

Ferdi Selim, 2017

Volume 3 Issue 2, pp. 654 - 671

Date of Publication: 16th September, 2017

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2017.32.654671>

This paper can be cited as: Selim, F. (2017). *Postmodern Liberalism and Solidarity: Richard Rorty*.

PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 3(2), 654-671.

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## **POSTMODERN LIBERALISM AND SOLIDARITY: RICHARD RORTY**

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### **Abstract**

*“Multiculturalism”, “living together” and “cohabitation” are of universal issues at the moment. As known for most of us, alienation and estrangement are widespread as well. Even the existence of “other” is not tolerated sometimes. Initially, it must be stated that the scope of the problem is wider than it is presumed to be and cannot be solved through induction since the bigoted beliefs and the traditionalized habits are at the core. This common approach relies on having a sole list of truth lading, a sole definition of humanitarian status and a sole universal context of respective lives. The given concept of belief must be replaced with “contingency”. The individual with the conscience of contingencies gets rid of metaphysical and theological truths and be set free. The liberal societies of our century must produce much more people who are able to accept the contingency of vocabulary which is used to utter the utmost hopes – contingency of their conscience – and still remain loyal to commands of respective consciences.*

*The present study aims at presenting a liberal, pluralist and contingent proposition for a solution in context with the given case. The proposition essentially based on the concepts which are spearheaded by Richard Rorty, a leading American intellectual, for postmodern liberal countries. Richard Rorty claims that the concept of “one of us” can be enlarged as such to include those who once were defined as “others”. In this respect, “us” is much more limited and local compared to human race. The sentiment of solidarity cannot be clarified*

*enough through the approach of “just another human”. The mutual sharing and features of humans are effective in constituting the sentiment of solidarity as “one of us”. His given approach whose chief task is to encourage solidarity and being us is in an endeavor to forge a type of liberal ironist individual. The liberal ironist individuals who stand against suppression, be aware of contingency and be in a perpetual quest to realize them are the champions of solidarity and progress. Another significant task of this study is to investigate the probabilities of achieving Rorty’s given claims.*

### **Keywords**

Contingency, Liberal Ironist and Public Sphere, Solidarity, Multiculturalism, Others

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## **1. Introduction**

The search for a better world and society rooted back to the beginning of humanity. In the contemporary age, the search turned into “pluralism” referring the cohabitation of diverse cultures alongside each other. The issue is particularly raised by many groups such as philosophers, politicians, and literati. Principally, the notions such as pluralism, diversity, and multiplicity are investigated by social sciences with an eagerly positive perspective after the apogee of the postmodernist wave. On the other hand, a myriad of instances proved that there are lots of obstacles on the way ahead for the most desired to be realized. For example take a look at the first sentences of an article published by Wall Street Journal: “Intellectual legacy of the West today is trialed at Stanford. Those who forecast the case be lost are in majority.” The controversy raised by Isaac Barchas, a student of classics at Stanford, appeared over the content of an only compulsory course at Stanford with a full year period, “Western Civilization”. It was mandatory that student have to choose from the eight courses and either of these courses was with a reading list of fifteen pieces comprising Homer, Dante, and Darwin. Teaching staff replaced the mandatory course of Western Civilization with “Culture, Ideas and Values” after a vote of 39 in favor and 4 against. The course was forged through adjusting the list of classics with the pieces of non-European cultures, women, Afro-Americans, Spanish, and Indian-Americans. The newly emerged core list still consists of New and Old Testament, Plato, St. Augustine, Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Marx. The public discussion followed the decision over whether these core courses must be replaced or not was highly remarkable<sup>1</sup> (Gutmann, 2014: 34).

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<sup>1</sup> A similar instance from Turkey was announced in the newspapers as follows: “The new model for philosophy education does not consist of philosophers such as Marx, Thales, Pythagoras, Foucault, Adorno.” Another

Cultural debates are performed not only in the US but also all across the world severely and intensely with an inclination towards violence.<sup>2</sup> These types of conflicts demonstrate that persons or groups are marginalized and be alienated to their respective societies. It is uncertain that those who are such marginalized would be criticized due to social irresponsibility. Even if one does not define himself a member of society, this does not mean that he is unaccountable towards society.<sup>3</sup> If such a critique is to be regarded meaningful, a higher community whose authority –like humanity- is viewed as a role model must be present. Therefore, if the person cuts the links between family, tribe or nation and him, the attraction of a higher community can rise and the critique towards the performer turns out to be an incentive further boosted the move. Some of the people believe in the existence of such people. These people think that human-beings have an innate value and are born with human rights as well as with an unhistorical division between the requirements of morality and foresight. Contrary to this view, it is claimed that “humanity” is not a moral but an biological comprehension, an humanitarian value that is come out in compliance with a value of specific society can never exist, and an attraction beyond an objective standard to measure the benefits of the actual or set societies is never for genuine (Rorty, 2000: 71-72).

Richard Rorty<sup>4</sup> prefers the second one among given approaches. However, he claims that if this approach and the principles set by him are to be realized, the philosophy must be

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headline was as: “Philosophy without Marx and Averroes! The new model for philosophy education does not consist of most of the leading names.” When the content of the news are checked, besides these noteworthy philosophers, it is viewed that names such as Sartre, Camus etc. are also excluded from the new model for philosophy education. Moreover, belief systems such as *positivism*, *deism*, *agnostic*, *atheism*, *secularism*, *nihilism*, *satanism* are regarded fallacious beliefs.

See: <http://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2017/02/13/marxsiz-ibn-i-rusdsuz-felsefe/>,  
<http://t24.com.tr/haber/mebin-mufredat-taslaginda-cihat-degerler-basligi-altinda-ateizm-ve-sekulerizm-ise-inanc-problemi,383546> .

<sup>2</sup> History has witnessed a lots of cultural, political and religious conflict. For example: In the last days of 1992, David Rieff stated in New Yorker afterwards of an interview conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina: “*For the Serbians, Muslims are humans no more. (...) Muslims lying on the ground in lines are smashed by a Serbian watchman who rides a small transportation truck.*” After Rieff announced the given news, the issue of inhumanity is raised again: “*A Muslim in Bosansi Petrovaç is coerced to bite the penis of another Muslim. (...) I If anyone claims that someone else who also looks alike is satan whose identity only be discovered by taking off the pants–Muslims are circumcised unlike Serbians-, the claimant needs little psychological stimulus to cut the genitals.(...)An ethnic cleansing without a sexual sadism is never existed.*” Rorty, Richard, 1994c, p56.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Rorty presents instances from history for the behavior types that are regarded as irresponsible by some scholars. On the other hand, to Rorty escaped slaves and those dug tunnels beneath the Berlin Wall cannot be described irresponsible. Rorty, Richard, **Postmodernist Burjuva Liberalizmi**, p71.

<sup>4</sup> Richard McKay Rorty, one of the most competent and distinctive figures of Pragmatism and Postmodern Liberalism that are considered to be the doctrine of formal American philosophy, was born in 4 October 1931, New York City. He was acted like a lightning conductor in gathering the controversial problems of modern philosophy. Charles Guignon, David R. Hiley, **Richard Rorty**. Thus, opposing views about Rorty is a common sight. This can be seen in his autobiography “*Trotsky and the Wild Orchids*”. For instance, he states that **Sheldon Wolin** regards him “an intellectual snob”. This opinion is also embraced by **Terry Eagleton**. According to **Harold Bloom**, Rorty is “the most interesting philosopher” in the world. In a similar line, his

defined. Rorty was in a struggle to protect the modern democracy against the authoritarian and metaphysical inclinations of conventional philosophy. Such stance of him as a philosopher can seem quite surprising and agitating at the first instance. Nevertheless, Rorty put faith in the thought that his social demands can be meaningful only if the philosophy is redefined. In this respect, Rorty who exclusively thought to settle up with the Enlightenment Philosophy was fronted to the debates over this problem particularly. He rejects most of the political thoughts which are held on epistemological basis by the conventional philosophy. Accordingly, the first part of this study aims at investigating the classic epistemological fundamentals of philosophy and Rorty's critique towards these thoughts.

## 2. Objections to Modern Epistemology

Richard Rorty, in his eye-opening and revolutionary book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*<sup>5</sup>, opposes the philosophical concept which claims that knowledge and language are in congruity with representation and truth as well as the approach that was created by epistemological tradition of Cartesian-Lockean-Kantian view that later infected the analytical philosophy (Danka, 2011: 70; Er, 2015: 172).

Rorty criticizes the archaic concept that approximately encompasses the entire history of philosophy, "modern philosophy", "epistemologically-centered philosophy" or Cartesian-Lockean-Kantian" cited as such by him through a thought which was centered on the "metaphor of mirror".<sup>6</sup> In this respect, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is a critique of modernity (Rorty, 2006 in: xxv). This critique is, in essence, focused on the belief approving

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thoughts are viewed as "a modern defense of old Cold War Liberalism" by **Richard Bernstein**. See: Rorty, Richard (1999). "Trotsky and The Wild Orchids", *Philosophy and Social Hope*, New York: Penguin Books, p3-4. Moreover **Neil Gross** in his piece, *Richard Rorty: The Making of an American Philosopher* saw fit the description such as "an American elite intellectual" and "an academic superstar" for Rorty. For more information, please see: Neil Gross, **Richard Rorty: The Making of an American Philosopher**. Though Rorty was raised in line with the analytical tradition, he is also competent at continental European philosophy and benefits from a diverse range of sources. His philosophy with a broad scope paved the way for him to be denoted as different and an objection to analytical philosophy that come out among them.

<sup>5</sup> This is Rorty's most prominent and challenging piece. These words of him about the book unpin the claim: "... The task of this book is to undermine the trust that was put by the reader into "mind" as a thing to have a "philosophical" view about, into "knowledge" as a concept to have a "theory" and "fundamentals" about and "philosophy" as it is comprehended since Kant. Rorty, Richard, **Felsefe ve Doğanın Aynası**, p13.

<sup>6</sup> This project elaborates on knowledge as an epistemology based on thinking habits about which we must have a theory. In this regard, the knowledge generated by mind is assumed as a flawless representation of the truth and as Rorty said evaluated as "a mirror of nature". This type of representative comprehension plays an active role in the self-positioning of human against the world which surround all over. The desire of humans to represent the world absolutely through his mental capabilities is viewed as a distinctively fundamental feature of his respective nature. What is more, the perception of the mind as a "mirror" that totally overlaps with nature through a scheme of reflection is regarded one of the most remarkable and privileged responsibilities of being a philosopher. Rorty, Richard, **Felsefe ve Doğanın Aynası**, p13.

that the subject is a universal ego that has the power to design the truth within the mind as a reflection.

Though according to Rorty the discovery of the *metaphor of mirror* goes back to Ancient Greek, the origins of modern epistemology rooted in the 17th century, particularly Locke. Additionally, Rorty claims that the concept of “mind” which is shaped the thought of representation along with the other founding notions of epistemology and as an entity in which the “processes” are occurred is owed to Descartes (Rorty, 2006: 10, 145).

According to Rorty, the entire liberal thinkers of the 17th century, primarily Locke, are taken the knowledge not as a relation between discourses and individuals but objects and individuals. As a result of this, the answer to how a person reached belief is also answer to how the belief is legitimized by (Rorty, 1980: 141). On the other hand, Kant splits the representations in mind as concepts and intuitions. The source of knowledge firstly is taken in relation to the discourses rather than objects by him (Rorty, 1980: 160). Kant was not able to improve this significant philosophical step and served for this metaphor since he approved the universal values and transformed the philosophy into a unique discipline, philosophy as an epistemological concept. Hegel firstly was able to disclose why philosophy is good by emphasizing the historicity. Rorty was directed to Dewey and Wittgenstein with the influence of Hegelian philosophy disregarding the conventional Platonic philosophy approach (Rorty, 2006 in: xxii).

Rorty classifies the central doctrines of the conventional philosophical approach into a few titles and tries to avoid them. Rorty thinks that the philosophy that is interested in the genuine problems of the humanity must be given room rather than the one aiming to get the truth based on metaphysical and epistemological problems along with getting rid of false problems created by (Nielsen, 2006: 128; Kundakçı, 2012: 46). The frequent mistakes in philosophy pinpointed by him as follows:

1. Truth is the chief in philosophy and a kind of reality is only attainable with a congruity between subject and object. This kind of understanding is based on the insight that human mind is fit to the outer world, the mind has high comprehension and illustration capacity and analytical philosophy portrays the language -for the language- ascertaining the world.<sup>7</sup>
2. Truth is only attainable through one way and we have to talk about it in a specific line.

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<sup>7</sup> See: Wittgenstein L., *Tractatus*, (4.021), 133 (5.6), 153 (6.13), p 51.

3. The problems of the philosophy are eternal and appear when someone began to reflect (to think) about them.
4. The philosophy aims at exceeding the cultural limits in order to get linked with absoluteness originated from reality as it is in itself. Philosophy is a prime-narrative either as a language, a mind or a discipline and since it carries its meaning in itself, the truth is discovered through such a method (Kletzl, 2012: 154).

*Dividing the outer world, at present and truth* means pinpointing the outer truth as a substance and contemplating the knowledge as a salient spirituality from reality. According to Rorty's approach, this spirituality is language. Truth is only visible through language. While the reality is right out there, the definitions related to reality is not out there. "*The world all alone/truth- the world that is not assisted by acts of definition of humans- cannot be right or wrong.*" (Rorty, 1995a: 26).

It is better to touch on the terms of John Searle such as *rough phenomena and institutional phenomena* in order to render more salient the thesis that was expressed as the division of the thing in itself and the object for itself: "(...) a division between that the sun is ninety-three million miles away is of (rough) *pre-lingual phenomena* and the presidency of Clinton of *institutional phenomena* is needed. While the rough phenomena are independent of any human institution; the institutional phenomena can exist within the human-institutions. The rough phenomenon needs the institution of language to express the *phenomena* yet the rough phenomena do exist independent of language or any other institution. That is why the expression of the sun is ninety-three million miles away requires an institution of measurement based on language and the measurement of mile. However, the *expressed phenomena*, the existence of a specific distance between earth and sun occurs independent of any institution. Yet institutional phenomena need leading human-institutions in order to survive. Language is one of these institutions; in fact, it is the aggregation of these institutions (Searle, 2005: 46, 47; Anli, 2015: 103-104).

Phenomena are shaped in truth(s). This claim does not mean that phenomena are "existence" independent of human or phenomenon is mere illusions. The thing is that if the existence is to perceive real, it is only possible through language, human-made entity. Rorty stated that "*the world does not talk. Only we talk. The world can lead us to particular belief after we are programmed in accordance with a specific language. Yet it never suggests a language for us to speak. Only other people can make that*". (Rorty, 1995a: 27)

The thing not left within itself is transformed into “object” by being connected to another world of meanings and get linked with other elements. This transformation is dictated on “thing”. The given expressions by Nietzsche disclose the traits of that thought: “There is only one world and it is phony, grim, reversely deceiving, meaningless... The world created in this way is the real one: lying is needed to gain victories against this reality, to survive... The necessity of lying in order to survive is embedded in the terrifying and skeptical character of the existence. Metaphysical, moral, religious, scientific- these are regarded different types of lying in this approach: the life becomes believable with the help of them. Life must be trustable: the quest by which started is immense. Human must be a liar by nature in order to overcome, and become the biggest one of entire artists. And it is too: Metaphysical, religious, scientific – all were born through the escape towards art by “really” negating the “reality”. The artist power of the human that founded hegemony over reality by lying have common features with the thing right there (Nietzsche, 2002: 420 [parag. 853]; Anlı, 2015: 106).

According to Rorty, language denotes an aggregation of contingent vocabularies made of vocabularies that are used to define the world, us and ourselves. Rorty’s use of “vocabularies” overlaps with Wittgenstein’s use “language games”. Wittgenstein put forth the concept of *language game* as follows: “I call the sum that consisted of languages made of languages “language game”.”<sup>8</sup> Again Wittgenstein stated that “(...) *the term ‘language-game’ means that speaking a language asserts the phenomena of a part of an activity or a way of life* (Wittgenstein, 1998: 24).

In the Western tradition of thought, “the search for truth” is taken adamantly.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, Rorty does not need metaphysics or epistemology in the search for truth. According to him, truth is gained its true meaning through “believing the one that is good for us”. Yet all pragmatists including Rorty accepts that the things we believe in can be wrong or the things others believed in can be right or others can oppose things that we consider right

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<sup>8</sup> Wittgenstein, L. **Felsefi Soruşturmalar**, p15.

<sup>9</sup> Rorty summarize the central position as such in his masterpiece, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*: “The picture which holds traditional philosophy captive is that of the mind as a great mirror, containing various representations--some accurate, some not--and capable of being studied by pure, non-empirical methods. Without the notion of the mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have suggested itself. Without this latter notion, the strategy common to Descartes and Kant--getting more accurate representations by inspecting, repairing, and polishing the mirror, so to speak--would not have made sense. Without this strategy in mind, recent claims that philosophy could consist of 'conceptual analysis' or 'phenomenological analysis' or 'explication of meanings' or examination of the 'logic of our language' or of 'the structure of the constituting activity of consciousness' would not have made sense.” Rorty, Richard, **Felsefe ve Doğanın Aynası**, p18.

(Rorty, 1985: 5). In this respect, it is better use assessments such as “more useful, less useful”, “sensitive”, “insensitive” rather than more objective, more scientific (Rorty, 1982: 203).

### 3. Postmodern Bourgeoisie Liberalism and Liberal Ironic Individual

Rorty’s critique over conventional philosophy hinges on diverse philosophical stances and thinkers as well. Rorty starts his critiques on philosophy by questioning the ontological pre-acceptances of classical liberalism and set forth a new type of definition related human. According to Rorty, many philosophers such as Plato and Kant attempted to divert an substance which is not central and contingent out of human and applied to this concept taken for granted in justifying some political and social organizations. For instance, Plato thought that characteristics that differentiate humans from other existences put the former into a position which is higher/different than others ontologically. In the diverse commentaries of Christianity, the use of “God’s reflection” to denote humans kept both the implication of being good-high along with being bad/sinful (Niebuhr, 2004: 13-16; Uluçakar, 2014: 230).

Rorty claims that an ideal pragmatist society must be a liberal society.<sup>10</sup> This society contains the ability to “*put the people responsible for the world*”. According to Rorty this society is as follows: “In its ideal form, the culture of liberalism is an enlightened, permanent, all-encompassing one. In this culture, there is no trace of godlikeness either in its form of godlike society or form of godlike identity. This type of culture has no room for the thought that non-human entities exist towards which people kept responsible.” (Rorty, 1989b: 45).

Rorty’s explanation over liberalism relies upon his claims of “common vocabulary and common hopes” (Rorty, 1989a: 86) It is called via the term “postmodernist bourgeoisie liberalism” in order to serve emphasizing the historical contingency. Rorty uses this name to denote the defense of institution and application in rich North Atlantic democracies by Hegelian terms without using pillars such as human nature, universal human rights. Additionally, it is a bourgeoisie due to the acceptance that all institutions and applications are the product of a particular time and space. Rorty’s respective expressions obviously demonstrate that how these expressions are used by him and the reason why they are used. His thoughts are as follows: “ In order to display that a large part of the people whom I talk

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<sup>10</sup> Mouffe and other scholars think that the trust in liberalism and the thought of liberalism as the best political approach are degraded. For example, the given sentences of Mouffe are quite intriguing: “We are told that liberal democracy gained a victory and the end of the history has arrived short time ago. Unfortunately, the collapse of Communism has led to the rise of nationalism and the emergence of new antagonisms in many places, rather than a gentle transition from pluralistic democracy. Western democrats are amazed at the explosion of ethnic, religious and nationalist conflicts that they think belongs to a past age” Mouffe, Chantal, **Siyasetin Dönüşü**, p13.



about this issue is not wary of Marxist thesis claiming that institutions and applications are possible and defensible only under certain historical and exclusively economic conditions, I use the term, “bourgeoisie”. I want to compare the endeavors of North Atlantic bourgeoisie in order to materialize their targets, the so-called bourgeoisie liberalism either with philosophical liberalism or a collection of Kantian principles that thought to justify our grasp for big hopes.” (Rorty, 2000: 73).

Rorty’s expressions repeatedly explain why bourgeoisie liberalism is postmodern: I use the term “Postmodernist”, as it is used by Jean-François Lyotard in the sense that the term connoted that postmodern demeanor is a demeanor of “mistrust towards metanarratives”. Metanarratives are narratives that include the foreseen or defined activities of existences such as “noumenal”<sup>11</sup> identity, Absolute Spirit or Proletarian. These metanarratives attempt to justify obeying some modern societies or breaking with them. On the other hand, these stories are neither historical narratives related to one nation’s past nor scenarios based what they will do in the future.” (Rorty, 2000: 74).

Rorty, one of the most creative thinkers of our age, offers a modern discreet utopia unlike conventional ways of thinking and political activity. His views of an ideal society or his expectations from a democratic society can be assessed through three demands in general. The first of them is the quest to eradicate disparity in order to attain social welfare; the second is the demand of ethics against all types of brutality and nepotism. Lastly, Rorty have another aesthetic demand from the society which linked the given two demands as a bridge and melded with literature (Kundakçı, 2012: 44).

Rorty’s emphasis in order to realize the three fundamental promise with a crucial importance about democratic society, in particular about philosophy and in general about Enlightenment requires the division of political and philosophical quests. This requisite put forward as an grand and valuable piece of political legacy without a philosophical past, the result of hopes for an ideal society and the natural result of the former, democracy. Rorty’s liberalism is closely related to his utopia about the future as mentioned above. For instance, in the introduction part of his article *Philosophy and Social Hope* Rorty after having stated that his writing are endeavors related to his social hopes, he obviously explains what that hope

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<sup>11</sup> “Noumenon - The area of things that can only be investigated in the face of facts that you have experimental or sensory information. The area of absolute reality or self-matter that Kant set as opposition to the phenomenal sphere, and determines it cannot be perceived as being usable.” See: Rorty, Richard, **Postmodernist Burjuva Liberalizmi**, p74.

is: “-without class, without caste, lawful, democratic and global is worth to be hopeful for.” Then he adds: “These are endeavors which contradict with Platonism” (Rorty, 1994b: xii)

Rorty’s view of liberalism which is claimed to be constituted in a utopian style is enlarged with the definition of liberalism taken from another political scientist, Judith Shklar (Tütüncü, Koray and Fatma, 2015: 164). In this regard, liberal is the one “who thinks that the grimmest thing we have done is tyranny” (Bernstein, 2003: 129; Kundakçı, 2012: 33). Unlike modern liberalist point of view, Rorty’s liberalism does not rely on the principle of private property or defend the society under the auspice of certain principles within the limit of a project. Moreover, Rortyan liberalism does not concentrate on a well-defined theory and philosophy<sup>12</sup> is not viewed with great expectations over (Rorty, 1995a: 138,141).

These are priceless efforts however, though Rorty, as already said before, define liberalism opposing the cruelty, when paid much attention to his studies, he does not explain in depth why cruelty is evil or why one must not be cruel. He absolutely avoids these controversies by claiming that these are philosophical. To emphasize again, this Rortyan liberal perspective confronts with Platonist and Kantian philosophy, views postmodernism “mistrust towards metanarratives” as define by Lyotard, and is committed to historical institutions rather than mere abstract concepts such human rights and human nature.

Rorty’s ethical politics relies on the division of public/private. Rorty thinks that the values belonging to public and private sphere cannot be defended within the prospects of single vision. Yet, according to Rorty, liberalism is not a theory but a metanarrative just like other narratives. From the perspective of the liberal utopia designed by Rorty, for instance, while the autonomy is part of the private sphere, the values such as solidarity, cooperation, justice is part of the public sphere. Rorty, having presumed that the values of these two spheres are impartially equal, merges the private and public sphere together in compliance with the “liberal ironist” view based on a individual perspective (Rorty, 1995a: 17). Individual of liberal ironist with a liberal face address the public sphere while the ironist face is part of a private sphere. According to Rorty, people use a set of words circularly either in order to justify their respective thoughts or to transmit the stories of other people. Rorty call these used set of words by human-beings, “ultimate vocabulary” (Rorty, 1995a: 114).

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<sup>12</sup> In what sense Rorty uses “philosophy” must be explained here. Rorty distinguishes between Philosophy, which has determinations like human nature, which are found in many works, as well as philosophy, located on great accounts, and philosophy which includes local beliefs and language games. The philosophy mentioned in this passage is Philosophy, which we first read about through his “mirror metaphor”.

Rorty claims that the balance between individual competency and social responsibility is well founded in liberal society. The citizens of society, ironists, must be those who are aware of that the reliance on liberalism must be related to its historical contingency. Rorty defines the ironist individual the one with three characteristics:

1. He must be radical and be skeptical of ultimate vocabulary he is still in use. He is open to influence of other vocabularies which are used by other people and books as ultimate vocabularies.
2. He is aware that the argument in the sense he referred in vocabulary cannot prove or solve all the suspicions.
3. As he thinks about his position as a philosopher, he never thinks that his ultimate vocabularies are closer to reality than other vocabularies meant being in touch with power rather than own self (Rorty, 1989b, 73).

In an ideal liberal society, the task of following the right path is positioned in favor of redefining the modern and modernization. This type of imagination and modernization is defined as -the goal of transforming the future independent of past rather than nearing the preceding concept of reality-. The desires to define the world with his words are replaced with proposing new interpretations of the latter and render our lives relevant (Bacon, 2010: 135). Rorty does not support the term “public reason” however created a novelty similar to that. As proved before, Rorty claims that liberal societies are bound through a common set of vocabularies and the political thinking must be constituted through these vocabularies: “The moral decisions through which the voices of plural and democratic states are uttered as it did with the claims of God, reason and science are taken on an impartial scale.” (Rorty, 1994b: 172). Rorty’s account on irony is critiqued by many philosophers<sup>13</sup> due to its destructive approach, eager stance towards radical skepticism. However, this paper, as Larmore and Bacon did, claims that Rorty’s account on irony requires the congruity of *creativity and reflectivity*.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For example MacIntyre argues that irony wreaks total havoc on shared values and way of life. MacIntyre also adds that ironist cannot get the moral reasoning and the meaning of dependence. Similarly, Haack claims that ironist is the only one that be “radical and constant skepticism” towards his vocabulary. Again Michael Williams in a milder approach argues that pragmatism combines negatability and anti-skepticism. Though Williams have sympathy towards the Rorty’s project, he thinks that ironist is at risk of becoming a radical skeptic through “radical and constant skepticism”. See: Michael Bacon, **Richard Rorty, Pragmatism ve Politik Liberalizm**, p136-137. Further see: Michael Williams (2003). “Rorty on Knowledge and Truth, **Richard Rorty**, eds. Charles Guignon and David R. Hiley, Cambridge University Press, p76.

<sup>14</sup> While, in his article, “Future and Philosophy” stating that democracy is not hard task but constructible through persuasion, and followed that if the philosophers have a function today, it is because of persuasion that put the latter in responsibility. Obviously, Rorty’s stance for the promise of liberal democracy is closer to the social

#### 4. One of Us, We the Liberals

We have stated that Rorty proposed a type of utopia based on postmodern liberalism. This utopia promised contingency and hope that would end up with freedom ultimately by narrating the utmost cruelty via sympathy. How this promise would be realized is a significant question. Rorty's reply over this issue can be summarized as follows: A new society that would focus on estranging cruelty, protecting either the personal self-creativity and or the endeavor to becoming "us" without overlapping<sup>15</sup> each other is the new task. To protect and realize this new hope, the term of "us" must be clarified definitely.<sup>16</sup> To Rorty, the solidarity refers being incorporated into one and dispersing the case as more people as possible. Thus, the goal must be to create an "us" that is accompanied with hope and cooperation rather than a universal "us". Since Rorty believed in that nobody can be replaced with "humanity" and "entire rational existences", he states that "We have to begin from where are at present."

It is useful to recall what Rorty commented about solidarity. He expresses as such in a peculiar way of him: "Solidarity is the capability is to discount many common differences such as tribe, religion, race and customs *vis a vis* vulnerability against suffering and being insulted and integrate as many as people among "us" from diverse walks of life..." (Rorty, 1989b: 192). Though Rorty retain keeping the "bourgeoisie"<sup>17</sup> as a liberal imperative, he also demands an ethical insistence in parallel to former. This ethical demand is not part of a rising rationality but discrimination, greed, inequality, hypocrisy, and cruelty along with rising social sensitivity and sympathy. In this respect, the more the worries of people are appeased, the more we advance by integrating people in terms of morality. This demand trivializes the

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efficacy of pragmatist tradition that inherited from his respective culture rather than deconstruction. Rorty, Richard, **1995b**, p205.

<sup>15</sup> Rorty in his Contingency, Irony and Solidarity emphasize the division of private and public sphere. For instance, in a chapter of this book as follows: "I definitely propose to use either of them for different purposes and focus on impartially rather than choosing one of them. (...)Yet, if we believe the existence of a broader philosophical view that would merge the self-creation, justice, self-perfection and solidarity within one vision, we can see that a private and public sphere contradicts with each other. Rorty, Richard (1989b). **Contingency, Irony and Solidarity**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p. xiv; Rorty, Richard (1995a). **Olumsuzluk, İroni ve Dayanışma**, trans. Alev Türker, Mehmet Küçük, İstanbul: Ayrıntı Publishing, p16.

<sup>16</sup> Sellars who claimed that Rorty loaned the idea of "being us" from him illustrated the "identity of us" with Christianity and "Royce's "loyalty". See: Solomon, David W. (1977). "Ethical Theory" **The Synoptiv Vision: Essay on the Philosophy of Wifrid Sellars**, ed. C. F. Delaney, Notre Dame, In.: University Notre Dame Press.; Rorty, Richard, **1995a**, p265.

<sup>17</sup> Rorty has a political view based on economic progress and the devoid of political and social discrimination comprised of liberal institutions. The first pillar of the political project that left after the postmodern bourgeoisie liberalism and Enlightenment philosophy without philosophical ideals is demand for a world without cruelty and boosted by "economic progress". Rorty, Richard (2002). "Postmodern Burjuva Liberalizmi", **Postmodernist Burjuva Liberalizmi**, trans. Yavuz Alogan, Ankara: Doruk Publishing, , p71.

non-humanitarian ideals and immaterial and non-conventional ideals such as kindness and truth (Rorty, 1994a: 81, 82). The philosophers preferred to be historical arbitrators as “the servants of democracy and freedoms” among our human peers rather than mere carriers of the truth attempt to reach a deal (Rorty, 1995b: 205).

People must be in solidarity with their inner communities which they share their grief and joy but also attempt to transform this community into a “more broad and colored “*ethnos*” (Rorty, 1995a: 275).

Since it is hinged on a concept focused on the contingency of human activities rather than a society which is forged by nature/God or historical imperatives, a result of “us”, our customs and cultural traditions, as Rorty frequently stated having managed to view the society as a product of ours, that our loyalty to the other human-beings is to rise is highly believed in by Rorty. In one of his papers about Rorty by illustrating his issue through examples from history attempts to demonstrate that being one of us requires local sentiments, beliefs and sentiments.<sup>18</sup> For example, in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* he debates Holocaust one of the leading examples of crimes against humanity in respect to the emotion of solidarity. His expression over this problem is as follows: “For instance, Danes and Italians have risked a lot to protect Jews against the oppression of Nazi Party. According to them, Jewish neighbors of Milano along with the colleague and the citizens of Jutlander were playmates, in the last instance, “one of us” (Rorty, 1995a: 266-267).

As Rorty stated, when liberal irony<sup>19</sup> was in circulation, within the liberal utopia in which liberal hope, values such as solidarity, justice, the production of values such as public good, historical imperatives, structure of class, religious duties, natural inclinations of human nature and the morality of rational duty approach is not constituted through metaphysical-theological justifications but realized by the power of contemplation (Rorty, 1995a: 18). The

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<sup>18</sup> Rorty provides cognitive experiments except instances from history. For example, in one of the experiments, he asks the reader to presume that we are wanted by the police and later taken refuge in parent’s home. We also do the same in response to similar demands of the family members. Yet, here Rorty’s task is to make think about prospective results of the intra-familial solidarity and independence perception: Can we stand, if one was punished due to our false witnesses? What can we do if our values on justice and loyalty are in conflict? According to Rorty, a moral conflict would appear. When we stranded between justice and loyalty, the identity of the one who is punished but in essence “innocent” determinates the dimension of our conflict. Rorty states that if the one punished was a neighbor and familiar to us, the extent of our remorse differs, if the punished one unknown to us in terms of national, racial or social characteristics, the remorse also differs. Rorty, Richard (1997). “Justice as a Larger Loyalty”, *Ethical Perspectives*, 4(2), p.139.

<sup>19</sup> Apart from that, to Rorty, the enlargement of the scope of our “us” is one two things an ironist liberal embraced in himself; the other is to discover self-existence. However, an ironist liberal opposes the self-ideas by claiming that “the task in itself” refers not contemplating the one without an argument based on a solely non-circular. Rorty, Richard, 1995a p104.

disciplines that would achieve this would be art and literary pieces rather than philosophical and religious works. Rorty states that we can redefine ourselves by “novel, movies, and TV”. The change of conceptualization can be called a change from “theory” to “narrative” (Rorty, 1995a: 19).

Rorty in his arguments at the intersection of literature, philosophy and politics attached much importance to division between public sphere and private sphere. Hence, the division of “public” sphere and “private” sphere paves way for the compulsory division of books as well (Tütüncü, Koray and Fatma, 2015: 166). In this respect, it is important to remember that to Rorty, literature become an all-encompassing concept. The most important is that it includes all the books with a moral scope that are capable of “the power to change the perception of one over what is possible and what is important.”<sup>20</sup> (Rorty, 1995a: 125, 203; Leypoldt, 2008: 149).

To Rorty’s ironist, both “individuals” and “cultures” are materialized vocabularies. The centrality of vocabulary is stated by Rorty’s given expression: “The thing that holds the societies together is common vocabularies and common hopes”. Though ironists are skeptical to vocabulary, while behaving virtuously in the daily life, they accept the vocabulary as data. They become closer to those whom they share common vocabularies.

## 5. Final Evaluations on Solidarity

Freedom is a way of life that each human-being is in need of. The limitation of freedom is not only imposed on us by law. The discrimination of humans by other human-beings due to their thoughts and beliefs further sabotages the freedom and the concept of living together. On the other hand, if an approach of belief or thought fails to present its respective structure, it cannot survive regardless of its insistence over the truthiness of its claims and is accepted as such by other factions. According to Rorty, the conservation and

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<sup>20</sup> Rorty illustrates the types of novels as follows: Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin and Victor Hugo’s Les Miserables. Rorty, while talking about the importance of literary works for the solidarity, cites and praises Marcel Proust. He claims that one feels how the novels of writers such as Proust transforms the reader during the reading process and emphasizes that if the development and education of the youth is considered, writers such as Proust would be highly fruitful. In another instance, Rorty states that others writers tries to accomplish something else. For example “Proust demanded autonomy and beauty, Nietzsche and Heidegger searched for autonomy and majesty, Nabokov wanted beauty and self-defense, Orwell looked for to be helpful for those suffering. All fulfilled their desires. All was successful on an impartial scale.” Rorty, Richard (1995a). *Olumsuzluk, İroni ve Dayanışma*, trans. Alev Türker, Mehmet Küçük, İstanbul: Ayrıntı Publishing, p. 78. and for more informations; Kearney, Richard & William, James (1996). “Narrative and Ethics”, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*, 70: 29-61.

defense of freedoms is our primary task. The given idiom summarize the theme: “We take of the freedom, truth will take of itself anyhow.”

If focused on Rorty’s definition of liberalism by which the cruelty is described to be the worst of all, the obligation to do a thing that we do not understand, be in favor of and believe in is the biggest cruelty. That the use of their volition and force by people to make their believes more believable is just an humanitarian, the opposite practice of this action is also that much selfish and incorrect.

Lastly, the comments about the share of solidarity in philosophy will be clarified.<sup>21</sup> As Rorty claimed, it is clear that the role of literary works such as poetry and novels in contributing the solidarity in undeniable. On the other hand, it is highly probable that philosophy can accomplish much more than we can imagine. Yet, philosophy is the utmost medium to interact with. That is why more than one comment and reasonable views are allowed in philosophy over a problem. According to philosophical culture, if there is no other or those whom we want to constitute a discourse together, it means that philosophy does not function properly and even a philosophy never exists as well. Dialog is a crucial part of philosophy since the beginning. Therefore, all political and cultural relations without a philosophy lack dialog as well. Even if you imagine a dialog comprised of entire cultural and literary studies, does not philosophy become the medium through which all that achieved on the highest level?

The greater of part of the problem is political. The continuation of conflict after the Cold War is accompanied with the instances of pro-ethnic policies, pro-identity policies and culturalism. The concept of “recognizance” can solve the problem. The recognizance means

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<sup>21</sup> Rorty’s thoughts over the termination of philosophy’s role in politics: “Philosophy is a ladder that Western political thinking climbed up, and then shoved aside. Starting in the seventeenth century, philosophy played an important role in clearing the way for the establishment of democratic institutions in the West. It did so by secularizing political thinking – substituting questions about how human beings could lead happier lives for questions about how God’s will might be done. Philosophers suggested that people should just put religious revelation to one side, at least for political purposes, and act as if human beings were on their own – free to shape their own laws and their own institutions to suit their felt needs, free to make a fresh start. In the eighteenth century, during the European Enlightenment, differences between political institutions, and movements of political opinion, reflected different philosophical views. Those sympathetic to the old regime were less likely to be materialistic atheists than were the people who wanted revolutionary social change. But now that Enlightenment values are pretty much taken for granted throughout the West, this is no longer the case. Nowadays politics leads the way, and philosophy tags along behind. One first decides on a political outlook and then, if one has a taste for that sort of thing, looks for philosophical backup. But such a taste is optional, and rather uncommon. Most Western intellectuals know little about philosophy, and care still less. In their eyes, thinking that *political proposals reflect philosophical convictions is like thinking that the tail wags the dog.*” Rorty, Richard (2008). “Demokrasi ve Felsefe”, *Cogito* (Turkey), trans. Şeyda Öztürk, Vol. 54, p260-261.

recognizing along with entire humanitarian differences and due to these differences. As Rorty stated, if recognizance is to be achieved, liberal democracies are a must. The freedom of expression for other and whole must be drawn up. Rorty states that saying “I like people, we are all brothers” is not enough for this.

Last but not the least; the last paragraph must be stressed out by Rorty himself: “I want to differentiate the identifying with humanity as a human solidarity with the imposed self-doubt as a human solidarity for a few centuries in the democratic countries. (...) Self-suspicion to me marks the typical sign of divisibility between the questions of “Do you believe and desire what believed in and desired and are you suffering throughout the history of humanity. According to my jargon, this is the ability to differentiate the question of whether we share the same jargon from whether we suffer. The differentiation of these questions enables the differentiation of public questions from private questions, questions related to suffering from the questions over the meaning of human life, the liberalist space from ironist space. Thus, the lone person can become the two of them (Rorty, 1995a: 275).

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