Chapter 3
Solidarity Instead of Objectivity

I. Introduction:

In spite of what other philosophers have argued that one can still see philosophy as a conversation and yet not do away with the notion of truth, Rorty is adamant. What he has advocated instead is an alternative description of truth, which is, truth is *intersubjective agreement* or *solidarity*. This appears to fit well with his understanding of philosophy as conversation for one can arrive at an intersubjective agreement only after members of a community have interacted and conversed with each about what is best to believe. Rorty argues: “If one reinterprets objectivity as intersubjectivity or as solidarity then one will drop the question of how to get in touch with ‘mind-independent and language-independent reality.’” Whatever else such a proclamation might mean, it should certainly indicate to us that Rorty is among the most controversial figures in contemporary intellectual circles.

In this chapter therefore, an attempt will be made to critically look into Rorty’s notion of truth as solidarity as found in his writings. The first part of this chapter will focus on Rorty’s argument that objectivity should be reduced to solidarity or what he calls “intersubjective agreement” among members of a community. The second part will consider Rorty’s claim that science too is a matter of solidarity. In fact, he says that the only sense in which science is exemplary is that it is a model of human solidarity. Surely, Rorty’s writings have met with passionate disapproval from some critics. Hence in the last part of this chapter, I will attempt to analyze various criticisms as articulated by many scholars and at the same time outline Rorty’s responses to his critics and eventually determine whether his defenses are sufficient to rescue him from the charge that his philosophy self-destructs by its own logic.
II. Objectivity versus Solidarity:

According to Rorty, Western philosophical tradition since Plato has been gripped by the picture of knowledge as accurate representation of reality, and of truth as correspondence to reality. With the rise of modernism from Descartes onwards, the mind has supposedly mirrored reality. On this perspective, truth calls for some sort of correspondence relation between the mind and a nonhuman, description-independent reality. But what if this very idea is itself an illusion - suppose the mind is not even in the business of mirroring the world? The idea that the mind is the arena of appearances and that it is the philosopher's task of letting us know which appearances rightly represent the world - suppose that is all a mistake? This is Rorty's proposal. We must get rid of the idea that thought, and the language in which it is couched, is there to enable us to represent the world.

In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Rorty has argued that there is no Archimedean point of view, no "divine perspective" which allows us to compare the real and these image in the mind's mirror: "(T)here is no way to get outside our beliefs and language so as to find some test other than coherence." Then again in *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*, Rorty contends that there is no "skyhook" which takes us out of our subjective conditions to reveal a reality existing independently of our own minds or of other human minds. His view echoes that of Hilary Putnam who once stated that there is no "God's eye standpoint" that reveals reality in itself.

Rorty therefore proposes that we simply abandon the metaphor of the mind as mirroring or representing reality. This proposal is provocative since it abandons truth - the correspondence of knowledge and empirical facts - as our ultimate orientation. We will never touch bedrock and arrive at a position that will allow us to claim that our knowledge truly represents the real: "The notion of accurate representation is simply an automatic and empty compliment which we pay to those beliefs which are successful in helping us to do what we want to do."

Rorty claims he is following the American Pragmatist tradition according to which knowledge is not a means to represent the world but an instrument for coping with it. Rorty
takes from Darwin the idea that language is an adaptation and words are tools. Moreover, he has also taken from Donald Davidson according to whom belief is nothing but a "reflection on how a language-using organism interacts with what is going on in its neighborhood." He says further, "[Davidson] thinks of beliefs as habits of acting rather than as parts of a 'model' of the world constructed by the organism to help it deal with the world." Thought is about knowing how, not knowing that; or, as Rorty likes to put it, for coping not copying. So then Rorty as quoted by Blackburn asserts, "There is no way in which tools can take one out of touch with reality. No matter whether the tool is a hammer or a gun or a statement, tool-using is part of the interaction of the organism with its environment. To see the employment of words as the use of tools to deal with the environment, rather than as an attempt to represent the intrinsic nature of that environment, is to repudiate the question of whether human minds are in touch with reality... No organism, human or non-human, is ever more or less in touch with reality than any other organism."

In his introduction to *Consequences of Pragmatism* he says further, "This Davidsonian way of looking at language lets us... see language not as a tertium quid between Subject and Object, nor as a medium in which we try to form pictures of reality, but as part of the behavior of human beings. On this view, the activity of uttering sentences is one of the things people do in order to cope with their environment." So he concludes, any theory of truth therefore is neither an attempt to explain the meaning of the word "true" nor an attempt to analyze such notions as "corresponds to" or "makes true." What we need in implementing a theory of truth are "words, meaning of words, reference and satisfaction," which an organism (including ourselves) use in interacting with the environment and which we judge to be true. For Rorty it makes no sense to say that "thought" or "language" is out of phase with the environment. That is to say, judgment and reality must fit together. It seems then that Rorty is arguing for an individualistic notion of truth free from all truth conditions. However, far from arguing for an individualistic free-for-all notion of truth, Rorty, in his essay, "Solidarity or Objectivity" emphasizes the social influence upon the individual and his beliefs." What then is truth for Rorty?
1. Truth - An Intersubjective Agreement:

From his writings we learn that truth is nothing but an “intersubjective agreement” among the members of a community who have arrived at some sort of a conclusion at what is best to believe. He then goes on to say that that intersubjective agreement permits the members of the community to speak a common language and establish a commonly accepted reality. The end of inquiry, for Rorty, is, therefore, not the discovery or even the approximation of absolute truth but the formulation of beliefs that further the solidarity of the community, or “to reduce objectivity to solidarity.”

In fact, in the eyes of Rorty there are only two major ways in which reflective human beings try to give sense or meaning to their lives. The first is “by telling the story of their contribution to a community” in which this community may be the actual historical one in which they live, or another actual one, distant in time or place, or a quite imaginary one. The second way is “to describe themselves as standing in immediate relation to a nonhuman reality.” “The stories of the former kind,” Rorty says, “exemplify the desire for solidarity, and that of the latter kind exemplify the desire for objectivity.”

Of these two, it is the desire for objectivity, according to Rorty, that has dominated Western philosophy. This desire came about in response to an uneasiness with diversity, the diversity that the Greeks noticed as their consciousness of the world around them expanded. Reacting to difference, they sought out commonalities, convinced by Plato that “the way to transcend skepticism is to envisage a common goal of humanity-a goal set by human nature rather than Greek culture.” What followed therefore was not merely an ardent quest for objectivity, resulting in some kind of neglect of solidarity but rather, a “turning away from solidarity to objectivity.” Furthermore, as Rorty puts it, “This [objectivist] tradition dreams of an ultimate community which will have transcended the distinction between the natural and the social, which will exhibit a solidarity which is not parochial because it is the expression of an ahistorical human nature.”

Needless to say, Rorty views the tradition as a failure. He says, “The best argument we...have against the realistic partisans of objectivity is...that the traditional Western
meta-physico-epistemological way of firming up our habits simply isn't working anymore. It isn't doing its job.

Of those who have resisted the objectivist tradition and have recognized that solidarity-the agreement of community - cannot be reduced to objectivity, are the pragmatists. Instead of grounding solidarity in objectivity, the pragmatists confidently argue that it makes more sense to reduce objectivity to solidarity. According to Levisohn, "By this, Rorty intends the abandonment of the pretensions of the Western philosophical tradition to search for transcendent truth-and the conceptual baggage of "correspondence" and "representation" and epistemology and metaphysics in general-and the acceptance instead of the historical and pragmatic nature of truth. Instead of conceiving of truth as "correspondence to a nonhuman reality," truth is simply, in William James phrase 'what is good for us to believe'. In fact according to Rorty, "there is nothing to be said about truth save that each of us will commend as true those beliefs which he or she finds good to believe..." Furthermore, truth is "simply a compliment paid to the beliefs which we think so well justified that, for the moment, further justification is not needed. An inquiry into the nature of knowledge can...only be a socio-historical account of how various people have tried to reach an agreement on what to believe."

Thus the gap between truth and justification is not something to be bridged by a transcultural sort of rationality, which can be used to criticize certain cultures and praise others, but simply as the gap between the actual good and the possible better. From Rorty's viewpoint therefore, "To say that what is rational for us now to believe may not be true, is simply to say that somebody may come up with a better idea. It is to say that there is always room for improved belief, since new evidence, or new hypotheses, or a whole new vocabulary may come along." So understood, philosophy, for Rorty, is one of the techniques for reweaving our vocabulary of moral deliberation in order to accommodate new beliefs, i.e., agreed upon beliefs. He makes use of a term he has borrowed from Hilary Putnam, "rewriting of a web of beliefs" to refer to those beliefs founded not on universal reason or a "transhistorical nature" but on a consensus or agreement reached within our ethnocentric group.

According to Levisohn, at this point, the picture has become a little muddled. The notions of objectivity and solidarity themselves need clarification. Initially, Rorty considered
them as human desires, social phenomena—not "natural" or "essential," but at least relatively common and in some sense fundamental. However, he soon transformed them into ideas or ideals, or maybe into values. What is most significant in this transformation from social phenomenon to concept according to Levisohn is that they seem to have lost their implied parallelism; instead, either solidarity is "grounded" in objectivity or objectivity is "reduced" to solidarity. In short, objectivity and solidarity transformed in Rorty's philosophy, from desires into ideals or values.

Thus as maintained by Levisohn, in grounding solidarity in objectivity, the realists transformed the desire for community into a "dream of an ultimate community," thereby attempting to explain away the values of community—of tolerance, mutual respect, even love—in terms of a transcendent community, "the expression of an ahistorical human nature." On the other hand, the pragmatists, in their reduction of objectivity to solidarity, redirected the desire for objectivity to be "simply the desire for as much intersubjectivity as possible," explaining away truth without recourse to any notion of objective reality.

2. Solidarity or the "We" Talk:

In Contingency, Irony and Solidarity, Rorty gives a further explanation of this solidarity. He says, "The view I am offering says that there is such a thing as moral progress, and that this progress is indeed in the direction of greater human solidarity. But this solidarity is not a product of the "...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 ability to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of 'us.' He therefore says, "The right way to take the slogan 'We have obligations to human beings simply as such' (is) to keep trying to expand our sense of 'us' as far as we can...." This is a process which we should try to keep going, or in other words, "keep the philosophical conversation going" until solidarity with others is accomplished.
He asks us to consider as an example, the attitude of contemporary American liberals to the unending hopelessness and misery of the lives of the young blacks in American cities. Do we say that these people must be helped because they are our fellow human beings? We may, but he says, "it is more persuasive, morally as well as politically, to describe them as our fellow Americans." On Rorty's account, reason considered by the Enlightenment to be an essential/central core is divorced from feelings, e.g., of pity and benevolence. Hence against this view, Rorty argues for a sense of human solidarity based precisely on feeling. His argument rests in part on his review of Nabokov and Orwell whose work shows, he argues, "a loathing for cruelty - a sense that it is the worst thing we do."

According to Caitlin McCollister then, Rorty's solidarity's "... a new type of solidarity beyond static, historical conditions, a solidarity by which humans are united in the 'imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers.' The more connected we are to the pain of other, the more difficult it is to abstract their suffering; there is a movement away from 'us' and 'them' towards simply 'us,' which Rorty argues is best exemplified by the creative workings of the novel. Moral change and progress can only be achieved through narrative, not theory and sermon and treatise; the goal is not to arrive at a single, encompassing vocabulary that unites humanity by anticipating all possible ways of viewing the world, but to create, by way of imagination, a narrative that connects past to present, individual to individual: a solidarity of compassion that makes obsolete the need to locate an objectively existent truth." Accordingly then we can say, Rorty offers a bottom-up approach based upon a personally experienced solidarity with others, girded by a democratic society designed to minimize the most serious of ethical lapses.

Rorty's opinion falls in line with Wilfred Sellars' view of moral obligations as 'we-intentions': "It is a conceptual fact that people constitute a community, a we, by virtue of thinking of each other as one of us, and by willing the common good not under the species of benevolence-but by willing it as one of us from a moral point of view." Rorty agrees with Sellars of whom he says, "He (Sellars) lets us view solidarity as made rather than found, produced in the course of history rather than recognized as an ahistorical fact. He identifies 'obligation' with 'intersubjective validity' but lets the range of subjects among whom such validity obtains be smaller than the human race... (such as)... the members of the class of
Milanese, or of New Yorkers, or of white males, or of ironist intellectuals, or of exploited workers, or of any other Habermasian ‘communicative community’. We can have obligations by virtue of our sense of solidarity with any of these groups. For we can have we-intentions, intentions which we express in sentence of the form ‘We all want…’ intentions which contrast with those expressed by sentences beginning ‘I want…’ by virtue of our membership in any of them, large or small.’ Such agreement does not have any ahistorical conditions of possibility, but is simply “a fortunate product of certain historical circumstances.”

Furthermore, Rorty says that he is not saying that the attempt to think in terms of abstractions like ‘child of God,’ or ‘humanity,’ or ‘rational being,’ has done no good. “The philosophical problem, and the sense of artificiality associated with these problems, only arises when… we start asking about the ‘nature’ of truth, or art, or humanity.”

Rorty’s solidarity as he wishes us to understand, intersects with Juergen Habermas first of all, as Habermas’ discourse ethics also involves an emphasis on the feeling of solidarity as a foundational component in the process of establishing ethical norms and obligations. In addition, as Rorty sees it, his notion of solidarity with and commitment to groups’ issues is the equivalent of Habermas’ “communicative community.” But there is also a crucial difference. While Habermas’ discourse ethics seeks to preserve, as does Rorty, the liberal intention of expanding the sphere of personhood to its widest possible range, unlike Rorty however, Habermas does not reject but rather tries to reconstruct the ethical and metaphysical foundations of the Enlightenment rationality which originally underlies this liberal intention. In particular, Habermas’ reconstruction defends at least quasi-transcendent norms - i.e., norms of community belief and action which have validity beyond the simply historical and contingent. Habermas argues for such quasi-transcendence in part by stressing that groups seek to achieve consensus in discourse for however much the content of resulting norms may differ from one group to the next, the form of such consensus-seeking transcends any particular group, otherwise defined by its historical and contingent features.

And it is just not Habermas who have argued for such quasi-transcendent norms. There is Putnam who though has rejected metaphysical realism, proposes a view that is
less “liberal” in that it allows some kind of a limit concept of truth. Yet while Rorty seems to have accepted Putnam’s “no God’s eye view” and his Quinean picture of inquiry as the continual reweaving of a web of beliefs, he rejects the latter’s use of the German Grenzbegriff, a “limit-concept of ideal truth.” Putnam believes that though we cannot make sense of a non-epistemic, metaphysically privileged correspondence relation between linguistic expressions and the items of the non-linguistic world that those expressions are supposed to be about, nonetheless we need standards and ideals of truth and rationality that transcend the limits of our own cultural or historical context(s). Rorty however retorts, “But what is such a posit supposed to do, except to say that from God’s point of view the human race is heading in the right direction?” Truth, says Rorty, still remains a matter of solidarity and we need to say, despite Putnam, that “there is only the dialogue,” only us, and to throw out the last residues of the notion of “transcultural-rationality.” In fact, Rorty extends his notion of truth as solidarity to include even the natural sciences. In “Science as Solidarity” he says, “the only sense in which science is exemplary is that it is a model of human solidarity.” In this Rorty is said to have given a distinctively postmodern twist to the tradition pioneered by Dewey and others.

III. Science as Solidarity:

Rorty begins by reminding us of how science has been understood traditionally. Well, most of the time, says Rorty, “whenever we think of science, we usually think of it as offering “hard,” “objective” truth; truth as correspondence to reality, the only sort of truth worthy of the name… We tend to identify seeking “objective truth” with “using reason,” and so we think of the natural sciences as paradigms of rationality… Worries about “cognitive status” and “objectivity” are characteristics of a secularized culture in which the scientist replaces the priest.” Hence what resulted was the opinion that “any academic discipline which wants a place at the trough, but is unable to offer the predictions and the technology provided by the natural sciences, must either pretend to imitate science or find some way of obtaining “cognitive status” without the necessity of discovering facts.” In general, people in the humanities chose the latter strategy
by either describing themselves as concerned with "value" as opposed to facts, or as developing and inculcating habits of "critical reflection." 

Rorty however thinks otherwise for he says, "We need to stop thinking of science as the place where the human mind confronts the world, and of the scientist as exhibiting proper humility in the face of superhuman forces." Irrespective of what one's opinion of the secularization of culture may be, Rorty says, it was a mistake to try to make the natural scientist into a new sort of priest, a link between the human and the non human. Such distinctions as have been accepted between "hard facts and soft values, truth and pleasure, and objectivity and subjectivity are awkward and clumsy instruments...It would be best to find another vocabulary, to start afresh." And according to Rorty, pragmatism offers us the hope of a culture in which questions about the "objectivity of value" would seem just as intelligible as questions about the "rationality of science." He declares: "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 of community." Rorty says further, "They (i.e. the pragmatists) think that the habits of relying on persuasion rather than force, of respect for the opinions of colleagues, of curiosity and eagerness for new data and ideas, are the only virtues which scientists have. They do not think that there is an intellectual virtue called "rationality" over and above these moral virtues." In fact, Rorty summed up his rejection of traditional notions of rationality and of the natural sciences by saying that the only sense in which science is exemplary is that it is a model of human solidarity in so far as scientific practices has succeeded in establishing institutions conducive to democratic exchange of view. Yet there are many thinkers who do not agree with Rorty. Take for instance Karl Popper, who believes that despite Rorty's challenge regarding the usefulness of science, there is something to be said about the objective progress of science in finding out what the world is really like.

According to David L. Thompson, Rorty's view of Science as solidarity seems to fall in line with Edmund Husserl. Now Husserl is a rationalist searching for an absolute foundation for science and Rorty is a post-modernist for whom science is but one discourse among many, none of which corresponds with reality. Yet on two fundamental points Rorty and Husserl are
surprisingly close. Both maintain that they are neither realists nor idealists but have overcome this dichotomy and both trace this overcoming to communal creativity, which Rorty calls solidarity and Husserl, intersubjectivity or more precisely, life-world-intersubjectivity. 54

What is life-world intersubjectivity? In his article, "Rorty and Husserl on Realism, Idealism and Intersubjective Solidarity," Thompson defines Husserl’s life-world intersubjectivity as, “...a cultural creation, unique for each culture, not a universal human acquisition. The Western life-world has given rise to the scientific project, a project which constitutes meanings in such a way that all who accept the project can arrive at universal truths." 55 For Husserl, science is both universal and contingent. While on one hand it is constituted as the search for a universal criterion of truth, on the other hand, this constitution is itself a contingent creation of a particular intersubjective community. 56

In all probability then Rorty agrees with the contingent half of this Husserlian thesis. For Rorty too, each human community has its own vocabulary, its own set of statements which are said and accepted. There is no overarching vocabulary in which all others can be discussed; there is no privileged vocabulary which is in some way absolute. For various historical reasons, which Rorty analyzes in some detail, philosophers have claimed a special privilege for the vocabulary of science, and have presented it as attaining universal truth. But this is mistaken: science or "Scientism" as he calls it, is one vocabulary among many and is no more nor less contingent than any other discourse. So there is no reason to expect that there is one final correct scientific theory of absolutely everything. This fits in with Quine’s arguments for theoretical under determination, with the idea that there will always be more than one theory that fits the constraints (the facts), and so there is no reason to expect some final truth in the long run. 57

In Rorty’s view then there is really no difference between the sciences and non-sciences for there is no privileged vocabulary which is in some way absolute. Science is one particular set of meanings - or vocabulary - among others and is generated by a community of meaning-creators. More than an epitome of rationality, it is in fact, a model of solidarity. That is, truth seen as solidarity is nothing more than what we can as rational (that is open and reasonable) people come to agree on. On this view then, scientific statements are indeed true, but not in any universal, privileged way, only in the way any communally accepted discourse is true. 58
Well, one might ask, is there no difference then between truth established by scientific means and truth found in other discourses, say the social sciences?

Well, for Rorty, this question would not have arisen in the first place if we have not been too fixed or obsessed with what he terms our “strong” sense of rationality. Taken in this sense, to be rational and scientific means to be methodical, that is, to have criteria for success laid down in advance. In other words, to adhere to prepared criteria, criteria established prior and external to the inquiry which we are currently undertaking and which are, therefore, not tainted by subjectivity or contingency. Rorty, however, prefers the “weak” sense of rationality, where to be rational does not involve algorithmically following pre-existing guidelines, but rather merely being “reasonable” or “sane” or “civilized.” That is, to be rational means to “eschew dogmatism, defensiveness, and righteous indignation,” opting instead for “tolerance, respect for the opinions of those around one, willingness to listen, reliance on persuasion rather than force.” In this way, the perceived (and problematic) essential distinction between the sciences and the humanities dissolves, since neither “corresponds to reality” but each can be pursued “rationally.” Now Rorty still defends the truthfulness of natural science, (which he has contrasted with “Scientism”) but attacks “the attempt to divinize it,” an attempt he attributes to the realists. Hence for both Rorty and Husserl, scientific truth is a human project, not a divine one.

In a nutshell then, Rorty’s “solidarity” requires no metaphysics, not even the so-called “quasi-transcendental norms” found in Habermas discourse nor the “limit-concept of ideal truth” as suggested by Putnam, since subject-object relation is mediated by subject-subject relation, i.e., intersubjectivity. Further, no (naturalistic) epistemology is required either. Truth is what it is good for us to believe (pragmatism—knowledge and interests) and is dependent on community-specific procedures of justification (against universality). It is intersubjective agreement and as a result, there is no qualitative difference between knowledge and opinion, science and non-sciences. Its only goal is, in Rorty’s own words, “…to create a more expansive sense of solidarity than we presently have.” And then Rorty concludes by saying that we (wet liberals) “are under no obligations other than the “we-intentions” of the communities with which we identify.”
Rorty is unclear concerning the nature of a community. It may include not only a group of existing people but also historical or fictional characters. He is somewhat more explicit concerning his own community however, which he refers to as “the community of the liberal intellectuals of the secular modern West.” The ideal of that community is the promotion of unforced general agreement among its members with tolerance of disagreement. The solidarity of such a community would lie in both the liberal beliefs that its members generally hold in common and in its tolerant attitude. So far, for Rorty, the best exemplification of such an “unforced general agreement” is found in the institutions of science. He says, “For these institutions give concreteness and detail to the idea of ‘unforced agreement.’” Such “unforced agreement” however, Rorty reiterated, is not due to any connection between human reason and the nature of things but through listening to as many suggestions and arguments as we can.

Rorty acknowledges that he values Enlightenment-based habits, such as the search for “toleration, free inquiry, and a quest for undistorted communication” for even the idea of universal Reason (transhistorical nature) is itself a product of the culture-bound conversation of the Enlightenment. So he says, we should be satisfied with our limited sense of truth and forget about the appeal to a non-existent universal Reason for certification of our sense of truth. It is okay just to “muddle through.”

Furthermore, for Rorty, “The pragmatists’ justification of toleration, free inquiry, and the quest for undistorted communication can only take the form of a comparison between societies which exemplify these habits and those which do not, leading up to the suggestion that nobody who has experienced both would prefer the latter. It is exemplified by Winston Churchill’s defense of democracy as the worst form of government imaginable, except for all the others which have been tried so far. Such a justification is not by reference to a criterion, but by reference to various detailed practical advantages. So the pragmatist admits that he has no ahistorical standpoint from which to endorse the habits of modern democracies he wishes to praise. These consequences are just what partisans [adherents] of solidarity expect.”
IV. Critical Evaluation and Conclusion:

At first sight, there is much to appreciate in Rorty’s claim that solidarity is what we should aim at in our society. After all, we all need to learn to live in unity with our fellow human beings. As Rorty puts it, “the habits of relying on persuasion rather than force, of respect for the opinions of colleagues, of curiosity and eagerness for new data and ideas, are the only virtues which scientists (or anyone for that matter) have.”\(^\text{71}\) However, in going for solidarity, Rorty completely rejects rationality for he says further, “[There is no] intellectual virtue called ‘rationality’ over and above these moral virtues.”\(^\text{72}\) From here Rorty goes on to reject objective truth altogether as he says there is no way in which language, which really are our tools for dealing with the environment, can take us out of touch with reality. The end of inquiry therefore, is, not the discovery or even the approximation of absolute truth but the formulation of beliefs that further the solidarity of the community, or “to reduce objectivity to solidarity.”\(^\text{73}\) Inevitably, Rorty’s writings have met with passionate disapproval from some critics. Beginning with Rorty’s claim that solidarity is to be preferred to objectivity, I will try to analyze various criticisms as articulated by many scholars and at the same time outline Rorty’s responses to his critics and eventually find out whether his defenses are sufficient to rescue him from the charge that his philosophy self-destructs by its own logic.

1. Objectivity vs. Solidarity:

According to Will Wilkinson, Richard Rorty’s “Solidarity or Objectivity,” begins by presenting us with an “awfully weird and unappealing choice.”\(^\text{74}\) Rorty claims that there are just two main ways to “give sense” to our lives. Either one can make up a story about oneself in which one’s life figures in the life of a bigger community, or one can think about standing in a certain direct relationship to the mind-independent world. If you go in for the first, then you like solidarity. If you go in for the second, you like objectivity.

Wilkinson thinks this is weird since he feels, “we might not care that much about being embedded in a tradition or community. And so fitting into one might not be central to some people’s sense of meaning in life. But these people don’t thereby have any overriding interest in eyeball-to-eyeball contact with the world-out-there.”\(^\text{75}\) Wilkinson then asks, “How about giving meaning to your life by trying to do something that makes you, the individual, happy?”\(^\text{75}\)
Furthermore, Levisohn in his article "Richard Rorty’s Ethical Anti-Foundationalism" asks, "Why should we accept Rorty’s story?" In other words, Why choose solidarity instead of objectivity? It appears that for Rorty, the desire for solidarity is more fundamental than the desire for objectivity. After all, in Rorty’s account, it was the values associated with solidarity such as the need “to envisage a common goal of humanity” and by the “fear of parochialism,” that gave rise to objectivity in the first place. The effect is to suggest that, from the very beginning, “objectivity was simply solidarity gone wrong.”

In section II of this chapter, we have seen how according to Rorty, the Western philosophical tradition dominated by the desire for objectivity failed. That is, it failed in all of its metaphysical and epistemological projects, as each one in turn stepped up to bat and struck out swinging. In Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Rorty has gone to a great length in exposing the flaws in the traditional images of the mind as a mirror of nature. In the process, he has surveyed the history of epistemology from its Greek origins to its recent demise, as well as the history of its putative “successor subjects,” empirical psychology and philosophy of language. And as we have noted before, Rorty’s conclusion is that “…the traditional Western metaphysico-epistemological way of firming up our habits simply isn’t working anymore. It isn’t doing its job”

As observed by Levisohn however, what Rorty has given us, is the “historical account” or origin of only one of the ways that we give sense to our lives-namely, the desire for Objectivity- not both. Rorty’s purpose was to show how the quest for objectivity arose at a certain time and place and in this way, Levisohn claims, he (i.e., Rorty) “devalues or undermines objectivity, by showing it to be not a natural or essential desire, but merely an optional and contingent one.” Furthermore, as pointed out by Levisohn, “Rorty casually jumps from the origins of the quest for objectivity in Greek thought to picking up the threads of the story with the Enlightenment, a familiar move but also a problematic one: aside from stressing the development of modern science as the model of rational inquiry (and the scientist as the ideal intellectual), Rorty does not sufficiently differentiate the contributions of the ancient and the modern periods to the story."
Whatever the case may be, let's say at this instance that we agree with Rorty that solidarity is (in some sense) more fundamental than objectivity. Still, Levisohn says, there is no reason, in principle, why a similar story cannot be told about the historical, contingent development of solidarity as well. Taking into consideration, Rorty’s out-and-out anti-essentialism, he must certainly admit that solidarity can no more be an essential or necessary desire than objectivity can, that solidarity too is simply an option open to us. But if this is so then why should we opt only for solidarity? As Levisohn puts it, “(If) both solidarity and objectivity are nothing more than options, then we should ask again: why choose solidarity?”

At this point, Rorty must acknowledge, not a negative but a positive reason for his allegiance to solidarity. And according to Levisohn, there is, in fact, a positive basis to Rorty’s views though it is not a metaphysical basis, but an ethical one.

What is that ethical basis? From the very beginning of Solidarity or Objectivity, we will notice that Rorty’s discussion of the twin desires is cast in ethical terms. Rorty specifically points out the potential violations associated with solidarity and objectivity. Beginning with solidarity, Rorty says, “Insofar as a person is seeking solidarity, she does not ask about the relation between the practices of the chosen community and something outside that community.” Consequently, as per Levisohn, “…the desire for solidarity-considered here as the concern with maintaining the cohesion, structure, or even the very existence of a community, as well as preserving one’s own membership within the community-obstructs the potential inquiry into whether the practices (or standards, or rules) of that community are unjust, as we might say.”

To explain further, the ethical problem here is not the specific activities undertaken in pursuit of solidarity – again, here the term is used in the fundamental sense in which it gives meaning to life- but “with the obstruction of inquiry, with the fact that the desire for solidarity may potentially blind and deafen the seeker of solidarity to ethical challenges, to the cries of the wounded from outside the community. Not every challenge, not every wound, deserves to derail the search for solidarity, but in the long run and on the whole, every challenge deserves to be heard. The fact that the desire for solidarity may in all probability blind and deafen the seeker of solidarity to ethical challenges, to the cries of the wounded from outside the community raises the ethical problem, which is the obstruction of inquiry.
Having said so much regarding the potential ethical violations due to the desire for solidarity we will now turn to the desire for objectivity. Now as maintained by Rorty, insofar as a person seeks objectivity, “she distances herself from the actual persons around her not by thinking of herself as a member of some other real or imaginary group, but rather by attaching herself to something which can be described without reference to any particular human beings.”

The first thing we notice Levisohn says, “is that the potential ethical problem here does not seem to involve other people, at least not initially.” To a certain extent, the seeker of objectivity seems to violate an ethical obligation to herself: “by denying her own membership within a community, she is denying her own humanity.” Besides, one already hears a hint of a further objection. Not only does this scientist or philosopher “attaches herself” to something non-human, but by doing so, according to Rorty, “she distances herself” from others.” Hence, as explained by Levisohn, “the ethical implications seem to involve not only herself, but others as well for by distancing herself in order to pursue objectivity, she can no longer hear the ideas-or the cries-of others.”

The ethical problem with the pursuit of solidarity then, according to Levisohn, might be characterized as “the prior restriction of entitlement, suffrage or representation to those within the community,” while the ethical problem of objectivity involves “the prior restriction of ethical challenges, in general.” The point here is that the two issues are not parallel: the problem with solidarity is specific, while the problem with objectivity is general. In this light, the specific pitfall of restricted representation in the search for solidarity is a problem of the community not achieving its own ethical values. The pursuit of objectivity, on the other hand, constitutes a denial of the value of community. The end result is that, in Rorty’s opinion, the former problem can be (and is) overcome, while the latter problem cannot be.

Rorty therefore casts the choice between objectivity and solidarity as the choice between an algorithm and an ethic, between a supposed (but in fact empty) “intellectual virtue called ‘rationality’” and the actual “moral virtue” of the ethics of inquiry.

Thus, Rorty says, “the pragmatist’s account of the value of cooperative human inquiry has only an ethical base, not a metaphysical or epistemological one.” Or again: “The pragmatist suggestion that we substitute a “merely” ethical foundation for our sense of community-or,
better, that we think of our sense of community as having no foundation except shared hope and the trust created by such sharing—is put forward on practical grounds. It is not put forward as a corollary of a metaphysical claim . . . nor of an epistemological claim.\textsuperscript{97}

What is this suggested “ethical foundation”? We know for certain, it is not a real foundation, because it is not justified by any external or prior criterion. Levisohn thinks there is a tension here over what this ethical foundation is as suggested in the above passage: “(I)n this passage, Rorty suggests it as a substitute for a metaphysical foundation, but almost immediately wishes to retract the phrase and replace it with something less prone to misinterpretation. The \textit{practical grounds} that Rorty refers to here are the collapse of traditional metaphysics and epistemology, as he states explicitly at the beginning of the paragraph, so the pragmatist suggestion should be considered as the only alternative still open to us. But actually, that is not quite true. More precisely, Rorty considers solidarity to be the only option available ‘in order to avoid...the bad side of Nietzsche’\textsuperscript{98} The contrast with Nietzsche is intended to confirm that, indeed, solidarity is optional. But if we desire to be ethical, to consider other people, to be tolerant and avoid cruelty- if we desire solidarity - then solidarity is the only option available.\textsuperscript{99}

Levisohn thus concludes that such circularity as observed in Rorty’s arguments “merely serves to indicate that, in the end, Rorty relies upon an intuition-his own intuition-about ethical obligations to others.”\textsuperscript{100} In other words, in affirming solidarity, Rorty affirms an ethics without any metaphysical foundation and which rely instead upon an intuitive, ethical foundation—which is to say, they rely upon themselves. Levisohn concludes: “Solidarity may indeed be optional, contingent, an historical development, but it is the ethical option; in the absence of any satisfactory justificatory account, but in the presence of our intuitions, we should just be ethical.”\textsuperscript{101}

By this Levisohn also mean to suggest- without any justification, at this point-that it might be \textit{optional}. What he means exactly is that one can also consider an alternative conception that will avoid the reduction of either objectivity or solidarity, thus letting each rest upon its own “foundation.” In the words of Levisohn, “the non-reduction of either objectivity or solidarity, the validation of both.”\textsuperscript{102}
Another important criticism relating to Rorty's rejection of objectivity has been put forward by Wilkinson who feels that Rorty's characterization of objectivity is in itself extremely impractical or unrealistic. According to Wilkinson, Rorty identifies correspondence-truth with a radical sort of mirroring of Things-In-Themselves. As a result, what he offers us is either his extreme irrealism about truth, or what Susan Haack calls "grandly transcendental" correspondence-truth. What Rorty overlooks are those "in between" positions such as "a genuinely pragmatist Peircian epistemic theory of truth, minimal correspondence theories, like Ramsey's or Tarski's, or moderate correspondence theories like Wittgenstein's, Austin's or...the Objectivist theory." 103

So much for objectivity. Now let's say we accept Rorty's alternative, which is solidarity. Now those who wish to reduce objectivity to solidarity, Rorty says, view truth as "what is good for us to believe." 104 Thus, we can come to decide that we were wrong, when we have a new set of beliefs or as he calls them a divergent "webs of beliefs" that are better than the old ones. Let us find out if this argument of Rorty holds water.

2. Truth - What is best for us to believe:

At first glance, there does not appear to be any profound confusion but as Collister observes, "Rorty is committed to conflating the actual outcome of a social change with its apparent outcome; (i.e.) if a new way of viewing the world seems better than its predecessors, then, for all practical purposes, it is. This view is obviously problematic, however, for (and here he cites Putnam's argument) "it could happen that a neofascist tendency wins out, and people cope better in the sense that it comes to seem to them that they are coping better by dealing savagely with those terrible Jews, foreigners, and communists." 105 In other words, along with Rorty's liberal contention that any change that results from an imaginative discourse between and within cultures may be a change for the better, he must admit that a neofascistic change is a change for the better.

Furthermore, Michael Olsen in his article "Rorty's Pragmatism Undone: The Necessity of Truth to Knowledge," insists there are multiple problems with Rorty's pragmatism. Rorty says, truth is simply a compliment paid to the beliefs which we think so well justified
that, for the moment, further justification is not needed. Seen in this way the only thing that matters is which way the concept of truth is “reshaped” or changed so as to make it more useful thus bringing in more practical advantages. However, according to Olsen, an infinite regress looms in the midst of this argument, thus never giving justification. He cites the following example:

Let’s say person A comes to the view that it is best to believe X, but person B comes to believe Y. Let’s say our community reaches agreement that we should believe X, we want to know however, is it true now that X is better than Y?” As a pragmatist he might claim that X is better because of “various detailed practical advantages.” However, as argued by Olsen we also have to ask “why is this advantageous?” The pragmatist then is most likely to speak of the effects it has on people. But then we ask, but why want those effects? Here the pragmatist could go on ad infinitum about the fact that it is “good” or “better” to believe this than not. All things considered, what we eventually see through this, says Olsen, is, “the vacuity of the term “better,” and as a result, he never supplies us with a reason.

Arguing along the same lines, Wilkinson says, “Suppose we have two beliefs, P and Q, (P could be pragmatism and Q could be realism, if you like) and we want to decide which is most advantageous, which is best for us to hold. And suppose Rorty says that P is better for us to hold than Q. Immediately we’ll want to ask, “Is P’s being better for us to hold than Q, a bona fide fact, i.e., is it really TRUE that P is better than Q.” Now, the pragmatist confronts a dilemma. Either he can say that it is correspondence-true that P is better for us to hold than Q, or it is merely pragmatically true that P is better than Q.” Wilkinson then carries this argument a bit further: “If the pragmatist grasps the first horn, he loses his pragmatism… (On the other hand), if the pragmatist grasps the second horn, he is saddled with a vicious regress. If it is pragmatically true that P is good for us to believe, then it is good for us to believe that it is good for us to believe that P. And if that is the case, then it is good to believe that it is good to believe that it is good to belief that P and so on. The regress is vicious because if one begins on the regress it becomes impossible to give any content to claims about a belief’s goodness or practical advantage. Unless a notion of truth unsusceptible to regress is introduced (the first horn), the pragmatist’s claim that P is good for us to believe turns out to lack content. It fails to be a claim at all.” What has been so passionately endorsed by Rorty as that which gives more sense to our lives is, in the ultimate analysis, bound to be ungrounded and arbitrary.
Furthermore, to arrive at “what is best for us to believe” is not according to Rorty ascertained by any objective standard but by a consensus, an agreement reached within a particular community. It is to this claim that we will turn now.

3. Intersubjective agreement:

There are a few problems encountered when truth, or in Rorty’s words “what is best for us to believe”, is being arrived at intersubjectively. Michael Albert, in his article, “Truth” has cited the example of Bruno Latour, a famous French sociologist who takes Rorty seriously. Latour rejects a claim by French Scientists working on the mummy of the Pharaoh Ramses II, that Ramses died in roughly 1213 due to tuberculosis. Latour asks, “How could he pass away [in 1213] due to a bacillus discovered by Robert Koch in 1882?” In other words, in tune with Rorty, Latour forgets about there being or not being a bacillus and wonders only when people intersubjectively agree about one, concluding that “before Koch, the bacillus has no real existence.” What would Rorty reply?

Rorty says, “If I have concrete specific doubts about whether one of my beliefs is true, I can resolve those doubts only by asking whether it is adequately justified—by finding and assessing additional reasons pro and con. I cannot bypass justification and confine my attention to truth.” Albert however asks, “But what counts as justification? Correspondence to reality doesn’t count and warranted intersubjective agreement does count. But again, what kind of intersubjective agreement counts? If it isn’t tested against evidence is it fortified by wish fulfillment, myth making, or lying?”

Albert gives yet another example: “ Favoritism corrupts the human spirit. Is this claim true only because I can find people who nod yes, intersubjectively agreeing when I say it? If that’s Rorty’s position, would it be false if I couldn’t find people to nod yes? When Newton wrote his Principia were his claims about gravity false because there was no one to nod in agreement that they were true?”

Rorty is very clear: “Philosophers on my side of the argument,” he says, “answer that objectivity is not a matter of corresponding to objects but a matter of getting together with other subjects—that there is nothing to objectivity except intersubjectivity.” Are we to understand that this statement is true only if enough folks say it is? We might as well take a survey.
Rorty further says, “I believe that it is pointless to ask whether there really are mountains or whether it is merely convenient for us to talk about mountains.” Albert asks, “If so, what type “convenience” justifies existence?...What has convenience got to do with truth, other than that truth might yield it or not, as the case may be?”117

In response to the above question Albert cites another example: Suppose Stalin, having just exiled some ex-aide and decided that this former aide must also be obliterated from the historical record, tells us that the exile never held his prior office. Suppose also that the revisionist view Stalin’s proposal as the most convenient since the alternative is a firing squad. Does Stalin’s claim then become true because we have intersubjectively agreed it is the most convenient thing to do?118

Accordingly, in Putnam’s view, Rorty, by acknowledging only practice-internal, “conversational” criteria for the justification of statements and beliefs and by confining the audience of justification to a culturally and historically particularized ethnos, just gives up the task of normative reflection which has always been part and parcel of the pragmatist tradition and which Dewey, Rorty’s greatest hero belonged.119

Habermas, with whom Rorty seems to be in agreement when it comes to his (i.e. Habermas) “communicative community”, puts much emphasis on the need for some kind of a quasi-transcendent norm beyond the simply historical and contingent by which the community arrives at a consensus or agreement. He does not, for instance, reject rational argumentation accompanying that discourse. In fact, according to Prasenjit Biswas in his Postmodern Controversy: Reading Rorty, Derrida and Habermas, “(T)he moot epistemic question that Habermas raises is, how can Rorty think of a community without having a consensus building approach through rational argumentation in speech?”120 Now according to Rorty, “a mere agreement on what is true, good or right has to be believed as sufficient to hold a point of view, instead of resolution of differences in such views through good reasons.”121 Contrastingly, as pointed out by Biswas “for Habermas, there is no other way to reach an agreement except by way of making oneself a party to the agreement “on the basis of good reasons,” which will also serve the purpose of resolution of disagreements. Further… to raise a validity claim is to proclaim, “This is so generally and not just for me or for us” and it is to point “beyond the
Accordingly, by substituting the implicitly “normative conception of valid argument” with the descriptive concept of “argument held to be true by us at this time”, Rorty commits an ‘objective fallacy’.  

Habermas has critiqued this fallacy in the following way: “Either one has accepted the argument of someone else and sublated her own or vice versa and accepted the force of an argument as valid without conditions. The moments of validity bring in such a notion of unconditionality, without which an argument cannot acquire the status of validity. This notion goes beyond “argument in a specific context” or even beyond the basic anthropological trust assumed to exist in a human society.” 

Ironically enough, as Biswas has pointed out, this notion of “unconditional-ness” comes close to Rorty’s acceptance of an “evidence transcendent notion of truth pace Davidson”, even though he refuses to admit “inner structure” of “true’ sentences.” To explicate this further, for Rorty, the “moment of unconditional-ness” is not a condition that transcends “human capacities” in recognizing a statement to be true or false. Rather, Rorty’s notion of “evidence-transcendent” has developed out of two epistemic concerns: (1) not allowing a scheme of truth that makes particular instances “true”, and (2) not allowing any tertia like “states of affairs” or “definition” to snoop between text and world. In this way, Rorty blurs the distinction between subject and object, appearance and reality, scheme and content and according to Biswas, “this is how Rorty’s holistic talk about agreement within a larger community coheres between the beliefs of each other and between beliefs not required to decide on matters of agreement and disagreement because such a decision already incorporates our direct contact with the world that gets our belief true or makes an appeal to that which transcends human capacities.” 

What Rorty is actually doing here according to Biswas, is arguing at a metaphilosophical level, which is “assigning belief as generally true which takes care of all agreements, disagreements and validity claims.” He then goes on to say, “Putting such a metaphilosophical notion of validity before particular validity claims, Rorty formulates his pragmatic criterion of validity in terms of agreement within a community that does not any longer require a criterion of truth to testify its beliefs.” Disregarding the charge of “objectivistic fallacy” Rorty says that the fallacy only comes in when we think that “the relationship between vocables and reality has to be
piecemeal (like the relation between individual kicks and individual rocks), a matter of discrete component capacities getting in touch with distinct chunks of reality."\(^{130}\)

According to Biswas, Rorty, in eliminating the chance of relating vocables with pieces of reality, gives us a picture of knowledge that "already enables us to recognize each other's beliefs locked in terms of their efficacy in practice."\(^{131}\) That "moment of unconditional" is thus appropriated by Rorty in such justification as "detailed practical advantages" showed by members of a society. Such practical advantages do not require a consensus as their legitimate basis nor an underlying normative structure to acquire gains flowing from them, as is required in the case of undistorted communication. So, then are we to conclude from this that Rorty does not take into account the other point of view? The answer is, "Rorty takes into account the other point of view to the extent that it brings in some practical advantages, but not in terms of some common validity claims."\(^{132}\)

However, what Habermas raises as a notion of validity claim takes into account the other point of view and this happens only when we un-condition ourselves from our own point of view and look beyond the local context. In other words, "truth claims can be contested indefinitely from an indefinite diversity of points of view, precisely because they claim unconditioned validity,"\(^{133}\) which are, above all, based on what Habermas calls, "good reasons" and not just because they happen to have certain practical advantages. What will happen if, say, the "other point of view" tend to have more practical advantages than that of Rorty's? Will his point of view then be disregarded?

In Teichman's view, "Rorty, in cutting the ground from under their feet (i.e. his critics) he cuts it from under his own."\(^{134}\) If he thinks truth is nothing over and beyond beliefs that have been agreed upon intersubjectively due to certain practical advantages that they bring, then his own neo-pragmatism will cease to be true whenever people disagree about it because they longer bring the most practical advantages.

Furthermore, as pointed out by Teichman, if true means true for the time being there is no sense in Rorty's urging us to aim for a certain kind of future, the extension of "us" as far as we can. By the time the desired future—the Rortian liberal utopia—arrives, it will no longer be true that it was a good one to aim for. By the way, even now it seems the Rortian liberal utopia
is still a far cry. It will only happen when members of Rorty's community agree with him.135 According to Wilkinson, when Rortian pragmatism would become "part of our cultural background, part of what we take for granted, a part of common life, something we just assume when undertake to converse with each other."136 But then he continues "...it isn't. Rorty's views are "controversial."137 As a matter of fact, there is nothing even approaching consensus or agreement over Rorty's ideas.138 Uncovering the truth or agreeing, i.e. truth (scientific truth for instance) goes beyond mere agreement (based on practical advantages).

Not just intersubjective agreement but even its end, which is achieving solidarity, is besotted with problems. Rorty has pointed out over and over again that the search for truth via intersubjective agreement is really the means towards solidarity or to put it another way, to extend the sense of "we" as far as we can.

4. Solidarity or the "We" Talk:

First, the means Rorty suggests to achieve solidarity seem quite problematic. According to Lemke, for while he rejects religious and secular ethical universalism, he also urges us to "try to extend our sense of 'we' to people whom we have previously thought of as 'they'"- indeed, he describes this imperative as being "characteristic of liberals." This appears to be very confused, if not contradictory.139 Likewise, according to Dean Guerras, Professor of Philosophy at Southwest Texas State University, this means of arguing for a belief, i.e. agreement with the purpose of achieving solidarity, becomes especially problematic when one considers the many different communities in one complex society such as the Liberals, conservatives, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, capitalists, Marxists, etc. who live together and, on many issues, have divergent "webs of beliefs." The question that arises is, how are we to converse on these issues if our aim is solidarity of each community rather than agreement based upon reasons aiming at objective truth?140 Besides, referring to Rorty's "we", i.e., the "wet liberal intellectuals" like himself, Baghramian says that even this is not a homogeneous grouping. To realize this we only need to look at the differences of philosophical and political opinion between Putnam, Rorty, Chomisky, Nozick, Dummett and Quine.141 It seems then that there could hardly be a "we" in the sense that would satisfy Rorty's desired community, namely, the "wet liberals".
Not only the means to achieve solidarity, but even the substitution of objectivity by solidarity itself could very well land us in a predicament. As an example, Guerra has brought in the western legal system where in order that the jury might be protected from prejudicial influence of the society as a whole, especially in well-publicized cases, they are purposely barred from communicating with their communities. Now if the aim of inquiry in the legal system were solidarity with the community, jurors would be encouraged to allow the society at large to influence them. However the aim is to discover truth rather than to attain solidarity. Rorty may object that the judicial practice of handling juries in this way has been agreed to by the community and thus expresses solidarity in principle. However, the reason for this agreement is not to establish solidarity but to devise rules that best enable us to uncover the truth. As Simon Blackburn have said, “But if the cartographers measure, the historians consult archives … the scientists do experiments, and here we may add, the jurors seek evidences, then they need some concept of discovery to make what they are doing intelligible. They are uncovering how things stand, uncovering the truth.” (italics added) Perhaps Rorty’s solidarity is useful in so far it leads us to objectivity. That is, it is not an end in itself, but only the means which when pursued with utmost candor and exactness, leads us to truth. To quote Blackburn, “(P)iece by piece, then, it looks as if the traditional building blocks of western thought - representation, truth, objectivity, knowledge - can and must survive Rorty’s battering.”

Because of his views on truth, Rorty has further provoked a wide range of the most diverse charges. Of these the most prominent is the allegation that Rorty is a relativist. However this is a subject that will be examined in detail in a chapter I have entitled “Relativism vs. Ethnocentrism: Is Rorty a Relativist?”

In conclusion we may ask, how is Rorty led to these strange and eccentric conclusions about truth and reality? Amongst Rorty’s writings, there is one oft-quoted linguistic argument in Contingency, Law, and Solidarity. It goes this way: To say that truth is not out there is simply to say that where there are no sentences there is no truth, that sentences are elements of human languages, and that human languages are human creations. It is to this argument that we shall now turn.
Notes and References:


7 Ibid., p.10.


11 Ibid., p.10.

12 Ibid., p.11.

13 Ibid., p. 23.

14 Ibid., p. 22. An important point to be noted regarding Rorty’s reduction or “reductive redefinition” is that it gets rid of the concepts that participants in serious discussions normally rely on. According to Jenny Teichman, Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge, by “reductive redefinition” Rorty removes his critics’ weapons even before they can get started. And it is in this way that Rorty has tried to explain away the notion of objectivity by reducing it to intersubjective agreement or solidarity. (see Jenny Teichman, “The Philosophy of We” (On Rorty’s Truth and Progress) webpage, http://www.newcriterion.com

15 Ibid., p.21.

16 Ibid., p.21.

17 Ibid., p.21.

18 Ibid., p.21.

19 Ibid., p.22.

20 Ibid., p. 33.


23 Ibid., p.24.

24 Ibid., p.23.

25 Ibid., p.23.

27 Ibid., p. 52. (See Rorty, Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth, p. 22.)

28 Ibid., p. 52. (See Rorty, Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth, p. 23.)


30 Ibid., p.196.

31 Ibid., p.191.

32 Ibid., p.190.


35 Rorty, Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, p.190.

36 Ibid., p.195.

37 Ibid., p.195.

38 Ibid., p.195.

39 Ibid., p.195.


41 Ibid., webpage.


43 Ibid., p. 27.

44 Ibid., p. 32.


46 Ibid., p. 35.

47 Ibid., p. 35.

48 Ibid., p. 35.

49 Ibid., p. 35.

50 Ibid., p. 36.

51 Ibid., p. 37.

52 Ibid., p. 39.

54 Thompson, David L. "Rorty and Husserl on Realism, Idealism and Intersubjective Solidarity." (Memorial University, 14-10-1994) webpage, http://www.ucs.mun.ca

55 Ibid., webpage.

56 Ibid., webpage.

57 Shaughan Lavine, 20th Century Philosophy: "Professor Rorty," (Spring 2004), webpage http://zillion.philosophy.arizona.edu

58 Ibid., webpage.


60 Ibid., p. 37.

61 Ibid., p. 37.

62 Ibid., p. 34.

63 Rorty, Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, p.196.

64 Ibid., p.198.

65 Rorty, Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth, p. 29.

66 Ibid., p. 39.

67 Ibid., p. 39.

68 Ibid., p. 29.

69 Ibid., p. 28.

70 Ibid., p. 29.

71 Ibid., p. 39.

72 Ibid., p. 39.


74 Ibid., webpage.

75 Ibid., webpage.

76 Levisohn, "On Richard Rorty's, Ethical Anti-Foundationalism," pp. 54-55.

77 Ibid., p. 51.

78 Ibid., p. 49.

79 Ibid., p. 51 (see Rorty, Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth, p. 33)

80 Ibid., p. 54.

81 Ibid., p. 54.

82 Ibid., p. 55.

83 Ibid., p. 55.
84 Ibid. p. 55.
87 Ibid., p. 55.
90 Ibid., p. 56. (See also Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, p. 21.)
93 Ibid. p. 56.
94 Ibid. p. 56.
96 Ibid., p. 24.
97 Ibid., p. 33.
98 Ibid., p. 33.
100 Ibid., p. 57. (See also Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, p. 22)
101 Ibid., p. 57.
102 Ibid. footnote 18.
105 McCollister, “Senior Thesis Proposal: Rorty’s Pragmatism and Putnam’s Charge of Relativism.”
107 Ibid., p. 75.
108 Ibid., p. 75.
110 Ibid., webpage.
112 Ibid., webpage.
114 Ibid., webpage.
115 Ibid., webpage.

117 Ibid., webpage.

118 Ibid., webpage.

119 Sami Pihlstrom, “Putnam and Rorty on their Pragmatist Heritage: Re-Reading James and Dewey” (Department of Philosophy, University of Helsinki, Finland, 23-02-2001.) webpage, http://www.helsinki.fi


121 Ibid., p.130.

122 Ibid., p.131.

123 Ibid., p.131.

124 Ibid., p.131.

125 Ibid., p.131.

126 Ibid., p.131.

127 Ibid., pp. 131-32.

128 Ibid., p.132.

129 Ibid., p.132.

130 Ibid., p.132.

131 Ibid., p.132.

132 Ibid., p.133.

133 Ibid., p.133.


135 Ibid., webpage.


137 Ibid., webpage.

138 Ibid., webpage.


144 Ibid., p. 7.

145 Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, p.5.