Philosophy as Social Hope:

Rorty's Critique of Epistemology

Rorty's anti-Platonism, or more specifically, his anti-dualism, attacks the privileged quasi-scientific character of western philosophy, a methodological fetishism about 'getting things in the right way'. Such a disciplinary privilege over accurately representing reality, resting upon the transcendental/doxactic divide, determines the methodological controversies between the sciences in their pursuit of capturing the essence of reality, human or nonhuman. Philosophy's professionalization of pronouncing One way the reality is, or redemptive truth, as Rorty claims it, brings it at the margin in relation to other areas of culture. To him, the goal of epistemology is not distinct from the democratic utopia of social solidarity and, in this regard, the search for the antecedent truths determining the sense of who we are and what we should do is misguiding, which also weakens our social fabric. Rorty questions the supremacy of the outlived, uninteresting Platonic vocabulary and revisits philosophy as cultural politics, a labored, 'useful', literary position that has to forgo its 'ambition for transcendence' and find a way to strike a concord with other discourses. The paper examines Rorty's post-philosophical, post-positivist critique that revisits epistemology in an interesting way hitherto caught in the methodologically-stricken language of accurate representation. In revisiting knowledge as collaborative inquiry having 'contingent starting points', the business of 'grounding' our beliefs in an overarching framework gets replaced with trusting human rationality in a hermeneutic-conversational realm. In this conversational shift, the disinterested philosophical wisdom gets deprofessionalized in the rational, persuasive task of cultural politics, in which the ideal of social hope may get realized.

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3   **Introduction**

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5   Rorty's critique of western philosophy or philosophy-as-epistemology, as he

6   terms it, is critical of the very subject-matter of Philosophy that is secured upon

7   the Platonic bivalence. Systematic philosophy essentially operates on splitting the

8   subject-matter (nature vs. history, or facts vs. value), method (objectivation vs.

9   reflection), faculty (reason vs. imagination) and normalizing or objectivising them

10 around 'the discovery of a permanent framework of inquiry'.[1] It has been the

11 business of philosophy, systematic, or therapeutic, either in positing or edifying,

12 Rorty argues, that there are philosophical questions of fundamental importance.

13 History of western philosophy, as he views it, is always that of finding a

14 successor to epistemology that centers around giving a Grand theory about the

15 way reality is. Rorty's 'epistemological behaviorism', a non-representational

16 position *pace* James, Dewey, Wittgenstein, Sellars, Kuhn questions the very

17 business of 'accurate representation of reality' in the quasi-divinity of mind or

18 language as the successor medium. To him, an epistemic inquiry is a coordinated

19 activity toward purposive goals where incommensurability does not entail

20 incompatibility. Attempts to objectivize epistemology, is also not a 'useful

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[1] Rorty, R. 2009. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Thirtieth-Anniversary Edition). Princeton: Princeton. University Press, p. 380.

vocabulary' now, Rorty concedes. It has converted philosophy 'into a boring

academic specialty',[2] a scholastic pursuit after a canonical, final commensurating

vocabulary that stops the flow of conversation in a non-interesting way. The

professionalization, in 'knowing something about knowing which nobody else

knows so well', and that there is a philosophical method, according to Rorty, is a

necessary evil that has marginalized philosophy in relation to other areas of

culture. He revisits philosophy as cultural politics, a labored task that places it

along other areas of culture. This shift from being transcendental to

conversational is progressive that does not split 'will to truth' and 'will to

happiness' in exploring better human conditions. It also dehierarchizes

epistemology built around rigid disciplinary boundaries in the positivistic credo

of reaching closer to reality. In what follows the paper examines the quasi-

scientificity of philosophy and the sciences in pursuit of giving a grand unified

theory of reality that prevents them from becoming conversational in useful

ways. Philosophy can participate in this cultural discourse only when it gives up

its privileged position of announcing the absolute conception of reality.

Ontological Priority, Methodological Differentiation and Epistemic Inquiry

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[2] Ibid, p. 385.

1   Rorty's critique of quasi-scientific aspirations of philosophy to find the

2   absolute truth, the intrinsic nature of reality attacks the Platonist as well as the

3   Positivist as they both 'ground' truth in a transcendental, atemporal world

4   beyond the space of conversation, the inexhaustible descriptions and explanations

5   of the same situation. Theorization of truth and the use of terms such as

6   'objectivity', 'rationality' and 'method' are hooked on the postulation of this

7   world of Really real that has inspired the scientific inquiries and the

8   methodological precision henceforth. The ontological priority to the world

9   outside has dictated philosophy's search in the western history for finding the

10   right methodological key that fits the 'way reality is'. This search, Rorty argues,

11   rests on the principle that only a certain vocabulary works because it rightly fits

12   the essential nature of things, humans or nature. As a result, philosophy turns

13   quasi-scientific, 'Galilean' in its approach. The Galilean success rests on the claim

14   that the mathematized vocabulary works because it fits well the infinite, cold and

15   comfortless nature of physical reality (as against the animistic, teleological and

16   anthropomorphic account), or as the nature wants it to be described.

17   Modern philosophy is awed at the success of science to have found Nature's

18   own vocabulary and is never able to overcome this fetishism for scientific method

19   in search for the objective conception of reality. The Cartesian vocabulary of

20   'clarity' in self-certitude (devoid of any confusion) and the Lockean reductionist

21   language of simple ideas are attempts to write in the Galilean cold language

1   devoid of any metaphysical and moral comfort. The search for finding the right

2   methodological key, Rorty argues, however, gets over in the Kantian claim to

3   have constructed the lock (the a priori forms) behind that the keys get fitted into.

4   Analytic and phenomenological approaches too rely on the scientific, methodical

5   rigor to eliminate the prejudiced, the non-essential. Assumption of essentiality,

6   the intrinsic nature of reality, physical or non-physical, drives the methodological

7   precision toward getting closer to reality. Social sciences too trend on this

8   positivistic rigor to make predictive generalizations about the social reality, the

9   way it wants to be described.

10   The Diltheyian *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften* distinction,

11   however, demands the liberation of the human-social sciences and an exclusive

12   vocabulary to understand the meaning-impregnated human reality. The

13   methodological debate intensified in this way is grounded in the core belief that

14   the physical and the human worlds are *essentially* distinct, and therefore

15   'explanation' and 'understanding' serve as two separate adequate methods. By

16   saying that human reality is semantically constituted, the human-social sciences

17   announce that the physical world is a-linguistic, a mind-independent reality

18   subject to causal explanation. Dividing the domains of inquiry as distinctively

19   suitable to 'explanation' and 'understanding' is to create an unbridgeable or

20   rather a disastrous gap between 'facts' and 'values'. This gap becomes all the

21   more alarming when the social researches pattern themselves on the Galilean

1   model in attempting to be successful in making predictive generalizations but

2   refraining from improving human conditions. Maintaining value-neutrality by

3   segregating the descriptive and evaluative in human matters (to Rorty it is

4   unimaginable how any term cannot be used *evaluatively*) is to leave policy matters

5   to be decided by a different set of people who seem to 'live on the other side'. A

6   quarrel between a value-free or hermeneutic social science, according to Rorty, is

7   a misguided one in the want of a common goal such as making accurate

8   generalizations about the implications of certain policies. 'Explanation' and

9   'understanding' do not contrast the way 'the abstract contrasts with the concrete',

10   he argues.[3] They are not opposed ways of doing social science; they are rather

11   more or less useful vocabularies for different purposes. For making predictions

12   and evaluating a policy-decision, two different vocabularies can stake their claims

13   for their usefulness. The controversy over the value-free or hermeneutic social

14   science, Rorty argues, is mistakenly about asserting the supremacy of One

15   vocabulary that can predict and control and, at the same time, decide what is just

16   for fellow-humans. The supremacy of one vocabulary is to assume the intrinsic

17   nature of human reality and correspondence to that determines the success of a

18   methodology. "To be told that only a certain vocabulary is *suited* to human beings

19   or human societies, that only *that* vocabulary permits us to "understand" them, is

20   the seventeenth-century myth of Nature's Own Vocabulary all over again", Rorty

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[3] Rorty, R. 1982. *Consequences of Pragmatism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 197.

1　argues.[4] The deadlock over the scientific or hermeneutic discourses whether they

2　have or do not have any intrinsic connection can get over when the idea of

3　epistemic inquiry is taken as purposive, coordinated activity rather than drawing

4　a 'principled distinction between man and nature, announcing that the

5　ontological difference dictates a methodological difference'.[5] It is only when we

6　stop asking the epistemologically pregnant question about the method to get us

7　right, closer to reality can we understand methods as tools, as instruments that

8　work well, or more useful to cope with reality. That a vocabulary works better

9　because the reality is so is a mistake.

10　　Rorty insists that we need to change the language of a thing as 'so

11　constituted', interpretively or non-interpretively having an intrinsic character of

12　its own. It is not the case that we understand our fellow-humans and their actions

13　within a 'web of meaning' and the fossils, for example, are probably understood

14　in a non-relational language. An understanding about the nature of a thing is

15　about knowing how it is 'constituted' in relation to other things, by a web of

16　meanings within the "intra-disciplinary criteria". Things make sense in relation to

17　other things, in relation to the existing terminology which helps gloss on new

18　meanings to the puzzling objects till a new terminology, a new discipline gets

19　stabilized. The birth of a new science or a new vocabulary is thus 'hermeneutic' in

20　nature and, Rorty sees no difference between Galileo's mathematized vocabulary

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[4] Ibid, p. 198.
[5] Ibid, p. 199.

1   or Darwinian evolution or what 'biblical exegetes, literary critics, or historians of

2   culture do' in this regard.[6] This does not make hermeneutics special, an

3   overarching discipline or method. The point that Rorty emphasizes is that an

4   inquiry about the physical object or a text, for that matter, is holistic, 'a coherent

5   narrative which will incorporate the initial object'.[7] The hermeneutics of sciences

6   negates the idea of any special vocabulary or method that stands to the putative

7   ontological status of things. Epistemology is no more than a matter of good

8   epistemic practices within the Kuhnian idea of 'normal science' as puzzle solving

9   activity refined, reformulated against the existing jargons.

10   The idea of epistemic privilege goes hand-in-hand with moral privilege to

11   position certain cultures or discourses over the others. This epistemic baggage

12   makes science and equally philosophy pre-eminent in making pronouncement

13   about the absolute conception of reality. The unlabored philosophical privilege of

14   finding the very 'language' of mapping the outside reality or pronouncing the

15   'redemptive truths', as Rorty puts it, weakens our social fabric. For, the sense of

16   who we are and what we should do is dictated by certain foundational truths

17   rather than being a work of our shared labor. In the pragmatic construal, an

18   epistemic inquiry is a coordinated, purposive activity that cuts across disciplinary

19   boundaries. Once we give up the idea of methodological dominance to attain

20   truth as an end-in-itself, the dichotomies between mental/physical,

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[6] Rorty, R. 1982. *Consequences of Pragmatism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p.199.
[7] Ibid, p. 200.

1 understanding/explanation, less objective/more objective become spurious. It is

2 the contingent needs and purposes that guide our epistemic activities and the

3 success of methodologies as the tools of inquiry depend on coping with reality

4 more effectively. The question between different tools is not about which one 'has

5 got the universe right'. Instead, "the purpose of inquiry is to achieve agreement

6 among human beings about what to do, to bring about consensus on the ends to

7 be achieved and the means to be used to achieve those ends. Inquiry that does not

8 achieve coordination of behavior is not inquiry but simply wordplay".[8] Since

9 epistemic inquiries, in the Kuhnian sense, are problem-solving activities, drawing

10 a line of disciplinary privilege between the 'cognitive and non-cognitive', serious

11 and non-serious domains prevents them entering into fruitful coordinated efforts.

12 To him, 'vocabularies are useful or useless, good or bad, helpful or misleading,

13 sensitive or coarse, and so on; but they are not "more objective" or "less objective"

14 nor more or less "scientific".'[9] The Platonic dream of perfect knowledge,

15 surpassing all conceptual confusions and opening ourselves to the world outside

16 as the mappers of some extra-linguistic reality, Rorty says, makes knowledge

17 'into something supernatural, a kind of miracle' and refrains epistemology to

18 relate to other disciplines in an interesting way.[10] This pseudo conception of

19 expert culture, a privileged discourse that enjoys a special relation to reality is a

[8] Rorty, R., 1999. *Philosophy and Social Hope*. London: Penguin books, p. xxv.
[9] Rorty, R., 2007. *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 4, Cambridge University Press p. 203.
[10] *Op cit*. 1999, p. xxvii.

1 desire for transcendence objectivising the sense of who we are. To him, the idea of

2 specialty is not more than seeing 'how things hung together'; there is no special

3 'method' to solve some special 'problem', with some universal regulative

4 principles. In the following section, I examine Rorty's arguments against any such

5 ambition and repositioning of philosophy within the literary culture as

6 suggesting more ways to be human, increasing the chances of human happiness.

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9 **Cultural Politics, Philosophy and Social Hope**

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11 Positing that there is an absolute conception of reality, the objective truth to

12 which we humans are related in special ways and derive our moral sense is the

13 language of offering 'redemptive truths' that philosophy, religion and science

14 may equally offer. Relativism, in matters of morality, Rorty concedes, is still an

15 interesting position, but to say that we make sense of our lives and purposes in

16 the light of some objective truths is not a tenable position. Philosophically, such a

17 claim toward a grand theory, solving a jigsaw puzzle, or cracking the Code of

18 codes complies with *cogito*-centricity. To know the self is to know everything; and

19 an incorrigible experience of this kind is to believe that we humans are related to

20 this mental stuff in a special way. To Rorty, this is an intriguing idea of positing

21 *qualia* or raw feel that we human beings possess but zombies do not. It is like

1 separating pain from pain behavior and assigning some philosophical meaning to

2 pain experiences which are not known to us in ordinary ways. Such scholastic

3 pursuits, he argues, are of no interest to the like-minded finitists and materialists;

4 they can only influence the Chalmers-leaning or Dennett-leaning philosophy

5 departments for believing or not believing in the quest for 'what it is to be a

6 human'. Claiming supremacy in this uninteresting, contemplative, leisured

7 positioning (which demeans the sweaty practicality also) and, pronouncing

8 redemptive truth in the similar vein, is the reason for philosophy's marginality.

9 Rorty revisits philosophy as cultural politics, changing its role from epistemology

10 to social hope, a more powerful relation between knowledge and social solidarity

11 than between knowledge and power.

12   Philosophy as cultural politics in an interesting, *useful* cultural position along

13 other areas but takes away the justificatory authority from it. Following Brandom,

14 a neo-Hegelian, Rorty argues for the priority of the social or cultural politics over

15 ontology. The priority of the social alludes to the Heideggerian notion of the

16 primordiality of *zuhandenheit*. To Brandom, the question of authority and also that

17 of epistemic authority belongs to the society and any belief in the ideas of truth,

18 reality, objectivity other than the society are the 'disguised moves'. A belief, or

19 let's say, a new God-report, or for that matter the discovery of a new physical

20 particle finds its reliability within the already existing belief-system. A new God-

21 report makes sense only with reference to the sacred scriptures, religious sects

1   and, most importantly, with respect to our own understanding of what God

2   wants us to do; it must live up to the previous expectations. Brandom's

3   inferentialism rejects any such perceptual report establishing or repudiating a

4   truth, dislocated from the cultural-political initiatives. Rorty agrees with Brandom

5   that our 'assertions are assumptions of responsibility to the other members of the

6   society'. In Brandom (who is not a utilitarian), he finds support to James'

7   pragmatism. The pragmatic standpoint here is that the society is the last authority

8   in matters of our beliefs and social practices on the sole criterion of their

9   advantages or disadvantages. There is no other philosophical 'truth' or

10   mysterious theological authority. For James, we believe in the ideas of God,

11   Truth, Objectivity because our practices are improved so by them. Or to put it

12   differently, 'truth and reality exist for the sake of social practices, rather than vice-

13   versa'.[11] Hence, there is no way to separate the question of 'will to truth' from that

14   of 'will to happiness'.

15   In this so-called conflict between the question of intellectual purity and moral

16   slackness, Rorty finds a space which he defines as 'cultural politics'. We play

17   cultural politics when we reason that the white people should stop calling the

18   black people as 'niggers', for example. In the similar vein 'should the scientists

19   continue investigating the correlation of skin color and intelligence' is a matter of

20   cultural politics that cannot be answered philosophically or scientifically. Cultural

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[11] *See* Rorty, 2007. P. 7

1   politics is about evolving a conversation as to whether we should practice or

2   discard certain beliefs, certain terms from our discourse from the standpoint of

3   utilitarian ethic. This line of thinking that '*ancestory* does matter' needs to be seen

4   in fresh light of evaluating short-term dangers over long-term benefits. Rorty's

5   suggestion is that we may replace it with the talk of genes, for medical purposes,

6   rather than the talk of race and racism. Philosophy may play a useful task in

7   unsettling and reweaving beliefs; constantly changing the conversation and

8   persuading people that taking one side rather than another makes a significant

9   difference to our social hopes and programs of action. However, philosophy is

10 not capable of giving us a grand theory of risk-management. For, each person is

11 capable of this discourse and cultural politics, he says, is 'the least norm-governed

12 human activity'.[12] This conversational arena of dropping some beliefs does not

13 consider that there are some ontological, antecedent truths of importance; for

14 human happiness or the idea of a good global society does not require any such

15 foundation.

16   Rorty's idea of cultural politics revisits the relation between philosophy,

17 poetry and sophistry and the controversies surrounding them. The first

18 controversy is whether human beings can realize their special powers to the

19 fullest by using reason or imagination, aggravated by the romanticists and now

20 represented as C.P. Snow's 'two-culture syndrome'. The second line of thinking

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[12] Rorty, R.,2007. *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 21.

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1 which is deeply rooted in the Platonic legacy is the division of the society

2 between the 'lovers of truth' and the 'deniers of truth'. To put the lovers as well as

3 the deniers of truth with the lovers of imagination crucially requires being

4 tolerant to the other side. To put philosophy and sophistry together is

5 undoubtedly upsetting. In Plato's standard of 'the love of truth', they are

6 antithetical. But, Rorty calls himself a neo-sophist and argues that being anti-

7 Platonic (or more specifically anti-dualist or anti-essentialist) is not tantamount to

8 be an irrationalist. He defines his rationalism in the hermeneutic-humanist stance

9 of democratizing knowledge and realizing self-sufficiency in imaginative ways

10 rather than in the redemption of any truth. Sophistry and poetry, in this regard,

11 share their aversion to the natural science, the mathematized physics for its

12 'universalist grandeur' – a desire to give an overarching framework of reality.

13 Romanticism, however, equally faces the charges for claiming what Isaiah Berlin

14 terms 'depth' or 'profoundity' – an experience of the ineffable in imaginative

15 venturing. To Rorty, both the metaphors of 'grandeur' and 'depth', subsisted on

16 the philosophical rationality and poetic geniality, are *public relation gimmicks* that

17 have no reliability.

18 Rorty takes up this controversy between 'grandeur' and 'profundity' further

19 by discussing two of Habermas's distinctions made in his book *The Philosophical*

20 *Discourse of Modernity* (1985). The first distinction is between the 'subject-centered

21 reason' and 'communicative rationality' and the second is between 'reason' and

1 'an other to reason'. The idea of subject-centric reason, is the Platonic idea of a

2 natural endowment, the self's eternal co-naturality with the immaterial world. As

3 opposed to this, Habermas' idea of communicative reason considers rationality

4 emerging from social practices, or what Brandom terms, in 'the game of giving

5 and asking for reasons'. The subject-centric reason, Rorty argues circumvents all

6 conversations, opinions, competing claims and heads straight to knowledge.

7 Replacing it with communicative rationality is to "see truth as what is likely to

8 emerge from free and imaginative conversation".[13] This shift replaces knowledge,

9 a possible mental state of enjoyment (by virtue of being closer to reality than

10 opinions and beliefs) with consensus, arrived at by rational, persuasive

11 argumentation. It helps us to see human cooperation and success in solving

12 puzzles and handling things in rather small ways and abandons any

13 metaphysical comfort of 'universal validity' over agreeable consensus.

14 The idea of 'an other to reason' in Habermas characterizes mystic insights,

15 poetic geniuses, religious faith, imaginative power, and authentic self-expression

16 – the claims of superiority over reason. Habermas avoids the seduction of such

17 romanticists' claims and upholds universal validity as the goal of inquiry. Rorty

18 argues that these 'other to reasons' are short-cuts around conversation and

19 persuasion, and are guarded to 'compete in the market place of ideas'. He grants

20 no concession to the Platonists or to the Romanticists either (though the latter

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[13] Rorty, R., 2007. *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 77.

1   explodes the Platonist-universalist idea of the Truth in the metaphor of depth).

2   Rorty has recourse to Isaiah Berlin's view that universalism-romanticism contrast

3   is a variance of the idea of the 'infinite'. While universalism takes the idea of

4   infinity, let's say, in the idea of God, as encompassing everything,

5   unchallengeable to any outside source; the romanticists' idea of infinity is to

6   break away from all limitations, and as Rorty himself puts it, 'the idea of perfect

7   freedom decoupled from that of perfect knowledge and of affiliation with the

8   invulnerable"[14] Both the universalist grandeur, in the capacity of human reason,

9   and depth or ineffability in the 'other to reason', he argues, are moves away from

10   human finitude - the contingent solutions to contingent problems. They

11   dramatize the needs of intersubjectivity and novelty respectively. A pragmatist

12   solution *pace* Dewy to him is to balance the need for consensus and the need for

13   novelty. This balancing requires putting our beliefs and practices to rational

14   argumentation toward agreeable solutions which will bring moral responsibility

15   toward other fellow-citizens. This conversational-humanist shift liberates the

16   Platonic universalism from the defect of glossing the metaphysical varnish of

17   universal validity, and at the same time bestows responsibility to the newer,

18   imaginative ways to be human that the romanticists lack in.

19   Philosophy, according to Rorty, was a transitional genre, offering humanity

20   novel solutions, 'when things seem to be falling apart'. One such example is

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[14] Rorty, 2007. *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 83.

1   replacing love of God with love of truth or reason that satisfied the need of

2   people, at the same time. Though this age of commonsensical materialists which

3   cares for the respect and happiness for all does not face any such cultural crisis,

4   an important turn that has taken place after Kant, from the time of Hegel, in

5   thinkers like Marx that philosophy cannot offer any redemptive truths, truths

6   independently of human needs and interests. Rorty's argument is that if

7   professionalization is the reason for the marginality of philosophy, relooking it as

8   a literary genre can make it a *useful* discourse. From the literary perspective,

9   philosophy and, so is religion, *optional*. They can be sought for more options,

10 more ways to be human. From this perspective they are not obsessions with the

11 nonhuman in the cognitive and non-cognitive ways respectively. The literary

12 culture treats them as "noncognitive relations to other human beings, relations

13 mediated by human artifacts such as books and buildings, paintings and songs.

14 These artifacts provide a sense of alternative ways of being human".[15] The non-

15 cognitive relation to the humans replaces the question of 'truth' and 'knowledge'

16 with novelty and hope. And this is a desirable change according to Rorty. "It

17 represents a desirable replacement of bad questions like "what is Being?", "what

18 is really real?", and "what is man?" with the sensible question "Does anybody

19 have any new ideas about what we human beings might manage to make of

20 ourselves?" This shift strikes a balance between the persuasion for novel ways to

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[15] Rorty, R., 2007. *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 93.

1 solve our problems and moral responsibility toward increasing the chances of

2 happiness. The present materialist and experimentalist world that cares for

3 equality and justice for all is disillusioned with the idea of 'infinity', Rorty

4 concedes. Philosophy can assert its usefulness by reweaving our beliefs in

5 imaginative ways, by evolving a conversation, rather than circumventing it in

6 some grand picture of the world. Within this conversational, literary culture

7 philosophy can align itself with other areas in an interesting way. To him,

8 philosophy cannot be aconversational, having its relation to *die sache selbst*; rather,

9 "the value of philosophy itself is a matter of its relation not to the subject matter

10 but to the rest of the conversation of mankind".[16] This alone is the sign of self-

11 reliance.

12 Revisiting philosophy within the pragmatic fold of a useful vocabulary

13 demolishes the privileged language of redemptive truths and treats epistemology

14 as a social hope in the realization of democratic ideal – the Good Global Society. A

15 democratic utopia of this kind sees no demarcation between the sciences, between

16 theory and practice when they all are part of 'the same endeavor to make life

17 better'. Such a goal, however, requires trusting human abilities and improving

18 coordinated activities, or recognizing what Putnam calls 'the epistemological

19 justification in democracy' - a condition to exercise human intelligence to the

20 fullest. In Putnam's views "democracy is not just one form of social life among

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[16] Ibid, p. 129.

1   other workable forms of social life; it is the precondition for the full application of

2   intelligence to the solution of social problems".[17] The epistemological justification,

3   at the same time, alters the fate of philosophy as a critique (without any authority

4   of intelligence) to the beliefs, institutions, customs, policies with respect to their

5   bearing upon good and not the Good. In the Deweyian spirit, Rorty exhorts that

6   what matters to the pragmatists, "is devising ways of diminishing human

7   suffering and increasing human equality, increasing the ability of all human

8   children to start life with an equal chance of happiness" and, that, "this goal is not

9   written in the stars…".[18] Philosophy democratizes itself when it aligns with other

10   discourses, experiments with new ways of being human rather than searching

11   some foundational, antecedent truths.

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14   **Conclusion**

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16   Revisiting Philosophy from the literary perspective makes it one among

17   many areas of culture. Since all epistemic inquiries, in the culture of intellectual-

18   moral progress, are problem-solving activities, science and philosophy are not

19   any different. There are no final solutions to the human problems in any

20   generation. But the desire for a better world, a hope for a democratic world

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[17] Putnam , H. 1992, *Renewing Philosophy*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 180.
[18] Rorty, R., 1999. *Philosophy and Social Hope*. London: Penguin Books, p. xxix.

1 requires epistemology to be looked at as a matter of 'increased abilities' rather

2 than 'increased knowledge'. The desire for transcendence in making preeminent

3 claims about absolute truth is not a useful vocabulary. Instead of a being a

4 tribunal of reason, a final arbiter in all matters, philosophy can be seen only as

5 'one of the techniques for reweaving our vocabulary of moral deliberation in

6 order to accommodate new belief' to effect change, improve human conditions.[19]

7 Rorty's project of epistemology as social hope, in the trajectory of 'beyond

8 methods' overtrusts human rationality toward the idea of social solidarity not

9 because of the shareability of the core self but because we all feel pain and

10 humiliation in the same manner. This alone is the pragmatic 'foundation' to our

11 epistemic enterprise.

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