanent friction and elusiveness inherent in irony. Philosopher and literary critic Claire Colebrook provides a clear and remarkable recap of this historical amalgam, which encapsulates irony's definition. For her, irony remains suspended, maintaining a tension between the possibility and impossibility of its manifestation.

5.2.2 Rorty's Liberal Irony

Rorty's interpreters have often criticized his concept of irony and the liberal ironist, sometimes with a tendentious perspective. These critiques frequently draw on various historical views of irony: some critique Rorty from a Socratic standpoint, others from Kierkegaard's, and some even dispute his characterization of Derrida as an ironist rather than a public philosopher. While some critiques hold weight when examined in detail, they often approach irony from a purely scholastic angle. As outlined earlier, there is no consensus on what irony entails, particularly given that the concept has adopted myriad forms across different historical contexts. Rorty constructs his notion of irony in relation to two key fractures in his project: 1) his concept of authentic liberal thought and 2) the development of new vocabularies. Focusing solely on this second fracture, Rorty does not interpret irony within a strictly historical framework but views it as a space for anti-dogmatic exploration that can dismantle metaphysical postulates. Influenced by Heidegger and his particular vernacular use of language, Rorty similarly employs irony in its common meaning but leaves room

for interpretation and manifestation. To articulate irony in this way, the concept of "*catachresis*" proves useful. Commonly understood as a misuse of language, literary critic Joseph Hillis Miller reinterprets it through Heidegger's philosophy as a term transformed from its conventional meaning to name a condition for which no literal language exists (Miller 2015: 8-9). This definition of catachresis aligns with Rorty's idiosyncratic take on irony, which, in dialogue with previous interpretations, carves out a new space and setting for its usage. In one of the most significant studies of irony, *A Case for Irony*, philosopher Jonathan Lear describes Rorty's ironist as metaphysically detached, exploring the myriad cultural forms where others have found a path to engagement. According to Lear, Rorty's ironist achieves a form of *ataraxia*, maintaining a super-positional distance from foundationalism, essentialism, and dogmatism. For Rorty, irony—through Lear's interpretive lens—provides a means of escape from rigid metaphysical-epistemic positions, allowing for a poetic experience of philosophy where one can wander across different philosophical positions, animating arguments anew and laughing at absurdity (Lear 2014: 119-120). This experience is fundamentally aesthetic—irony becomes an exercise in existence. Lear, in a nuanced approach, confronts contemporary conceptions of irony, perceiving it more as a form of exhibitionism. He sees trans-ideological, discursive community-oriented, and polyvalent irony as a diluted extension of Kierkegaard's efforts, criticizing the contemporary model by referencing Rorty: "*For Kierkegaard, irony is a way of achieving a deeper understanding of—and ultimately a more earnest commitment to—what comes to emerge as one's final vocabulary*" (Lear 2014: 39). This approach appears as an aesthetic transcendence meant to lead toward an ethics of life. The position of the liberal ironist, then, is an aesthetic one in that their detachment from the trivialities of daily life enables a pluralistic ideal oriented toward freedom. Both Kierkegaard and Rorty share this view: "*detachment from the social pretense in order to facilitate attachment to the more robust version of the ideal*" (Lear 2014:39). Lear disagrees with Rorty's pluralism, finding it somewhat disorienting. However, Bjorn Ramberg, one of Rorty's most insightful interpreters, supports it by stating:

"*The liberal ironist embodies the values and virtues of the post-metaphysical intellectual (...) Rorty will want to depict a kind of problem situation to which his liberal ironist characteristically and paradigmatically responds and he will want us, his readers, to recognize that situation as our situation. Moreover, he will want us to perceive the characteristic response of this figure as displaying a kind of human excellence*" (Ramberg, 2014, 149).

This passage highlights a challenge for progressive liberal politics: confronting the finitudes of final vocabularies within contemporary contexts. Rorty's existential irony functions as a demarcation against universal presumptions in public language about truth and theory, abandoning grand narratives. As Ramberg keenly observes, Rorty's essay "A Spectre Is Haunting the Intellectuals: Derrida on Marx," from *Philosophy and Social Hope*, provides insight into his vision of liberal thought within the political spectrum. Here, Rorty emphasizes democracy over philosophy and politics over theory (Ramberg 2014: 151). This observation centralizes the role of the liberal ironist, who forges new paths by challenging final vocabularies and opening the space for new ones. As Colebrook aptly notes, Rorty's irony allows for a new ethics of liberalism (Colebrook 2003: 151). To summarize, Rorty's existential irony transgresses the limits of contemporary vocabularies, embodying his notion of contingency as a balance between contingency and normativity. Only by understanding Rorty's contingency does his provocative philosophy become clear. If contingency is aesthetics, it must serve normativity, which is an ethic of responsibility. Within this relationship, irony ensures freedom from dogmatism of any kind.

To define some key components of the liberal ironist, it is essential to note that Rorty always refers to this figure in the feminine as "she." The liberal ironist, heuristically, is defined as follows: 1) She harbors a radical, persistent doubt toward final vocabularies, intrigued by the new final vocabularies of people and books she encounters; 2) She realizes that her doubts cannot be dissolved by the arguments within her current vocabulary; 3) She philosophizes about her situation without privileging one vocabulary over another as closer to reality. Ironists, then, tend not to philosophize from neutral or universal positions but through the constant play of surpassing the old with the new (Rorty 1989: 78). As Ramberg points out, two salient notions emerge here: final vocabularies and radical doubt (Ramberg 2014: 154). According to Williams, irony in Rorty's thought resembles skepticism, though this poses problems for his nominalism since Rorty embraces a form of embedded fallibilism. Williams views fallibilism as contrary to skepticism and sees Rorty's irony through a neo-Humean perspective on skepticism. Rorty never explicitly outlines the role of the ironist within the liberal community. However, as Ramberg suggests, this type of irony provides ironists with self-understanding that their tendencies are best represented by liberal thought, which serves them better than its alternatives. Thus, the liberal *civitas* becomes a habitat for ironists, described as "a home such that dwelling there imposes no obligation to feel right at home" (Ramberg 2014). This perspective embodies the notion that "hope for social justice

is nevertheless the only basis for a worthwhile human life" (Rorty 1999: 204). In this light, the effort of liberal ironists becomes clear: for Rorty, even Hegel is an ironist due to the tension in his philosophy:

"*I have defined "dialectic" as the attempt to play off vocabularies against one another, rather than merely to infer propositions from one another, and thus as the partial substitution of redescription for inference. I used Hegel's word because I think of Hegel's Phenomenology both as the beginning of the end of the Plato–Kant tradition and as a paradigm of the ironist's ability to exploit the possibility of massive redescription. In this view, Hegel's so-called dialectical method is not an argumentative procedure or a way of unifying subject and object, but simply a literary skill – skill at producing surprising gestalt switches by making smooth, rapid transitions from one terminology to another . . . Instead of keeping the old platitudes and making distinctions to help them cohere, Hegel constantly changed the vocabulary in which the old platitudes had been stated; instead of constructing philosophical theories and arguing them, he avoided argument by constantly shifting vocabularies, thereby changing the subject. In practice, though not in theory, he dropped the idea of getting at the truth in favour of making things new.*" (Rorty 1989: 78).

Before concluding, it is essential to explore the transformative role of irony and how liberal ironists serve as tools for reshaping vocabularies (Ramberg 2014: 158). A transformative reading of irony aligns it with liberal thought or authentic liberalism as a guiding force, where solidarity coexists with final vocabularies, or as Rorty puts it: "*My position entails that feelings of solidarity are necessarily a matter of which similarities and dissimilarities strike us as salient, and that such salience is a function of a historically contingent final vocabulary*" (Rorty 1989: 192). Current vocabularies lead one toward a final vocabulary that may only be conceived as a "present practical limit." Thus, the response to this closure must be a self-generative reaction of the ironist, resulting in transformation. This transformation, as Ramberg suggests, should be seen in two planes: 1) The intellectual gesture, embodying the existential ironist's insatiable attitude in exploring alternative forms of life, equates to understanding what is embedded in her final vocabulary, or as Ramberg explicitly puts it, 'getting a grip on her self, the ironist throws new light on currently familiar ways of being a self' (Ramberg 2014); and 2) On the political plane, experiencing the irony of liberal values does not imply skepticism but rather the awakening it incites. This experience leads the ironist to question the embedded normative demands of her practical identity. This trajectory connects existential and political realms within Rorty's irony. Liberal ironists open new avenues for available practical identities by subtly, reflexively unsettling the commitment to identity and effort within their community (Ramberg 2014:160). It may sometimes appear Sisyphean to be such an ironist, yet their transgressive power is essential for fostering creativity within the community.

In summary, Rorty's concept of liberal irony aims to transcend old vocabularies and present new ones. It manifests as an exercise in existence, revealing the pluralism that encircles the imperative of life and highlighting the practical limits of the present. This detachment serves to grasp an ethic of life, an ethic of responsibility, sustained through non-theoretical solidarity. Perhaps it is worth repeating, even as a litany: here, the goal is the aesthetic transcendence of aesthetics itself for a life ethic. Irony ensures that *poiesis* becomes a creative act in service of a praxis maintained by an inexhaustible, profoundly human responsibility.

5.3 Revitalizing Hope

It is pertinent to draw a clear line between Heidegger's notion of "onto-teleology" and Rorty's application of hope. While hope has often been conceived as an extension of some abstract duty or as a messianic promise with eschatological implications, here it resonates with a romantic timbre that fosters a sense of connection to the other—not as an abstract obligation but as a necessary touch, deeply rooted in poetic and social dialogue. This version could aptly be termed "pragmatic hope." Why pragmatic? It is constituted by two essential components: (a) it promotes democratic pluralism, and (b) it is not oriented toward an indefinite future but instead manifests as an ongoing, daily intervention for improvement. This pragmatic variant could be seen as an expression of "democratic friendship," echoing Dewey's assertion that "pragmatism is the philosophy of democracy." Where does this form of hope find embodiment within the social body? Onto-teleological forms of hope have failed to offer genuine adaptation to everyday life, largely due to their totalitarian nature. In contrast, this socially poetic variant of hope emerges in non-philosophical terrains. Within an anthropo-poetic context, this type of hope is exemplified in the figure of Havel, who embodies both poet and politician. Admired by Frank Zappa as well as by Rorty for his positions, Havel does not belong to the monumental conservatism of an old world nor to an El Dorado vision of a renewed one. He is a figure whose self-technologies align with the civic virtues society must foster, virtues stripped of metaphysical imposition and oriented instead toward connection and mutuality. Rorty encapsulates this ongoing quest for improvement with a hint of romanticism, dissolving the boundary between private individuation as self-technology and social poetry as solidarity. This solidarity sustains an apocryphal humanism, untethered from any notion of a final destination, as he expresses it here: " *A few years ago, Havel and the other signers of Charta 77 supplied us with a new example of social poetry, of the poetry of social hope. That*

example makes clear that such hope can exist, and can sometimes even be fulfilled, without backup from a philosophy of history and without being placed in the context of an epic or tragedy whose hero is Humanity" (Rorty 1991: 243*).*

After all this, one must answer the question: why is there a need for social hope, especially when past efforts to formulate an adaptable approach have consistently failed? The revitalization of hope is essential in the context of the current post-heroic "*tanatos*" and the mirage of techno-domination. The roots of these developments can be traced to two earlier lines of thought, which intersect in a lunatic convergence due to their respective endpoints: (1) radical nihilism, which Heidegger insightfully observes as "… in its essence metaphysics is nihilism" (Heidegger 2022), and (2) the monumental heroism of the "god-party"[102] manifesting through Bolshevik revolution and Mao's cultural primitivism. The combined result of these discursive formations is their appearance as spectral adversaries of democratic ethos. Cloistered and self-satisfied, these discourses seek a superior, apodictic position, attempting to disparage democracy by suggesting that the justification for a better life cannot occur in praxis but instead requires an elevated esoteric level. Their stance implies that democracy's weakness lies in its refusal to promise the infallible

[102] Note: The concept of "God-State Party" is found in the book *Democracy and Totalitarianism: Selected Essays* by the philosopher Claude Lefort. With this concept, Lefort attempts to draw a historical tangent anchored in two key points: (1) the *augenblick* in which the traditional concept of the God-King relationship prevails, marked by monarchy as a ruling force determining our earthly fate, where the monarch is crowned to oversee the destinies of those they govern, and (2) the moment after the October Revolution when, through the machinery of control—known in dialectical/historical materialism registers as the central committee—the Party replaces the God-King with a secular creation, the State-Party. In this second moment, the traditional relationship with God is severed, as the Party-State assumes the role of *Dei*. Through its human tribunal, the Party-State plays the role of an eternal court, operating on Earth in a 'permanent' function, as the Communist trope suggests, or as Lefort puts it:

"the State-God, represented by a minority holding all power, while the remainder of the population consists of passive citizens. Additionally, the totalitarian concept is perfected by purges" (Lefort 1994: 94)

As a result of this analysis of ideological totalitarianism, contemporary reconfigurations of these contexts have mutated or devolved into new perverse forms. Despite these transformations, certain constants remain in these residual forms: (1) the *egocrat* (Solzhenitsyn), who now may not hold high office in a cooperative or central committee but instead thrives as an expert in techno-digital vanity. This new "mutant" experiences ecstasy in virtual *jouissance* (Baudrillard, 2008); and (2) whereas totalitarian regimes had a passive majority (Lefort 1994), today's techno-sphere of digital barbarism features a silent majority (Baudrillard 1996). To encapsulate the State-Party dynamic, it is sufficient to state its oppressive maxim: *I am the State!* See: (Lefort 1994).

messianic "promesse de bonheur" on Earth, nor the nihilistic plunge into the void [*ex nihilo nihil fit*]. Instead, as Lefort concisely defines it, "democracy is the form of a society in motion that has left behind the principle of absolute legitimacy" (Lefort 1994: 14). The implications of this reading lead to the understanding that democracy cannot be reduced to the mechanics of voting nor confined to the pursuit of eternal truths. On the contrary, if one invokes Whitman, democracy is an everyday pursuit in the making of a "human-all-too-human" *civitas*. This excursion reveals how these two pursuits have eroded hope within the contemplative registers, pushing it into a Manichean framework. Democracy, that middle road—not Giddens' Third Way—is challenging to follow precisely because it is continually assailed by the naïve enthusiasts of extremes. Yet, democracy creates the "other world" Kafka evokes in his letters, where social poetry can be written outside of these polarities, offering a gravitational field distinct from the mythic struggle between Zeus and Gaia. The revitalization of hope arises precisely along this middle path as an inspiring manifesto for improvement.

The source of this reconfiguration of hope, translated into social poetry, finds an embodiment in the figure of Havel. He viewed self-technologies not as elements of an "egological life" (Derrida 2001: 156) but as affirmations of a type of interconnection, which, in ontological terms, might be expressed as *Mitsein*—an acknowledgment of the essential nature of our interconnectedness. In Havel, individuation becomes a form of mutuality, realized through integrity and responsibility toward others. He articulates what Rorty calls "non-theoretical solidarity," resonating with Amos Oz's perspective in "How to Cure a Fanatic," where the other is an integral part of one's own being. The remedy, then, is to see the other as an essential component of one's being-in-the-world. These poetic fragments serve as dwellings that kindle social hope. Havel clarifies that this interconnection and mutuality do not stem from some external force or futuristic venture but are woven into everyday intervention. He expresses this through the phrase, "hope is not prognostication" (Havel 1990: 109). When translated into discursive terms, Havel's claim should lead toward a form of coexistence akin to fraternity—as Dewey interprets the term. Fraternity and the fellowship of ordinary people, through a *caritas* reminiscent of Vattimo, must foster a belief that social interconnection and hope should be humanity's beginning and end (Rorty 1999: xi). This sentiment of an ethics of responsibility seems to be the shared focal point between Havel and Rorty. In his famous address at Harvard University, later published with a title that echoes his

primary thesis, "radical renewal of our sense of responsibility," Havel articulates a position that aligns closely with Rorty's, as he states:

"*It is my profound belief that there is only one way to achieve this: we must divest ourselves of our egotistical anthropocentrism, our habit of seeing ourselves as masters of the universe who can do whatever occurs to us. (...) Our respect for other people, for other nations and for other cultures, can only grow from a humble respect for the cosmic order and from an awareness that we are a part of it, that we share in it and that nothing of what we do is lost, but rather becomes part of the eternal memory of being, where it is judged"* (Havel 1995).

In the figure of Havel, Rorty finds the poet and politician who refuses to submit to two exhausting modes of being: (1) brutal nihilistic defeatism and (2) the one-dimensional machinery of Leninism. Rorty seems to extend a hand to progressive politicians emerging from the yoke of Stalinist communism, aiding them in the constitution of their political platforms. Turning to social hope, for Rorty, it must be constructed from Deweyan pragmatist elements and a forward orientation akin to Whitman's vision. Rorty, in *Achieving Our Country*, frames hope according to Whitman's worldview, claiming: "*full play for human nature to expand itself in numberless and even conflicting directions*" (Rorty 1998: 24).

Rorty anticipates the present state, aptly called "melancholic reason." Numerous philosophers have created vocabularies and taxonomies of social phenomena, critiquing existing institutions to construct frameworks that serve as references or narratives for the future. Critique has conveyed political, social, and discursive positions, encapsulated in Foucault's definition: "the art of not being governed like this" (Foucault 2024). Comparing Foucault's *opera mundi* with Rorty's works, a similarity emerges: both aim to reanimate a new space for enlightenment. Yet Rorty's critique zeroes in on how new forms of political and social expression, influenced by psychoanalysis, language philosophy, and traditional identity approaches, have produced not hope but its erosion. This diagnosis is reflected in his words: "*inability to construct a plausible narrative of progress. A turn away from narration and utopian dreams toward philosophy seems to me a gesture of despair*" (Rorty 1999: 232). These new approaches have undermined the potential to sustain a dream for a world striving for, as Rorty states, "*a classless and casteless society (...) the sort of society that American Leftists have spent the twentieth century trying to construct*" (Rorty 1998: 30). Such a society can only be sustained by igniting the flame of social hope and non-theoretical solidarity to preserve the democratic future.

Social hope functions as a synonym for Rorty's apocryphal humanism, as Bernstein describes it: "There is nothing that we can rely on but ourselves and our fellow human beings" (Bernstein, 2010: 211). Social hope, tested daily by terror, genocide, and dehumanization, resonates with Sartre's famous maxim, "Hell is Other People." Yet this is no signal to despair. Voices remain who view critique as a mental and practical space to resist the denigration of human existence; they stand on the metaphorical front lines for a society fueled by *poiesis* for a *praxis*, where the Other's alterity is integral to our being-in-the-world. Amid the machinery of war and technocratic bureaucracy, Rorty's call offers a positive variant of Benjamin's "hope for the hopeless." This call can be characterized as: "*that we good people who respect Otherness (...) a poetic agon, in which jarring dialectical discords would be resolved in previously unheard harmonies*" (Rorty 1998: 20, 24).

Toward the end of his life, a certain melancholy seemed to infiltrate Rorty's discourse, as he discerned the self-stultification of the academic Left, which had chosen to remain stoic in the "libidinal academy," suppressing any form of *praxis* or *pragma*. This left an "open door" for autocratic nationalism, cloaked in the guise of "vox populi," to overtake not only progressive patriotism but also the critical sphere. Rorty was one of the first to observe that a commitment to purely theory-centric projections, divorced from daily life, could pave the way for bureaucratic tyranny. His later writings and lectures reveal traces of this melancholy, yet he never conceded. He urged the maintenance of non-theoretical solidarity and social poetry as tools to avoid becoming passengers on the train to defeatism. Silence would signify comfort and fear, while noise embodies mobility, vitality, and cooperation—essential components for sustaining the desire for an improvement manifesto.

5.3.1 Social Poetry: Non-theoretical Solidarity

Rorty constructs the idea of un-theoretical solidarity on two lines of argumentation: (1) as a marker that replaces the drive for objectivity and (2) as un-theoretical, solidarity becomes contextual and thus broader in scope when confronting cruelty. Without anchoring solidarity in any epistemological or ideological nexus, it can serve as a tool for improving the human condition. Rorty's concept of solidarity aligns with his ideas of a post-philosophical culture and a post-metaphysical state. In Vattimo's interpretation, the term "solidarity" parallels his notion of charity as a form of *in vivo* self-realization. Neo-pragmatists, regarding truths as created rather than given,

envision an "authentic togetherness" free from any form of alienation. For Vattimo, "It appears to me that in neopragmatism we have a summation of the acceptance that truth is given only as the manifestation of a community" (Vattimo 2011:134). Thus, un-theoretical solidarity challenges the epistemological domain by offering a communal truth, not one revealed, ahistorical, or existing outside of events, occurrences, and history. At the same time, it challenges ideology, reminding us that solidarity, when one-dimensional in history, has functioned fragmentarily, selectively, and exclusively, rendering the concept of solidarity itself a source of scorn and despair.

These dual premises support the development of Rorty's concept of solidarity as an integral part of democratic community, post-metaphysical state, and his post-philosophical culture. True to his characteristic style, Rorty begins dismantling epistemology with solidarity as an alternative to objectivity. According to Rorty, those who reduce objectivity to solidarity and dispense with the "metaphysics of presence" deserve the title of pragmatist. They have no need to bind beliefs to objects, either through correspondence or coherence. In short, the self-consumption of truth in solidarity offers an objective description of the situation itself, as moments moving toward this state (Vattimo 2011: 134). These truths, rather than existing as ahistorical entities, are situated within the reality of events: "no origin placed somewhere outside of the actuality of the event" (Vattimo 2011: 42). In Davidson's terms, supported by Rorty, this incursion toward eventfulness might be encapsulated as "minimal truth." The underlying point of this approach is that pragmatists seek to shift philosophy's drive for objectivity to a desire for solidarity. Rorty calls for an immersion in the "*jouissance of solidarity*," enabling science to transcend a laboratory-bound life of individualism and innovation, and to exist in public life, where research outcomes enhance life on Earth. For Rorty, solidarity is the discursive marker encapsulating this theoretical gesture. In attempting to dismantle objectivity through solidarity, he states: "Pragmatists would like to replace the desire for objectivity—the desire to be in touch with a reality which is more than some community with which we identify ourselves—with the desire for solidarity with that community" (Rorty 1990: 39). Here, un-theoretical solidarity serves to: (a) uphold a philosophy of unity inherited from Hegel; (b) view science as a model for human solidarity; and (c) cultivate an open, free exchange of ideas, producing agreement without coercion within an interpretive community. These points converge in a Nietzschean gesture within Rorty's philosophy: "*The best argument we partisans of solidarity have against the realistic partisans of objectivity is Nietzsche's argument that the traditional Western metaphysico-epistemological way of firming up our habits simply isn't*

working anymore" (Rorty 1990: 32). Following this line of reasoning, pragmatist truths submit to no internal or external authority, precluding any form of alienation. This is also their *Wegmark*, where expectations are formulated and reformulated within this disciplinary matrix by generations and societies. Here, solidarity signifies intervention, allowing truth to be seen within human communities as zones affirming social poetics over rigid scientism. In this sense, Nietzsche's philosophy becomes a tool for solidarity, dismantling transcendence zones to awaken an objective sensibility.

The second dimension of un-theoretical solidarity unfolds in the realm of social poetry. Through an "unbearable lightness of interpretation," Rorty grants literature primacy in revealing human cruelty; literature provides an "ethical laboratory" (Ricoeur) enabling an unfiltered look at *Dasein* in its actuality, transcending any ideology attempting to conceptualize it. The call that "the poet is not a killer" is crucial, revealing social poetry through literature, which begins as an aesthetic ecstasy and, in the moment of liturgy or performance, transcends the aesthetic to offer moral liberation. Un-theoretical solidarity might crystallize as *minima aesthēticus* transforming into *minima moralia*, echoing Heideggerian *Sorge* in an ontological sense. The platform making pain, cruelty, and grief palpable, and uniquely equipped to describe the savage and morbid facets of *homo sapiens*, is art. Rorty, with his fascination for literature, finds in Dickens's works a deeper expression of misery, degradation, and alienation than in contemporary political or social philosophers, or even in Marx.[103] He captures this sentiment in an essay on Nabokov: "*the study of the sociological or political impact of literature has to be devised mainly for those who are by temperament or education immune to the aesthetic vibrancy of authentic literature, for those who do not experience the telltale tingle beween the shoulder blades*" (Nabokov 1980: 64).

[103] Note: A similar view on the importance and impact of Dickens is found in Deleuze's essay *Immanence*, where, with a refined and cryptic approach, Deleuze emphasizes Dickens's role in understanding the concept of *Homo Tantum*—that man without any distinguishing qualities. Deleuze expresses this notion as follows: "'Homo tantum' with whom everyone empathizes and who attains a sort of beatitude. It is a haecceity no longer of individuation but of singularization: a life of pure immanence, neutral, beyond good and evil, for it was only the subject that incarnated it in the midst of things that made it good or bad. The life of such individuality fades away in favor of the singular life immanent to a man who no longer has a name, though he can be mistaken for no other. A singular essence, a life." According to Deleuze, no one has penetrated more profoundly into the essence of what he calls "life"—or what could also be termed "forms of life"—than Dickens. See: (Deleuze 2013)

Literature is crucial for capturing the intent of solidarity within, to touch on those edges where the affirmation of the other resides. This sense of solidarity is strengthened precisely in the moment of action, embodied in the epigraph "one of us." Here, "one of us" does not carry an abstract meaning but is directly concrete, signifying the immediacy of an act of ontological or anthropological emancipation. Madame de Staël,[104] through a dialectics of negation, attempts to define the impossibility of solidarity as something that steals solitude without offering companionship. The impossibility of a truly solidaristic society implies the reign of bizarreness, where there is no *arete*, only a multitude of vacuums and extremes. In parable form, the current political and social context suffers from the impossibility of solidarity, remaining bound within the frameworks of "nationalism" and "populism," which, simply put, means confinement within the comfort of the status quo. Lacking a social imagination (Mills), society falls into conformity, lethargy, and the reign of bureaucratic cynicism. Rorty's "anthropo/poetic" solidarity sees similarities and dissimilarities as core elements of our ontological and anthropological constitution, viewing this trait as part of the function of historically contingent final vocabularies. Adopting the "make it explicit" approach that characterizes him, Rorty does not see solidarity as rooted in any essentialism but rather as an ongoing effort within the present moment; he expresses this notion as follows:

"*But that solidarity is not thought of as recognition of a core self, the human essence, in all human beings. Rather, it is thought of as the ability to see more and more traditional differences (of tribe", religion, race, customs, and the like) as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to pain and humiliation - the abitity to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of "us"*" (Rorty 1989:192).

Rorty's argument for "non-theoretical solidarity" invokes the discursive tools of Sellars' "psychological nominalism," which distinguishes between moral obligation and benevolence. This distinction lies in that the former is actual, while the latter remains potential within the intra-subjective dialogue of a given idiosyncratic group. This type of argument does not anchor itself in

[104] Note: This observation by Madame de Staël is derived from Roberto Unger and Cornel West's *The Future of American Progressivism*. Madame de Staël is regarded as one of the pioneering figures of liberal thought in the Western hemisphere, often credited as a philosopher who laid the groundwork for egalitarian liberalism and progressive politics. Using Unger's discursive trope, this positions her within the super-liberal tradition beginning with Mill, which sought to establish a clear demarcation from the tradition ultimately solidified as neoliberalism. See: (Unger-West, 1998).

any ahistorical condition but is instead a product of historical circumstances. A crucial distinction Rorty aims to make is that: a) theoretical solidarity remains unrealized, overlooking existence and remaining purely functional and systematic; whereas b) non-theoretical solidarity is embedded in the event itself, thus residing in the present and reaching into the depths of human emotion. The former is constructed outside the human and being, while the latter is an integral part of both. In this sense, Rorty's effort can be viewed within the progressive political spectrum's challenge to reanimate solidarity as a dimension of being-in-the-world. The challenge for progressive politics is to combat a narrow-minded, individualistic ethic of self-improvement, where the affirmation of solidarity becomes central (West Unger 1998: 32). The socio-political domain must converge with the onto-anthropological in sustaining an endless dialogue for the evolution of life forms.

With the characteristic clarity provided by philosopher Nancy Fraser, who observes: "*On one side will be public life, the preserve of pragmatism, the sphere where utility and solidarity predominate. On the other side will be private life, the preserve of Romanticism, the sphere of self-discovery, sublimity and irony. In the public sphere, one's duty to one's community takes precedence; social hope, decency and the greatest happiness of the greatest number are the order of the day. In the private sphere, by contrast, the reigning cause is one's duty to oneself; here, one may disaffiliate from the community, attend to the fashioning of one's self and, so, deal with one's aloneness*" (Fraser 1989: 31). Perhaps Rorty's endeavor could be seen as a way to establish a kind of homeostasis between the private and public realms, where the public sphere takes precedence as the arena of democracy. Thus, Rorty's non-theoretical solidarity, as his anthropo-poetics, positions democracy and community as central in his political ontology—an ontology that is inherently rooted in the present.

6. CODA: TRUTH WITHOUT ESSENCE

6.1 Truth in a Theoretical Desert

Before delving into Rorty's concept of truth, a genealogical examination is necessary to uncover where the notion of truth begins to form within Western reflective thought. Here, genealogy is understood in the Foucauldian sense, where it is described as "grey," patiently documenting and locating its function on "confused parchments" (Foucault 1977) that are continually written and rewritten. Foucault's endeavor is not to pursue genealogy as a search for origins but to challenge such a pursuit. Genealogy is historical in its depth yet counters the meta-historical arrogance of ideal meanings and teleologies. Consequently, it allows for an understanding of how the "metaphysics of presence" became the central point legitimizing the intellectual impulse to discover truth as objective, intelligible, and ahistorical. This is the period when metaphysical philosophy emerged, seeking to un-conceal the essence of things as they are. Metaphysics would serve as the discipline underpinning this "*bio-theoretikos*," manifested as a fortress inaccessible to ordinary people. At the gate of this esoteric citadel reads "privileged access," with the philosopher as its code-breaker. Europe would pride itself on having devised this code, which simultaneously becomes a burden. However, agreeing with Agamben, one can observe that Europe still holds the potential to reexamine its history with a critical and historical eye, preventing Western philosophy and culture from surrendering to mere museality.

This genealogical exploration leads to the point where the co-primordial emergence of truth and being and their byproduct, the true and the good, is encountered. This genealogical journey traces back to Ancient Greece, where the notion of nature's priority over language, culture, and historical experiences is constituted. Given this primacy of nature, an intelligible plane for conceptualizing truth emerges, not as an occurrence or event but as something that simply is; this implies a linkage to being, that which exists and is present, with its own identity, form, and nature. Here, the classical concept of being (*ousia*), associated with existence and identity, comes to the fore. A second focal point in this examination should guide toward the idea that truth is a kind of identification that distinguishes it from falsity, creating a demarcation line between what is said and what is. This identification connects with the concept of form (*eidos*). The ancient Greeks' fixation on physis is observed precisely where, to maintain the precedence of nature, they position truth as a secondary identification; this implies the imitation of the original by the copy, leaving

humanity reliant on reproducing Nature's original (Allen 1993: 10). A brief intervention here reveals an attempt to override *nomos* in favor of *physis*, marking the emergence of a "mirror of nature" *avant la lettre*.

The third feature in the Greek concept of truth relates to how the character of secondary signs, through which truth is symbolized and communicated, undergoes subordination. This variation of truth subordinates being (existence/identity) and signs (linguistic and others) to nature and physics, thus granting presence a non-sign status (Allen 1993: 10). Put more gently, this process de-historicizes truth, rendering it intelligible. Herein lies the platform that still dominates philosophy: viewing "being as truth," wherein all entities are subject to an essential and objective nature, contrasted with what is called the philosophy of freedom, which sees "the truth of being" as viewing language, praxis, freedom, and events as steps toward multiple truths.

This yearning for truth is linked to the concept of logos, where Heraclitus sees it 'as a criterion of truth or a means of intelligence.' At this point, Aristotle's intervention appears, as Allen describes: "*Aristotle links form and logos through phusis, nature, which he defines as "shape (morphe) or form (eidos) according to logos" (193a). This double linking of form—on one side to nature and being, on the other to logos, language, reason, and measure—recurs in later work on truth*" (Allen 1993: 20). This introduces a notion of "logical form" as "forms of reality," where the idea of truth as a correspondence to objective reality emerges, or what is known in Platonic dialogues as "Truth as justified belief." This proto-epistemological relationship between logic and truth seems to require an additional impulse: the creation of a more juridical discourse regarding being. Here arises the Eleatic effort, particularly with Parmenides, where truth stands as an elenchus—a rigorous dialectical inquiry. Truth is that which withstands this scrutiny, in the sense that what survives has passed the test of truth. This metaphysical plane of contemplation later finds resonance in Roman law, with its methods of extracting truth through torture.[105] Consequently, the

[105] Note: In *Truth in Philosophy*, Barry Allen provides a brilliant breakdown of the practical consequences of Parmenides' metaphysical stance. Allen draws examples from Roman law, initially citing Ulpian, who writes, "By torture (quaestio) we are to understand the torment and suffering of the body in order to elicit the truth," while Boethius describes, "Torture is interrogation by torment of the body ... for the purpose of eliciting the truth." A similar approach appears in Plato, who refers to the need "to put the statement itself to a mild degree of torture" and insists that "we must attach ourselves solely to our object and torment it." According to Allen, these statements reveal a rationalization

metaphysical-epistemic dichotomy converges with an invisible ideological layer. This juridical precision can be seen emptied in Kant's endeavor for apodictic truths. This conceptual line toward nature in Ancient Greek thought on truth is succinctly encapsulated in Aristotle's famous formulation: 'to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true.' From this, it may be concluded that truth initially intertwines with being, but for it to acquire a "useful" status, it must be good. Similar to Plato's gnoseological platform, where the idea of the good occupies *Nous* and *Arche*.

A more intense relationship between the good and the truth is found in the Medieval period, especially in the theosophical reflections of Aquinas and Augustine, who attributed the Supreme Good and Beauty to God. Through God's criteria, *malum* and *bonum* would be determined. Here emerges a sort of providence of truth, where God, by his omnipotent and omnipresent nature, installs his governance. The Medieval period introduces a significant shift for understanding the development of truth within humanity's reflective history. This shift derives from Aquinas's famous assertion: 'falsity and truth are not in things ... but in thought' (Aquinas). This marks a transition from truth-making (being) to truth-seeking. With Christianity begins the militant ritual of truth-seeking, with Saint Paul as its first militant.[106] Despite their nuanced differences, the ancient Greeks, Augustine, and the Scholastics considered the relationship between intellect and being (Allen 1993: 12). Philosopher Odo Marquard, with a characteristic cynicism, views metaphysics, and initially even theodicy, as opening moments for philosophical anthropology to create the "nexus nemesis" of good/evil, which serves as the path for *homo compensator*, or as Marquard explains: "*Contemporary anthropology defines men centrally as one who seeks refuge from his imperfections, and can only exist by means of compensations*" (Marquard 1991: 23). Two

---

of torture as an instrument of truth. Marquard rightly observes that modernity is a continuation of the culture of tribunalization. From the tribunal of truth, we move to the tribunal of the mind (cogito), and finally to the tribunal of language. Considering these interconnected elements, MacIntyre's call for enlightenment and Latour's claim that "we have never been modern" perhaps take on greater significance. See: (Allen 1993); (Marquard 1991).

[106] Note: The militant character of Saint Paul, within the context of political theology, is reflected in the work of the Marxist philosopher Alain Badiou. In numerous books and reflections, Badiou regards Paul as a mobilizing figure for creating a new situation. Meanwhile, Barry Allen highlights Paul's significance in establishing a model that becomes part of the Enlightenment discourse on the pursuit of truth, thereby contributing to its unveiling. For further details, see in: (Badiou 2015, 2003); (Allen 1993).

key elements define the Medieval period: 1) the shift toward the militant truth-seeker and 2) the emergence of a path toward the secularized culture of compensation.

In the modern period, a return to the metaphor of nature emerges, with Spinoza and Descartes as two principal figures in this revival. This effort ultimately culminates in Kant's apodictic truths, which coalesce into what he initially termed *Erkenntnistheorie*, now recognized as epistemology within the milieu of analytic philosophy. In this era, truth is viewed through the lens of "ontological a priori truth," meaning that distinctions among entities are determined ontologically in the possibility of existence and the content of truth (Allen 1993: 30). This ontological determinism appears in Descartes' reflections and his substantiating subject, driven toward "ontological certainty." In modernity, the metaphor of nature undergoes a metamorphosis; it no longer mirrors the Greek *physis* but leans toward a principle of resemblance enacted by the subject—a self-evident unity, a mirror of nature. Here, the subject is seen as an interlocutor in sustaining the unity between being and thought, where truth serves as a guarantee for this maintenance. Despite the shift brought about by the dawn of consciousness philosophy and the turn toward language, the same foundational principles set by Plato, later taken up by Kant, remain. Epistemology produces a linguistic variant of the Plato-Kant canon's endeavor. Two dominant forms of analytic philosophy concerning truth are (a) the correspondence theory and (b) the coherence theory. Both directions, along with their derivatives, continue to dominate analytic philosophy up to the present contexts. However, a significant transition deserves emphasis here: the militant *truth-seeker* now becomes the laboratory of the "truth-maker." This truth-maker, though, is no mere antique version; it is, so to speak, version 2.0. This truth-maker now sees language as integral to reaching infallible apodictic truths. The marked example of this shift is Tarski's philosophy of language, specifically in his theory of truth. Tarski's semantic conception posits that the idea of truth concerns a oneness tied to correspondence. In his canonical framework, truth predicates are defined within a formalized system (Allen 1993).

The approach that has factually dominated Western philosophical conceptions of truth is the ontological one. Analyzing this paradigm further reveals that the logical possibility of a sentence's truth-value arises from ontological possibility, as seen in the traditional philosophical formulation of "they are what they are," thus implying that things possess their own identity (Allen 1993). The ontological approach, present in both analytic philosophy and the history of philosophy,

closely aligns with what may be termed the esoteric fortress of truth. These approaches to truth, though emerging from the historical stream of philosophy, are today primarily represented by the reflective arena of analytic philosophy. In conclusion, the ontological approach operates by asserting that truth is true insofar as things are, deriving from its fundamental premise that "what is, is," thus implying a self-contained nature of truth (Allen 1993).

6.1.1 Fractures in the Post-Metaphysical Concept of Truth

If this aforementioned perspective dominates a philosophy oriented toward the metaphysics-epistemology binary, it should be marked by the metaphor of the fortress. Heretics of this approach, deprioritizing truth in favor of freedom, aim to shift the principle of truth towards culture and context. This approach could thus be identified with Baudrillard's metaphor of the desert, not in the classical "desert of the real" of *The Matrix* that draws from Baudrillard's reflections, but in a re-adapted version: "welcome to the desert of truth." A common denominator of this approach consists of two key elements: a) that truth is not capital-T Truth, and b) given that there is no singular Truth but rather a multiplicity of truths, it is found in events [*Ereignis*], affirming what philosopher Donald Davidson terms "minimal truth."

Friedrich Nietzsche is the first philosopher to effectively lay the groundwork for dismantling the metaphysical-epistemological approach to truth. Known for his heretical formula, "We have art in order not to die of the truth" (Nietzsche 1968: 822), his perspectivism, concretized through his critique of metaphysics, opens the doors to the plurality of truths. In Nietzsche, for the first time in the history of thought, there appears an explicit prioritization of freedom over truth. Although previous sparks of this idea can be found in the reflective history of thought, Nietzsche's suspicion becomes evident in his famous statement: "The will to truth requires a critique – let us thus define our own task – the value of truth must for once be experimentally called into question" (Nietzsche 1989: 153). Nearly the same disdain for truth as something indisputable is found across the Atlantic in the pragmatist philosopher William James, who, through his postulate—arguably a prelude to the pluralistic nature of pragmatism—asserts that 'truth has no essence.' For both Nietzsche and James, truth does not adhere to any adequation with a transcendent order of being that is fixed and closed (Allen 1993: 3). Rorty captures this link between pragmatism and nihilism

when he claims: 'Neopragmatism is a combination of passive nihilism and pragmatism.' (Rorty)[107] This stems from the radical critique both positions undertake of the metaphysical-epistemological binary. A distinction can be seen in that while the former seeks to annihilate truth, the latter attempts to reinterpret it within a practical understanding.

One thinker who brilliantly overturns the classical discourse on truth as correspondence is Martin Heidegger. While before Heidegger, 'being as truth' was present within the economy of presence, he shifts it towards the formula 'the truth of being.' In this shift, the impulse is not towards truth, but towards being, or as Allen states: "Heidegger too is a critic of truth's onto-logic, in particular of the idea that the essence of truth is its correspondence to reality" (Allen 1993: 3). This approach to truth constitutes Heidegger's ontological proto-anarchism, as Schurmann describes. Schurmann identifies two economies of presence in Heidegger's thought, closely tied to the concept of truth: 1) metaphysics, governed by the epochal principle, and 2) post-metaphysics, governed by "an-archic" chaosmos. The former presupposes the "explanation of being," while the latter presupposes the "thinking of being" (Zabala 2009: 61). Heidegger does not perceive truth as an *arche*, an origin, but as *(an)archai*, which is originless. This approach manifests in Heidegger's definition of truth when he states, "the essence of being is freedom" (Heidegger 1993: 125). He views truth not as something bound to static being but as linked to freedom. This ontological anarchism, derived from Heidegger, is seen in many philosophers such as Agamben, Nancy, Derrida, Levinas, and Schurmann. Rightly, this ontological anarchism is defined by philosopher Catherine Malabou as "anarchy without anarchism" (Malabou 2023).

Many other thinkers have deconstructed traditional approaches to truth. Imagining the implementation of the essence of truth as correspondence with reality in the political or ethical sphere reveals its lack of coherence. Conceptually, partial agreement can be found with philosopher Barry Allen's proposal: "passing for true." In a simplified interpretation, this implies that only human beings possess the capacity to make statements that penetrate practical reason or

[107] Note: Historian Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen sharply highlights the influence of Nietzsche's philosophy on contemporary American thinkers. In her book, *American Nietzsche: A History of an Icon and His Ideas*, she conducts a detailed examination of this connection. Indeed, the link between Nietzsche and American philosophy lies in their shared radical critique of universal truths. One of the central figures she explores in this book is Richard Rorty, who uniquely integrated Nietzsche's critique into his own pragmatism. For further details, see: (Ratner-Rosenhagen, 2011).

practical logic, which can be taken seriously as a pass for truth. These practical conditions situate truth amidst the significant asymmetries of social power, undermining its status as a common good. Here, truth appears as historically situated in a contingent manner. Pragmatism strikes decisively at this call, lucidly captured by philosopher Astrit Salihu when he asserts that the shift is "from a theory of truth to a theory for truth" (Salihu 2024).

6.1.2 Rorty's Pragmatist Conception of Truth

> *"Beliefs are true or false, but they represent nothing. It is good to be rid of representations, and with them the correspondence theory of truth, for it is thinking that there are representations that engenders thoughts of relativism"* (Davidson 1989:165-66).

Rorty's critique of truth as essence focuses on two main targets: (1) representationalism, as represented by analytic philosophers, and (2) universal truth, which resides within the discursive registers of various political ideologies. Both dimensions attempt to present a truth that is infallible, eternal, and intelligible—a truth that must either be discovered or followed, even to the point of self-sacrifice. Representationalism, an extension of Kantian-style apodictic truths into contemporary epistemology, constructs itself along two primary lines: (a) the correspondence theory and (b) the coherence theory. While these two pillars of epistemology regarding the problem of truth have generated further offshoots, these branches remain anchored in these foundational directions.

Rorty proposes an anti-representationalist version of truth, blending the efforts of Nietzsche and Heidegger with those of Wittgenstein and Dewey. This variant of truth (a) lacks any inherent essence, being instead a product of historical contingencies and social practices, and (b) at the level of the ontology of actuality, should be either the consequence of events that sustain the current reality or context-oriented. As Vattimo puts it, there is "no origin placed somewhere outside of the actuality of the event" (Vattimo 2011: 42). This approach seems influenced by Heidegger and his famous postulate that "science does not think." If metaphysics is marked by the age of principle, revelation, and representationalism, then the post-metaphysical condition is characterized by democracy, plurality, and creativity. Within the neo-pragmatist framework, truth is tied to freedom and democracy as its central pillars. In his essay collection *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, Richard Rorty offers a vision of the anti-representationalist approach to truth, which can be summarized as follows:

The first component of the anti-representationalist approach centers on a deep skepticism toward the notion of "truth-makers", i.e., the non-linguistic entities that are purported to determine the truth or falsity of statements, as established by representationalist theory. This skepticism challenges the foundational premise that there exists an objective, extra-linguistic arbiter of truth. The second component expands on this critique, suggesting that without the active engagement of certain social practices, assertions cannot meaningfully be deemed true or false. Truth, in this view, becomes inseparable from the contexts and conventions through which language operates. The third component draws on Davidson's reflections on truth theory, positing that terms such as "words," "meaning," "reference," and "satisfaction" are necessary positions for implementing a theory of truth but do not amount to an analysis of the word "truth" itself, nor do they attempt to explain correspondence or define what "makes true." According to Rorty, this shift reframes the theory of truth away from any search for foundational meaning or objective correlation. The fourth component, as a response to Davidson's reflections, argues that truth functions more as noise or signs created by one organism to coexist with another within a coherent pattern. This process, one that adapts and fulfills our description of interaction between organisms and their environment, aligns with a pragmatist view in which truth is not a metaphysical anchor but a relational tool. Here, Rorty attempts a synthesis between his pragmatist fallibilism and Nietzsche's radical critique of philosophy, suggesting that truth is best understood as a dynamic interaction within specific social and linguistic contexts, rather than as an objective standard imposed upon thought.

As a final position, attention turns to Alan Malachowski's lucid analysis of truth theory within the context of Richard Rorty's philosophy. For Malachowski, Rorty denies the assertion that there exist mind-independent truths. Truths that are discovered, deal with uncovering essences, and are therefore true because they describe things as they truly are. For Rorty, the truths uncovered by science are true insofar as they correspond to things as they are, exemplified in statements such as "Mars is x distance from the Sun." Within the registers of neo-pragmatism, this implies that "truth must correspond to actuality" (Malachowski 2002: 14). For Rorty, truth is poetry, democracy, contingency, history, and attunement to the present.

7. Instead of a Conclusion: A World History of Narratives

In one of his final interviews, philosopher Michel Foucault, summarizing his *oeuvre*, embodied the Nietzschean tone in his philosophy, conveying the idea of a "fabulous experience of reality" (Vattimo). This fabulous experience serves as a response to the "theater of truth" (Foucault) that occupies the reflective body of Western thought through metaphysics and persists in analytic philosophy through the domain of epistemological "specialists." At the heart of the metaphysics of presence lies rationality, which has undergone various permutations but has never strayed from the defining dichotomy: what is true, and what is false? This "theater of truth" becomes a detachment from reality, projecting a world that remains outside the human-social—indeed, human-all-too-human—dynamic. The truths these academic heterotopias seek to uncover remain locked within a theoretic-centric realm accessible only to the "calculative minds" of specialists, akin to bureaucrats shaping the world's nature through their projections of *worldhood*.

This dissertation does not aim to chart a path toward discovering a grand historical truth or the theater of truth deeply embedded within Western being and thought. In his lectures on metaphysics, Heidegger argues that this mode of thought is deeply ingrained. The only way to find a route untouched by its presence is to avoid engagement with it entirely. And the only way to avoid engagement is to view the world as an ensemble of metaphors, rather than as something founded on eternal, infallible truths. This turn toward metaphorology opens a path to see the world as a historical narrative. Within Rorty's philosophy, this turn toward narrative is crucial to understanding the reflective gesture of human endeavor, distancing itself from the specialist's stranglehold on thought. Narrative affirms a pluralistic social poetics, not in pursuit of universal truths, but in generating truths closely tied to events, practices, and the present moment. This ontology of the present, through narrative, nourishes solidarity in discursive practice. Hölderlin's notion of poetic dwelling takes on new meaning in Rorty's philosophy, embodying the development of more solidaristic practices centered on creating vocabularies that foster freedom and embrace otherness—not as revelations of any eternal, transhistorical truth. Through narrative, two essential aspects of Rorty's contingency can be apprehended: a) normativity, reflecting Wittgenstein's notion of "a rule to follow," and b) the universal history of contingency, as Deleuze asserts. Narrative enables an appreciation of the romanticism of everyday life, with creativity

serving as a lever to open new fields of possibility for expressing dreams that embrace the otherness of the other.

This turn toward narrative stands as a counterpoint to the mental architecture of truth—and, by extension, objectivity. In this turn, several key components of Rorty's philosophy are affirmed: a) ethical pluralism, b) the multiplicity of truths, c) the poetic experience of social dynamics, d) solidarity and democracy, and e) the literary parliament. As a lover of literature, Rorty's philosophical poetics is encapsulated by Borges, who remarks, "Perhaps universal history is but a history of metaphors." Inverting this observation through Rorty's dictum might render it as: "Perhaps the world history of truth is nothing more than a world history of narratives." This implies that narrative is an ongoing dialogue, sustaining hope for a shared future. Literary critic Kenneth Burke, in his inimitable style, seems to capture Rorty's pragmatist effort toward open dialogue:

"Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion has already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress" (Burke 1941: 110-11).

This dissertation should close with a phrase that could be considered the specter haunting this entire work. The phrase encapsulating this reflection on Rorty's anti-essentialism would be: "A *poiesis* as a creative act for a human-all-too-human *praxis*."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

‘Richard Rorty: The Man Who Killed Truth’, BBC4, 2003, and a brilliant text about this documentary by Stuart Jeffries, ‘Beautiful Minds’, Guardian, 2003, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/media/2003/nov/03/broadcasting.artsand humanities

“Structuralism and Post-Structuralism: an Interview with Michel Foucault,” Telos 55 (1983), (interview led by Gerard Raulet), translated by Jeremy Harding, pp. 195-121

Adorno W. Theodor (2013), *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique*, translated by Willis Domingo, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Adorno W. Theodor (2007), *Negative Dialectics*, translated by E.B Ashton, Continuum, New York, London.

Agamben Giorgio (2000), ‘Bartleby, or On Contingency’, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen, Stanford University Press, Stanford, pp. 243-271.

Agamben Giorgio (2000a), *Means to an End: Notes on Politics*, translated by Vincenzo Binetti, Cesare Casarino, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis.

Agamben Giorgio (1990), *The Community to Come*, translated by Michael Hardt, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London.

Allen Barry (2021), ‘A Pragmatist More Ironic Than Pragmatic’, (ed.) David Rondel, *Cambridge Companion to Rorty*, pp. 88-109.

Allen Barry (2022), ‘Disepistemology’ in: Giancarlo Marchetti (ed.) *The Ethics, Epistemology, And Politics of Richard Rorty*, Routledge, New York, London , pp. 180-188.

Allen Barry (2013), *Postmodern Pragmatism and Skeptical Hermeneutics: Richard Rorty and Odo Marquard*, Contemporary Pragmatism 1,10, pp. 91-111.

Allen Barry (1993), *Truth in Philosophy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Anders Gunther (2009), ‘The Pathology of Freedom: An Essay on Non-Identification’, Deleuze Studies 2, 3, pp. 270-310.

Apolloni Ag (2020), *Comentum*, BardBooks, Prishtinë.

Attali Jacques (1985), *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, translated by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Auerbach Erich (2013), *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, Princton University Press, Princton.

Bachelard Gaston (2002), *The Formation of Scientific Mind: A Contribute to a Psychoanalysis of Objective Knowledge*, translated by Mary McAllester Jones, The Bath Press, Avon.

Bachelard Gaston (1984), *The New Scientific Spirit*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, Beacon Press, Michigan.

Badiou Alian (2015), *Philosophy for Militants*, translated by Bruno Bosteels, Verso, New York, London.

Badiou Alian (2003), *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, translated by Ray Brassier, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Bahtin Mihail (1978), *Stvaralastvo Fransoa Rablea i narodna kultura srednjeg veka i renesanse*, Nolit, Beograd.

Barthes Roland (2007), *Criticism and Truth*, translated by Katrine Pilcher Keuneman, Continuum, New York, London.

Bataille Georges (2012), *Literature and Evil*, translated by Alastair Hamilton, Penguin Books Limited.

Baudrillard Jean (1996), *Perfect Crime*, translated by Chris Turner, Verso, London, New York 1996.

Bennington Geoffrey (2011), 'A Moment of Madness: Derrida's Kierkegaard,' Oxford Literary Review 1, 33, pp. 103-127.

Bennington Geoffrey (1998), *Lyotard: Writing and Event*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Bergson Henri (2022), *Creative Evolution*, translated by Donald Landes, Routledge, New York, London.

Bernstein J. Richard (1983), *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Bernstein J. Richard (2010), *The Pragmatic Turn*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Berstein J. Richard (1992), *The New Constellation The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*, Polity Press, London, New York.

Bertens Hans (1995), *The Idea of Postmodern*, Routledge, New York, London.

Blanchot Maurice (2003), *The Infinite Conversation*, translated by Susan Hanson, The University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota.

Blanchot Maurice (1988), *The Unavowable Community*, translated by Pierre Joris, Station Hill Press.

Bloom Harold (1982), *Agon Towards a Theory of Revisionism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Bloom Harold (1997), *The Anxiety of Influence*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Blumenberg Hans (2010), 'Metaphorics of Naked Truth', in Hans Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, translated by Robert Savage, Cornell University Press, Ithaca/New York, pp. 46-51

Bourdieu Pierre (1990), *The Logic of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.

Brandom Robert (ed.) (2000a), *Rorty and His Critics*, Wiley-Blackwell, New York London.

Brandom Robert (2013), 'An Arch of Thought: From Rorty's Eliminative Materialism to His Pragmatism', in: In: Alexander Gröschner, Colin Koopman, Mike Sandbothe (eds.) *Richard Rorty: From Pragmatist Philosophy to Cultural Politics*, Bloomsbury, New York/ London, pp. 23-30.

Brandom Robert (2021), 'Foreword: Achieving Enlightenment', in: Richard Rorty, *Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London.

Brandom Robert (2000a), 'Introduction', (ed.) Robert Brandom, *Rorty and His Critics*, Wiley-Blackwell, New York.

Brandom Robert (2000), *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Breazeale Daniele (ed.) (1979), 'Introduction', in: *Friedrich Nietzsche, Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the early 1870's*, translated by Daniel Breazeale, Hummanities Press Intenationa, New Jersey, London, pp. xiii-xlix

Cacciari Massimo (2009), *The Unpolitical: On the Radical Critique of Political Reason*, Fordham University Press.

Calcaterra M. Rosa (2022), 'Rorty's Reconstruction of Epistemology' in: Giancarlo Marchetti (ed.) *The Ethics, Epistemology, And Politics of Richard Rorty*, Routledge, New York, pp.129-148.

Calcaterra M. Rosa (2019), *Contingency and Normativity: The Challenges of Richard Rorty*, Brill, Leiden, Boston.

Cavailles Jean (2021)*, On Logic and Theory of Science*, translated by Robin Mackay, Knox Peden, Urbanomic, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London.

Cavell Stanley (1994), *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Chandler Daniel (2023), *Free and Equal: What Would a Fair Society Look Like?*, Penguin Books, London, New York.

Colebrook Clarie (2003), *Irony*, Routledge, New York, London.

Conant James (2020), "The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the Tractatus," in: *The Logical Alien: Conant and His Critics*, Sofia Miguens (ed.), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London.

Connolly E. William (1995), *The Ethos of Pluralization*, University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota, London.

Copleston Frederick (2003), *A History of Ancient Philosophy I: Greek and Roman*, Continuum, London, New York.

Critchley Critchley (2012), *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology*, Verso, London, New York.

Critchley Simon (2004), ‘Unworking Romanticism’, in: Simon Critchley, *Very Little... Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy and Literature*, Routledge, New York, London, pp. 99-162.

Critchley Simon (1999), *Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity*, Verso, New York, London.

Critchley Simon (2013), *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance*, Verso, London, New York.

Davidson Donald (1989), ‘A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs’, (ed.) Ernest Lepore, *Truth and Interpretation*, Blackwell.

Davidson Donald (1989), ‘The Myth of the Subjective’, (ed.) Michael Krausz, *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation*, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame.

Davidson Donald (1984), ‘What Metaphors Mean’, Donald Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

de Certeau Michel (1980), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendall, University of California Press, Berkley, Los Angelos, London.

Debord Guy (2005), *The Society of Spectacle*, translated by Ken Knabb, Rebel Press, London.

Debray Regis (1996), *Media Manifesto: On the Technological Transmission of Cultural Forms*, translated by Eric Rauth, Verso, New York, London.

Deleuze Gilles, Parnet Clarie (1987), *Dialogues*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Columbia University Press, New York.

Deleuze Gilles (1997), ‘Bartleby, or, Formula,’ *Gilles Deleuze, Essays Critical and Clinical*, translated by Daniel W. Smith, Michael G. Greco, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Deleuze Gilles (2013), ‘Immanence a Life’ (ed.) Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze, *Biopolitics a Reader,* Duke University Press, Durham, London.

Deleuze Gilles, Guattari Felix (2008), *Ç’ Është Filozofia?*, translated by Elivs Hoxha, Zenit, Tiranë.

Deleuze Gilles (1997), *Negotiations 1972-1990*, translated by Martin Joughin, Columbia University Press.

Deleuze Gilles (2005), *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, translated by Anne Boyman, Zone Books, New York.

Derrida Jacques (1992), 'Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority', Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld, David Gray Carlson (eds.), *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, Routledge, New York, London, pp. 3-68.

Derrida Jacques (1997), 'Interview with Derrida', interviewed by Nikhil Padgaonkar, available at: https://mural.uv.es/mibosa/DerridaInterview2.htm

Derrida Jacques (1996) , 'Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism', in: (ed.) Chantal Mouffe, *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, London.

Derrida Jacques (2021), *Clang*, translated by Geoffrey Bennington, David Wills, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Derrida Jacques (1986), *Glas*, translated by John P. Leavey. Jr, Richard Rand, The University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, London.

Derrida Jacques (1982), *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Derrida Jacques (1995), *Points ... Interviews, 1974-1994*, (ed.) Elisabeth Weber, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Derrida Jacques (2005), *Rouges: Two Essays on Reason*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault, Michael Naas, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Derrida Jacques (1997), *Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, translated by David B. Alison, Newton Garver, Northwestern University Press, Evanston.

Derrida Jacques (2001), *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass, Routledge, New York, London.

Dewey John (2008), 'Ethics in Democracy', in: (ed.) Jo Ann Boydston, *The Early Works, 1882-1898: 1882-1888*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale.

Dewey John (2008a), *The Early Works, 1882-1898: 1882-1888*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale.

Dewey John (2008b), *The Later Works, 1925-1953: 1925*, in: (ed.) Jo Ann Boydston, , Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale.

Dresser Sam (2020), 'Peak of Ellipsis', Aeon Online Magazine.

Dummett A. E Michael (1994), *Origins of Analytical Philosophy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Eco Umberto (1984), *Postscript to The Name of The Rose*, translated by William Weaver, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Eco Umberto (1989), *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos: The Middle Ages of James Joyce*, translated by Ellen Esrock, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Edwards C. James (1990), *Authority of Language: Heidegger, Wittgenstein and the Threat of Philosophical Nihilism*, University of South Florida Press, Tampa.

Elshtain B. Jean (2003), "Don't be Cruel: Reflections on Rortyian Liberalism", in: Charles Guingon, David R. Hiley (eds.), *Richard Rorty*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge/New York, pp. 139-157.

Emerson Waldo Ralph (1950), 'Nature', in: Ralph Waldo Emerson "*The Complete Essays and Other Writtings*", Random House, New York, pp. 3-45.

Esposito Roberto (2010), *Communitas: The Origin and the Destiny of Community*, translated by Timothy Campbell, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Fairfield Paul (2011), *Philosophical Hermeneutics Reinterpreted (Dialogues with Existentialism, Pragmatism, Critical Theory, and Postmodernism)*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York.

Feyeraband Paul (1993), *Against Method*, Verso, London, New York, 1993

Fish Stanley (1980), *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Fleck Ludwik (1981), *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*, translated by Frederick Bradley and Thaddeus J. Trenn, University of Chicago Press.

Flynn Thomas (2005), "Foucault's Mapping of History," (ed.) Gary Gutting, *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, Cambridge, pp. 29-49.

Foucault Michel (1977), 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', (ed.) D.F. Bouchard, *Language Counter Memory Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Foucault Michel , 'Discourse on Language', Michel Foucault, *The Arecheology of Knowledge and Discourse on Language*, translated by Pantheon Books, New York, pp. 215-238.

Foucault Michel (1998), "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," in: James D. Faubion (ed.), *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, *vol. 2, "Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*,*"* The New Press, New York, pp. 269-278.

Foucault Michel (1980), "The Eye of Power" in Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Writings 1972-1977*, translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper, Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, pp. 146-166

Foucault Michel (2024), *"What Is Critique?" and "The Culture of the Self"*, translated by Clare O'Farrell, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Foucault Michel (2002), *Archeology of Knowledge*, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith, Routledge, New York, London.

Foucault Michel (1988), *History of Sexuality I: The Will to Knowledge*, translated by Robert Hurley, Vintage Books.

Foucault Michel (1990), *History of Sexuality II: The Use of Pleasure*, translated by Robert Hurley, Vintage Books, New York.

Foucault Michel (2009), *Pushteti dhe Dija*, translated by Orgest Azizi, Persida Asllani, ISP&Dita, Tiranë.

Foucault Michel (2002), *The Order of Things: An Archeology of Human Sciences*, Routledge, New York, London.

Fraser Nancy (2008), ‘Abnormal Justice’, Critical Inquiry 3, 34, pp. 393-422.

Fumerton Richard, Hasan Ali (2002), ‘Foundationalist Theories of Epistemic Justification’, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Fynsk Christopher (1991), ‘Foreword,’ in: Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, translated by Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, Simona Sawhney, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Oxford.

Gabriel Markus (2020), *Limits of Epistemology*, translated by Alex Englander, Markus Gabriel, Polity Press, London.

Gadamer George Hans (2004), *Truth and Method*, translated by Joel Weinsheimer, Donald G. Marshall, Continuum, New York, London.

Gellner Erenst (1989), *Plough, Sword, and Book: The Structure of Human History*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Godin Colin (1980), “Afterword,”, (ed.) Colin Godin, *Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews 1972-1977*, Pantheon Books, New York, pp. 229-259.

Goffman Erving (1956), *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh.

Gonzalez Francisco (2015), “Hermeneutics in Greek Philosophy,” in: Jeff Malpas, Hans-Helmuth Gander (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics*, Routledge, New York, pp. 13-23.

Gros Neil (2008), *Richard Rorty: Making of an American Philosopher*, The University Chicago Press, Chicago, London.

Groys Boris (2012), *An Introduction to Anti-Philosophy*, translated by David Fernbach, Maria Carlson, Verso, New York, London.

Guess Raymond (2013), *Not Thinking like a Liberal*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Guess Raymond (2009), *Outside Ethics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Guingon Charles, Hiley R. David (2003), 'Introduction: Richard Rorty and Contemporary Philosophy', in: Charles Guingon, David R. Hiley (eds.), *Richard Rorty*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, pp. 1-40.

Guthrie W.K.C. (1997), *A History of Greek Philosophy Volume I*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Gutting Gary (ed.) (2008), *Continental Philosophy of Science*, Wiley-Blackwell.

Gutting Gary (2020), 'Rorty and Analytic Philosophy' in: Alan Malachowski (ed.), *A Companion to Rorty*, Willey-Blackwell, London, pp. 211-228.

Gutting Gary (2003), 'Rorty's Critique of Epistemology', in: Charles Guingon, David R. Hiley (eds.), *Richard Rorty*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, pp. 41-60

Gutting Gary (1989), *Michel Foucault's: Archeology of Scientific Reason*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York.

Habermas Jurgen (2013), """… And to Define America, Her Athletic Democracy" The Philosopher and the Language Shaper. In Memory of Richard Rorty " (eds.) in: Alexander Gröschner, Colin Koopman, Mike Sandbothe (eds.) *Richard Rorty: From Pragmatist Philosophy to Cultural Politics*, Bloomsbury, New York/ London, pp. 9-19

Habermas Jurgen (1998), *On Pragmatics of Communication*, edited by Maeve Cocke, The MIT Press, Massachusetts.

Habermas Jurgen (1992) , *Postemetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays*, translated by William Mark Hohengarten, MIT Press, Massachusetts.

Habermas Jurgen (1987), *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, translated by Frederick Lawrence, Polity Press, London.

Hacking Ian (1999), *The Social Construction of What?*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Hägglund Martin (2008), *Radical Atheism: Derrida and The Time of Life*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Handwerk J. Gary (1985), *Irony and Ethics in Narrative: From Schlegel to Lacan*, Yale University Press.

Hassan Ihab (1987), *The Postmodern Turn:Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture*, Ohio State University Press, Ohio.

Havel Vaclav (1995), 'Radical Renewal of Our Sense of Responsibility', Lecture Harvard University.

Havel Vaclav, Huizdala Karel (1990), *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Huizdala*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Heffernan Jiménez Julian (2013), 'Introduction: Togetherness and Its Discontents', in: Paula Martin Savlan, Gerardo Rodrigo Salas, Julian Jiménez Heffernan (eds.), *Community in Twentieth Century Fiction*, Palgrave, London, pp. 1-48.

(1998) *Hegel After Derrida,* Stuart Barnett (ed.), Routledge, New York, London.

Hegel Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1995), *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Greek philosophy to Plato. Vol. 1*, translated by E.S. Haldane, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, London.

Hegel Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1975) , *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Introduction: Reason in History*, translated by Hugh Barr Nisbet, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Hegel Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1953), *Reason in History*, translated by Robert S. Hartman, MacMillan, Londonn.

Hegel Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2005), *Philosophy of Right*, translated by S.W. Dyde, Dover Publication.

Heidegger Martin (1972), 'Time and Being', in: Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, translated by Joan Stambaugh, Harper and Row, New York, San Francisco, London, pp. 1-24.

Heidegger Martin (1959), *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Ralph Mannheim, Yale University Press, New Haven, London.

Heidegger Martin (1993), *Basic Writings: from Being and time (1927) to The task of thinking (1964)*, translated by David Farrell Krell, Harper Collins, New York.

Heidegger Martin (2008), *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie, Edward Robinson, Harper Perennial, New York.

Heidegger Martin (2022), *Metaphysics and Nihilism*, translated by Arun Iyer, Polity Press, London.

Heidegger Martin (1982) , *On the Way To Language*, translated by Peter D. Hertz, HarperCollins, New York.

Heidegger Martin (2010), *Pathmarks*, translated by William McNeil, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Heidegger Martin (2003), *The End of Philosophy*, translated by Joan Stambaugh, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Heidegger Martin (2002), *The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Parable of the Cave and the Theaetetus*, translated by Ted Sadler, Bloomsbury Academic, London, New York.

Heidegger Martin (1994), *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, translated by William McNeil, Nicholas Walker, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indianapolis.

Heidegger Martin (2000) *, Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Vittorio Klostermann, Stuttgart.

Heidmann Dietmar (2007), *Der Begriff des Skeptizismus: Seine systematischen Formen, die Pyrrohnische Skepsis und Hegels*, De Gruyter, Berlin.

Heilbroner Robert (1994) , *21st Century Capitalism*, W. W. Norton.

Henning Christoph (2014), *Philosophy After Marx:100 Years of Misreading and the Normative Turn in Political Philosophy*, translated by Max Henninger, Brill, Leiden, Boston.

Henry Michel (1991) 'The Critique of Subject" in: Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, Jean-Luc Nancy (eds.), *Who Comes After the Subject?*, Routledge, New York/London, pp. 157-167.

Hesse Marry (1988), 'Cognitive Claim to Metaphors', The Journal of Speculative Philosophy 1, 2, pp. 1-16.

Hjelmslev Louis (1961), *Prolengomena To a Theory of Language*, translated by Francis J. Whitfield University of Wisconsin Press.

Honneth Axel (2008), *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Horkheimer Max, Adorno Theodor (2002), *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, translated by Edmund Jephcott, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Huizinga Johan (1955), *Homo Ludens A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, Beacon Press, Boston, Massachusetts.

Husserl Edmund (1965), "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" in: *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, translated and edited by Quentin Lauer, Harper Collins, New York.

Hutcheon Linda (1988), *A Poetics of Postmodernism History, Theory, Fiction*, Routledge, New York, London.

Hutcheon Linda (1994), *Irony's Edge The Theory and Politics of Irony*, Routledge, New York, London.

Ihde Don (1995), *Postphenomenology: Essays in the Postmodern Context*, Northwestern University Press, Evaston, Illinois.

Jackson P. Timothy (2015), *Political Agape: Christian Love and Liberal Democracy*, Eerdmans.

James William (1907) , *Pragmatism: A New Name For Some Ways of Thinking*, The Floating Press.

James William (1997), *The Writings of William James*, (ed.) J. J. McDermott, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Johansen Friis Karsten (2005), *A History of Ancient Philosophy: From the Beginning to Augustine*, translated by Henrik Rosenmeier, Routledge, London, New York.

Jonas Hans (1984), *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, Chicago University Press, Chicago.

Joyce James (1992), *Finnegans Wake*, Penguin Books, London.

Jurić Hrvoje (2018), *Iskušenje Humanizma*, Hrvatsko Filozofsko Društvo, Zagreb.

Jurić Hrvoje (2021), *Pandemija kao simptom*, DAF, Zagreb.

Kant Immanuel (1991), 'Bemerkungen in den Beobachtungen tiber das Gefuhl das Schonen und Erhabenen', në: *Kant-Forschungen, vol. 3*, Meiner Verlag, Hamburg.

Kelmendi Labinot (2018), "Aporia e teorisë së njohjes', Symbol,13, pp. 54-70.

Klossowski Pierre (2005), *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, translated by Daniel W. Smith, Continuum, London, New York.

Kofman Sarah (1991), "Descartes Entrapped" in: Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, Jean-Luc Nancy (eds.), *Who Comes After the Subject?*, Routledge, New York/London, pp. 178-199.

Kojeve Alexander (1980), *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the "Phenomenology of Spirit"*, translated by James H. Nichols, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, London.

Koselleck Reinhart (2004), *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, translated by Keith Tribe, Columbia University Press, New York.

Kundera Milan (1985), "Man Thinks, God Laughs," translated by Linda Asher, The New York Review, 13.

Kundera Milan, Roth Philippe (1980), 'The Most Original Book of the Season', interview in New York Times.

Kundera Milan ,'The Theatre of Memory', translated by Linda Asher, Guardian 2003,available at: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/may/17/featuresreviews.guardianreview34.

Lacan Jacques (1997), *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, translated by Dennis Porter, W. W. Norton & Company.

Laclau Ernesto (1991), 'Community and Its Paradoxes: Richard Rorty's 'Liberal Utopia'', The Miami Theory Collective (eds.), *Community at Loose Ends*, The University of Minneasota Press, Minneapolis.

Laclau Ernesto (2000), 'Identity and Hegemony: The Role of Universality in the Constitution of Political Logics', Ernesto Laclau, Slavoj Zizek, Judith Butler, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on Left*, Verso, London, New York, pp. 44-89.

Laclau, Ernesto (2000), ‘Structure, History and the Political’, Ernesto Laclau, Slavoj Zizek, Judith Butler, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on Left*, Verso, London, New York, pp. 182-212.

Laclau Ernesto (1996)*, Emancipations*, Verso, London, New York.

Lacoue-Labarthe Philippe, Nancy Jean-Luc (1988), *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism Intersections*, translated by Philip Barnard, Cheryl Leser, SUNY Press.

Latifi Blerim (2024), ‘Interpretations of Hegel’s Philosophy After his Death’, Renewed Life : Journal of Philosophy and Religious Studies 1, 74, pp. 35-47.

Latour Bruno (1993), *We Have Never Been Modern*, translated by Chatherine Poter, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Lear Jonathan (2014), *A Case for Irony*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Lefebvre Alexander (2024), *Liberalism as Way of Life*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Lefort Claude (1994), *Democracy and Totalitarianism: Political Essays*, translated by Muhamedin Kullashi, Dukagjini, Pejë.

Levinas Emmanuel (1979), *Totality and Infinity: And Essays on Exteriority*, translated by Alphonso Lingis, Nijhoff, Dordrecht, Boston, London.

Lewis David (1973), *Counterfactuals*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Lingis Alphonso (1998), *The Imperative*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indianapolis.

Luhmann Niklas (1995), ‘Why Does Society Describe Itself as Postmodern?’, *Cultural Critique* 30, 1, pp. 171-186.

Lyotard Francois-Jean (1991), ‘A 1'insu (Unbeknownst)’, The Miami Theory Collective (eds.), *Community at Loose Ends*, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, pp. 42-29.

Lyotard Francois-Jean (1996) “Parathënia”, *Gjendja Postmoderne: Raport mbi Dijen*, translated by Muhamedin Kullashi, Dukagjini, Pejë.

Lyotard Francois-Jean (1993), *Libidinal Economy*, translated by Ian Hamilton Grant, Indian University Press, Bloomington, Indianapolis.

Lyotard Francois-Jean (1989), *The Differend: Phrase in Dispute*, translated by Georges Van Den Abbeele, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis.

Lyotard Francois-Jean (1984), *The Postmodern Condition: A Report to Knowledge*, translated by Geoffrey Benington, Brian Massuimi, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Lyotard Francois-Jean (1993), *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondences 1982-1985*, translated by Julian Pefanis, Morgan Thomas, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

MacIntyre Alasdair (1984), *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Philosophy*, University of Notre Dame Press.

Malabou Cathrine (2023), *Stop Thief! Anarchism and Philosophy*, translated by Carolyn Shread, Polity Press, London.

Malachowski Alan (2002), *Richard Rorty*, Princeton University Press, Princton.

Malecki W.P., Voprail Chris (2021), 'Introduction' in: *Richard Rorty, On Philosophy and Philosophers: Unpublished Papers 1960-2000*, (eds.) W. P. Malecki, Chris Voprail, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 1-12, p. 4.

Maliqi Shkëlzen, Haxihu Baton (2011), *Shembja e Jugosllavisë, Kosova dhe rrëfime të tjera : dialog me Baton Haxhiun*, UET, Tiranë.

Malpas Jeff (2021), *Rethinking Dwelling: Heidegger, Place, Architecture*, Bloomsbury Academic.

Marquard Odo (1989), *Farewell to Matters of Principle*, translated by Robert M. Wallace, Oxford University Press, Oxford, London.

Marquard Odo (1991), *In Defense of the Accidental*, translated by Robert M. Wallace, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York.

Marrone S. Steven (1996), 'Revisiting Duns Scotus and Henry of Ghent on Modality,' (eds.) Ludger Honnefelder, Rega Wood, Mechthild Dreyer, *John Duns Scotus: Metaphysics*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Cologne, pp. 175-191.

May Tood (1994), *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania.

Menand Louis (2002), *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.

Mendieta Eduardo (2006), 'Introduction,' (ed.) Eduardo Mendieta, *Take Care of Freedom and The Truth Will Take Care of Itself: Interview with Richard Rorty*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, pp. ix-xi.

Merquior G. Jose (1985), *Foucault*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles.

Miller J. Hills (2015), *Community in Fiction*, Fordham University Press.

Miller J. Hills (1998), *Reading Narrative*, University of Oklahoma Press, Oklahoma.

Mills C. Wright (2000), *Sociological Imagination*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Mouffe Chantal (1996), 'Deconstruction, Pragmatism and the Politics of Democracy', in: (ed.) Chantal Mouffe, *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, London.

Moyn Samuel (2023), *Liberalism Against Itself: Cold War Intellectuals and the Making of Our Times*, Yale University Press, 2023.

Muecke D.C (1982), *Irony and the ironic*, Routledge, New York, London.

Nabokov Vladimir (1980), *Lectures on Literature*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Nancy Freaser (1989), *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*, University of Minesota Press, Minesota.

Nancy Luc-Jean (1996), *The Muses*, translated by Peggy Kamuf, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Nehamas Alexander (1982), 'Can We Ever Quite Change the Subject?: Richard Rorty on Science, Literature, Culture, and the Future of Philosophy', *boundary 2* 10, 3, pp. 395-413.

Nietzsche Friedrich (2010), 'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense', in: Friedrich Nietzsche, *On Truth and Untruth: Selected Writtings*, translated by Taylor Carman, Harpper Perennial, New York/London, pp. 17-53

Nietzsche Friedrich (2014), *Beyond Good and Evil/ On Genealogy of Morality,* translated by Adrian Del Caro, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Nietzsche Friedrich (1995), *Human, All Too Human*, translated by Gary Handwerk, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Nietzsche Friedrich (1989), *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, translated by Walter Kaufman, Vintage.

Nietzsche Friedrich (2019), *Unpublished Fragments (Spring 1885- Spring 1886)*, translated by Adrian Del Caro, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Nietzsche Friedrich (1968), *Will to Power*, translated by Walter Kaufman, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Palmer Richard (1969), *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston.

Patocka Jan (2020), 'Life in Balance, Life in Amplitude', in: Jan Patocka, *Living in Problematicity*, translated by Eric Manton, Oikumenh/Karolinum Press, Prague, pp. 32-43

Patton Paul (2015), 'Redescriptive Philosophy: Deleuze and Rorty', (eds.) Simone Bignall, Sean Bowden, Paul Patton, *Deleuze and Pragmatism*, Routledge, London, New York.

Pearson Ansell. Keith, Large Duncan (eds.) (2006), *The Nietzsche Reader*, Blackwell Publishing.

Pearson Ansell-Keith (1997), *Viroid Life: Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition*, Routledge, London, New York.

Pessoa Fernando (2003), *Poeti është një shtiracak*, Dritan, Tiranë.

Petrović Gajo (1986), *Prolegomena za kritiku Heideggera*, Naprijed, Zagreb 1986.

Petrović Gajo (1991), *U potrazi za slobodom: povijesno filozofski ogledi*, Hrvatsko Filozofsko Društvo, Zagreb.

Piketty Thomas (2022), *A Brief History of Equality*, translated by Steven Rendall, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Pinkard Terry (2024), "Understanding collective self-consciousness in Hegelian pragmatism (The Return of Idealism)", available at: https://www.essentiafoundation.org/understanding-collective-self-consciousness-in-hegelian-pragmatism -the-return-of-idealism/reading/, January.

Popper Karl (1994), *The Myth of the Framework: In Defense of Science and Rationality*, Routledge, London.

Prigogine Illya (1980), *From Being to Becoming: Time and Complexity in the Physical Sciences*, W.H. Freeman, San Francisco.

Prigogine Ilya (2000), 'The Norbert Wiener Memorial Gold Medal address: Norbert Wiener and the idea of contingence', Kybernetes 7/8, 29, pp. 825-834.

Prigogine Ilya, Stengers Isabelle (1996), *The End of Certainty: Time, Chaos and New Laws of Nature*, Free Press, New York, London, Toronto, Sidney, Singapore.

Quine Orman Van Willard (1991), "Let Me Accentuate the Positive," in Alan Malachowski (ed.), *Reading Rorty: Critical Responses to Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature and Beyond*, Wiley Blackwell, London, pp. 74-100.

Quine Orman Van Willard (1969), *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, Columbia University Press.

Quine Orman Van Willard (2013), *Word and Objects*, The MIT Press, Massachusetts.

Ramberg Torgrim Bjorn (2014), 'Irony's Commitment: Rorty's Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity,' The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms, 19, 2, pp. 144-62. Doi: 10.1080/10848770.2014.876197.

Ratner-Rosenhagen Jeniffer (2012), *American Nietzsche: A History of an Icon and His Ideas*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Ratner-Rosenhagen Jennifer (2019), *The Ideas That Made America: A Brief History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Reading Paul (2020), 'Rorty on Hegel on the Mind in History', in: Alan Malachowski (ed.), *A Companion to Rorty*, Willey-Blackwell, London, pp. 253-267.

Ree Jonathan (2021), ‘Richard Rorty and the Power of Pragmatism,’ Prospect Magazine, February, available at: https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/culture/38245/richard-rorty-and-the-power-of pragmatism.

Ricoeur Paul (1992), *Oneself as Another*, translated by Kathleen Blamey, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, London.

Ricoeur Paul (1974), *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, ed. by Don Ihde, Northwestern University Press, Evanston.

Ricoeur Paul (1977), *The Rule of Metaphor. Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, translated by Robert Czerny, Kathleen McLaughin, John Costello, University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Rorty Richard (2022), ‘Democracy and Philosophy,’ (eds.) W.P. Malecki, Chris Voparil, *Richard Rorty, What Can We Hope? Essays on Politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, pp. 34-49.

Rorty Richard (ed.) (1992), *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method With Two Retrospective Essays*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Rorty Richard (2010), ‘Fire of Life’, (eds.) Christopher J. Voparil, Richard J. Bernstein in: *The Rorty Reader*, Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 520-522.

Rorty Richard (2006), ‘Heideggerianism and Leftist Politics’, (ed.) Santiago Zabala, *Weakening Philosophy Essays in Honour of Gianni Vattimo*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Ithaca.

Rorty Richard (2010), ‘Intellectual Biography’ in: Randall E. Auxier, Lewis Edwin Hahn (eds.), *The Philosophy of Richard Rorty*, Open Court, Chicago.

Rorty Richard (2021), ‘Philosophy as Epistemology: Replay to Hacking and Kim”, in: *Richard Rorty, On Philosophy and Philosophers: Unpublished Papers 1960-2000*, (eds.) W. P. Malecki, Chris Voprail, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 145-156.

Rorty Richard (1997), “Introduction”, in : Wilfred Sellars, *Empiricism and Philosophy of Mind*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London.

Rorty Richard (2006), “On Philosophy and Politics,” interviewed by Chronis Polychroniou, (ed.) Eduardo Mendieta, *in Take Care of Freedom and The Truth Will Take Care of Itself: Interviews with Richard Rorty*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Rorty Richard (1998), *Achieving Our Country: Leftist thought in twentieth-century America,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London.

Rorty Richard (1982), *Consequences of Pragmatism*, University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota.

Rorty Richard (1989), *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Rorty Richard (1990), *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth: Volume I: Philosophical Papers* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Rorty Richard (1999), *Philosophy and Social Hope*, Penguin, London.

Rorty Richard (1979), *Philosophy and the Miror of Nature*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, Cambridge.

Rorty Richard (2023), *Philosophy as Poetry*, Virginia University Press, Charlottesville, London.

Rorty Richard (2021), *Pragmatism as Anit-Authoritarianism*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Rorty Richard, Richard Rorty Papers: Box 3, Folder 2, University of California.

Rorty Richard (1998), *Truth and Progress*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Rosenblatt Helena (2020), *The Lost History of Liberalism: From Ancient Rome to the Twenty-First Century*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Rumana Richard (2000), *On Rorty*, Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Russell Bertrand (2009), ‘Egocentric Particulars’, in: Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits, Routledge*, London, New York, pp. 80-88.

Russell Bertrand (2009), ‘Logic as the essence of philosophy’, in: Bertrand Russell, *Our Knowledge of External World, Routledge*, London, pp. 26-48

Saatkamp Jr. Herman (ed.) (1995), *Rorty and Pragmatism: The Philosophical Respond to His Critics*, Vanderbilt University Press.

Sacks Oliver (2011), *The Island of the Colour-blind*, Pan MacMillan.

Salihu Astrit (2010), 'Anaksimandri Tundimi Burimor i Mendimit', *MM* , 10.

Salihu Astrit (2024), 'The Challenges of Post-Philosophy', European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy 1, xvi, pp. 1-19.

Salihu Astrit (2009), *Aporitë e Modernes (Kritika e rrëfimëve të mëdha)*, Qendra për studime humanistike "Gani Bobi", Prishtinë.

Salihu Astrit (1997), *Diskursi Filozofik i Postmodernes*, Dukagjini, Pejë.

Scheler Max (2020), *Pozita e Njeriut në Kozmos*, Botimet Pema, Prishtinë.

Schoentjes Pierre (2001), *Poetika e Ironisë*, translated by Verjon Fasho, Dy Lindje dhe Dy Perëndime, Tiranë.

Schurmann Reiner (2003), *Broken Hegemonies*, translated by Reginald Lilly, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indianapolis.

Schurmann Reiner (1987), *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principle to Anarchy*, translated by Christine-Marie Gross, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

Sellars Wilfried (1997), *Empiricism and Philosophy of Mind*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London.

Sellars Wilfried (1963), *Science, Perception and Reality*, Humanities Press, New York 1963

Sloterdijk Peter (2017a), 'Rules for the Human Park: A Response to Heidegger's "Letter on 'Humanism'" in: Peter Sloterdijk, *Not Saved: Essays After Heidegger*, translated by Ian Alexander Moore, Christopher Turner, Polity Press, Cambridge, pp. 193-216

Sloterdijk Peter (1991), *Tetovirani Život*, translated by Milan Soklić, Dečje Novine, Gornji Milanovac.

Sloterdijk Peter (2017b), *The Aesthetic Imperative: Writing on Art*, translated by Karen Margolis, Polity Press, Cambridge

Sloterdijk Peter (2017c), ‘Aletheia or the Fuse of Truth: Toward the Concept of a History of Unconcealment’, in: Peter Sloterdijk, *Not Saved: Essays After Heidegger*, translated by Ian Alexander Moore, Christopher Turner, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Sloterdijk Peter (2009), *Derrida, an Egyptian: On the Problems of Jewish Pyramid*, translated by Wieland Hoban, Polity Press, Cambridge, London 2009.

Sloterdijk Peter (2017), *Not Saved: Essays After Heidegger*, translated by Ian Alexander Moore, Christopher Turner, Polity Press, Cambridge 2017.

Sloterdijk Peter (2016), *Selected Exaggerations – Conversations and Interviews 1993-2012*, translated by Karen Margolis, Polity Press, London, 2016

Sloterdijk Peter (2018), *Stress and Freedom*, translated by Wieland Hoban, Polity Press, London.

Sloterdijk Peter (2013), *You Must Change Your Life: On Anthropotechnics*, translated by Wieland Hoban, Polity Press, London.

Smith Herrnstein Barbara (2005), *Scandalous Knowledge*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Sosa Ernest (1979), ‘Epistemic Presupposition’, (ed.) Geroge Pappas, *Justification and Knowledge: New Studies in Epistemology*, Springer, Dordrecht, Boston.

Spiegelberg Herbert (1994), *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, Springer, Hague.

Starčević Goran (2015), ‘Od sakralnoga prema čovječnome (Apokrifni humanizam Emmanuela Lévinasa)’, Časopis Tvrđa 1/2, Hrvatsko društvo pisaca, Zagreb.

Starčević, Goran (2013), *Vuk u Supermarketu: Antropologija Ustrojenog Sveta*, Istarski ogranak Društva hrvatskih književnika, Pula.

Steiner Geroge (1997), “The Secular Messiah,” in: George Steiner, *Nostalgia for the Absolute*, House of Anansi Press, Toronto, pp. 1-11.

Stout Jeffrey (2012), ‘Spirit of Pragmatism: Bernstein’s Variations on Hegelian Themes,’ Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal, 33,1, pp. 185-246.

Stout Jeffrey (1988), *Ethics After Babel: The Languages of Morals and Their Discontents*, Beacon Press, Cambridge.

Strauss Levi Claude (2014), *Myth and Meaning*, Routledge, London New York.

Stuhr J. John (1997), *Genealogical Pragmatism: Philosophy, Experience, Community, State*,University of New York Press, New York.

Svendsen Lars (2008), *A Philosophy of Fear*, translated by John Irons, Reakiton Press, London.

Tartaglia James (2020), 'Rorty's Philosophy of Consciousness' in: Alan Malachowski (ed.), *A Companion to Rorty*, Willey Blackwell, London, pp. 43-57

Tartaglia James (2007), *Rorty and the Mirror of Nature*, Routledge, London, New York.

Taylor Charles (1995), 'Overcoming Epistemology', in: Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge , pp. 1-19.

Taylor Charles (2003), 'Rorty and Philosophy', in: Charles Guingon, David R. Hiley (eds.), *Richard Rorty*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge/New York , pp.158-180.

Taylor Charles (2001), *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, Cambridge.

Thacker Eugene (2018), *Infinite Resignation*, Repeater, London, New York.

Tönnies Ferdinand (1999), *Community and Society*, translated by John Samples, Routledge, New York, London.

Trilling Lionel (2008), *Liberal Imagination*, New York Review of Books, New York.

Valone James J. (1988), 'Against epistemology: A constructive look at Adorno's deconstruction', Human Studies 1,11, pp. 87-97.

Van Tuinen Sjoerd (2010), *A Thymotic Left?: Peter Sloterdijk and the Psychopolitics of Ressentiment*, symploke 1-2, 18, pp. 47-64.

Vattimo Gianni (2011), *A Farwell to Truth*, translated by William McCuaig, Columbia University Press.

Vattimo Gianni (1988), *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-modern Culture*, translated by Jon R. Snyder, Polity Press, London.

Vattimo Gianni (1992), *The Transparent Society*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1992.

Vision Gerald (1991), 'Veritable Reflections' in: Alan Malachowski*, Reading Rorty: Critical Responses to Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature and Beyond*, Willey Blackwell, London, pp. 74-100.

Wagner Richard (1849), *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, O. Wigand, Leipzig.

Wallace Robert, Latifi Blerim (2021), *Çka mund të mësojmë sot nga Hegeli?*, Bardbooks, Prishtinë.

Wanke Gregoria (2003), 'Rorty's Democratic Hermeneutics', in: Charles Guingon, David R. Hiley (eds.), *Richard Rorty*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, pp. 105-123.

West Cornell (1989), *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin.

Westbrook B. Robert (1991), *John Dewey and American Democracy*, Cornell University Press, Cornell.

White Hyden (1973), *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, London.

Whitehead N. Alfred (2010), *Process and Reality*, Simon and Schuster, London, New York.

Williams Bernard (1991), 'Auto-da-Fe: Consequences of Pragmatism' in: Alan Malachowski, *Reading Rorty: Critical Responses to Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature and Beyond*, Willey Blackwell, London, pp.26-36

Williams Michael (2003), 'Rorty on Knowledge and Truth' in: Charles Guingon, David R. Hiley (eds.), *Richard Rorty*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, pp. 61-80.

Williams Raymond (1979), *The Country and the City*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Wittgenstein Ludwig (2002), *Hulumtime Filozofike*, translated by Kritstë Shtufi, Toena, Prishtinë.

Wittgenstein Ludwig (1961), *Notebooks 1914-1916* , translated by G.E.M Anscombe, Harper and Row, New York.

Wolf Paul Richard (1998), *In Defense of Anarchism*, University of California Press, Berkley, Los Angelos, London.

Wright Crispin (1991), "Scepticism and Dreaming: Imploding the Demon," Mind, vol. 101, no. 1, pp. 87-111.

Zabala Santiago (2017), 'Richard Rorty: Life, Pragmatism, and Conversational Philosophy', Los Angeles Review of Books, available at: https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/richard-rorty-life-pragmatism-and-conversational-philosophy/ , July 2017.

Zabala Santiago (2009), *The Remains of Being: Hermeneutic Ontology After Metaphysics*, Columbia University Press.

Zahavi Dan, *Being We: Phenomenological Contribution to Social Ontology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, (will be published: 2025).

Zahavi Dan (2019), *Phenomenology: The Basics*, Routledge, New York, London 2019.

Zizek Slavoj (2016), *Antigone*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi, Sydney.

AUTHORS BIOGRAPHY

Labinot Kelmendi is a philosopher coming from Pristina. He earned his MA in Philosophy from the University of Pristina "Hasan Prishtina," Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, and is currently pursuing his PhD in Philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb. Presently, he serves as an assistant in the Faculty of Philosophy (Department of Philosophy) and at the Faculty of Arts. Additionally, he holds a position on the presidency of the Kosovo Philosophical Association. From 2015 to 2021, he co-authored Kosovo's first philosophical telecast, "Filozofema," aired on Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK). He chairs the International Inter- and Trans-Disciplinary Symposium for Philosophy, Art, and Technology, known as "Filozofema." Beyond academia, he actively engages in the cultural realm, initially as a member of various bands and alternative music projects, including the popular "Madgod" and "Elektorati Intelektual." Subsequently, he contributed articles to the "Cineks" platform, offering critiques on local films and serving as curator and art critique for the drawing biennial and other exhibitions.