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## The Priority of literature to Philosophy in Richard Rorty\*



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### **Abstract**

In this article, I try to defend the thesis that imagination against reason, moral progress through imagination not the reason, solidarity vs. objectivity, the emergence of literary culture after philosophical culture from Hegel onwards, contingency of language, the usefulness of literature (poetry, novels and stories, etc.) in enhancing empathy with one another and ultimately reducing philosophy to poetry in Richard Rorty's writings point to one thing: the priority of literature to philosophy. The literary or post-physical culture that Rorty defends is opposed to the Enlightenment and the philosophical and religious culture. Rorty prefers literary culture between the religious culture and philosophical culture. The literary culture Rorty envisages is a radically historicist and nominalist one. Rorty's romanticised version of pragmatism aims precisely at dealing with this literary or post-physical culture or, in generally, the literature.

**Keywords:** philosophy, literary culture, literature, pragmatism, and Rorty

*Philosophy makes progress not by  
becoming more rigorous but by  
becoming more imaginative.*

Richard Rorty

### **Introduction**

Let us start by examining the relationship between literature and philosophy. We see this relationship in the philosophy of some contemporary philosophers such as Richard Rorty places a great deal of value on the critique of philosophy and the fundamental concepts of traditional philosophy, and we know that he went to Stanford University's Department of Comparative Literature late in his academic life. At first step, to considering the issue, it may be useful to point out that this relationship has many vicissitudes from the beginning until today. The overwhelming relationship between philosophy and literature in the history of philosophy from Plato to Rorty, in spite of the complete disregard for this relationship in traditional philosophy, is now at the center of the philosophical debates of contemporary philosophers. Of course, this relationship is not limited to the history of Western philosophy<sup>1</sup>.

The philosophers, the literate or the poets as well as artists have always claimed in various ways that their field of activity is a well-deserved field in which truth can be discovered. The tool of the philosopher is reason, and the tool of the poet of imagination and metaphorical language. In this writing, we will try to show that in order to understand the priority of literature to philosophy in Richard Rorty's neo-pragmatism, one must consider some the key words of his thought such as, "literary culture versus philosophical culture", "philosophy as a literary genre", philosophy as poetry, imagination, moral progress through imagination, and etc.

As Rorty himself has defended the priority of democracy over philosophy in "The priority of democracy to philosophy (1992)", we also advocate the priority of literature over philosophy. The priority of freedom over truth is the subject of Rorty's book, and the imagination of reason and reason is the subject of our article. We believe that if Rorty had written a book or an article on the relationship between philosophy and literature at the beginning of the twenty-first century, surely the title of our article would have been one of his works. But he did not write, but the content of such a book or article can be found in many of his later works, and we pursue this goal in this article, although we do not claim to have been fully successful.

### **Continental background of Rorty's thought**

The emergence of the post-structuralist movement and the publication of books by postmodern philosophers such as Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, and Deleuze and the reception of these works at American universities drew the attention of analytical and post-philosophical philosophers to these works, and generally incorporated European philosophy into American philosophy. Nietzsche and Derrida are a familiar model for Rorty's view of philosophy as a literary genre. In "Looking Back at a Literary Theory", Rorty says that in the 1970s, teachers in American literature departments began reading Derrida and

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Foucault. A new subdiscipline called "literary theory" took shape. The notion that a literary text could profitably be "theorized" helped make it easy for literature professors to teach their favorite philosophy books and for literature students to write their dissertations on philosophical topics. It also helped create jobs in literature departments. (Saussy 2006: 63)

Since the publication of his famous book, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), Rorty has been influenced by this continental tradition, in particular the ideas of French post-structuralist thinkers such as Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze, Lyotard and others (such as Heidegger). Rorty, in his paper, "Philosophy as a Kind of Writing: An Essay on Derrida", prefers Derrida to the early Derrida because "for Derrida, writing always leads to more writing, and more, and still more—just as history does not lead to Absolute Knowledge or the Final Struggle, but to more history, and more, and still more"(Rorty 1982: 145). Of course, Rorty wants to clear the line between analytic and continental philosophies:

I have heard analytic philosophers get furious at comparative literature departments for trespassing on philosophical turf by teaching Nietzsche and Derrida, and doubly furious at the suggestion that they might teach it themselves. Conversely, I have heard fans of Continental philosophy be obnoxious about the 'mere logic-chopping' with which their analytic colleagues waste students' time and dehydrate their minds. Like reciprocal charges of incompetence, this sort of rhetoric is pointless. It is also dangerous, for it can actually result in colleges and universities not having people on the faculty who can explain certain books to interested students. Yet the only way in which institutions of liberal learning can justify their existence is to be places in which students can find practically any book in the library – Gadamer or Kripke, Searle or Derrida – and then find somebody to talk with about it. When all the jockeying to decide which department's budget will bear the freight is over, we have to make sure the result has not been to limit the possibilities open to the students (Rorty 1982: 225).

It should not be forgotten that towards the end of his life he became increasingly interested in literature. Richard Rorty was professor emeritus of comparative literature and philosophy at Stanford University, passed away on Friday, June 8, 2007.

### **Rorty's pragmatic criticism of philosophy**

Rorty believes that the traditional Western philosophical tradition is a tradition on which Plato's heavy shadow has fallen. The Western philosophical tradition has always sought to approach the transcendental reality. In the *Philosophy and mirror of Nature*, Rorty characterized the traditional view of philosophy in the following way:

Philosophers usually think of their discipline as one which discusses perennial, eternal problems – problems which arise as soon as one reflects. Some of these concerns the difference between human

beings and other beings, and are crystallized in questions concerning the relation between the mind and the body. Other problems concern the legitimation of claims to know, and are crystallized in questions concerning the “foundations” of knowledge. To discover these foundations is to discover something about the mind, and conversely. Philosophy as a discipline thus sees itself as the attempt to underwrite or debunk claims to knowledge made by science, morality, art, or religion. It purports to do this on the basis of its special understanding of the nature of knowledge and mind. Philosophy can be foundational in respect to the rest of culture because culture is an assemblage of claims to knowledge, and philosophy adjudicates such claims. (Rorty 1979: 3)

In western tradition, the philosophy’s task or philosopher’s task is to use its special methods and tools in order to secure the relationship between the mind’s representations and the world represented. On such an approach, philosophy is foundational for western culture because it is the tribunal of reason before which all other areas of inquiry (namely, other disciplines) are to be judged. He believes that philosophy’s remoteness from the rest of culture follows from this privileged and special self-understanding.

So the phrase has an important message to the reader that Rorty does not accept philosophy as a discipline.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Rorty’s official position is that there is no longer any reason to defend philosophy as an autonomous discipline. This American pragmatist philosopher wants to dissolution the problems of this philosophy because they are not useful at all. As we have said, such a definition of discipline is entirely Plato’s definition of philosophy. To understand the spirit of Rorty’s thought can be considered his endless opposition to Platonic thought as the starting point for research on Rorty’s philosophy. In the Platonic tradition, which is the dominant tradition in the West, philosophy has always preceded poetry.

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### **Poetry and Philosophy**

In other words, let me say that the distinction between poetry and philosophy and the primacy of philosophy over poetry or the primacy of reason over emotion in the Platonic tradition is criticized by Richard Rorty.

I think as soon as you try to re-create the Platonic contrast between poetry and philosophy you are in danger of reifying your favorite philosopher and calling that philosophy and reifying your favorite poet and calling that poetry. Heidegger makes a distinction between poets and thinkers that I have never been able to make sense of. I don’t know how you are supposed to tell which are which. (Rorty 2006: 140)

We all know that poetry is created by the poet’s imagination, this great poetry of romanticism is a tool for expressing human intentions, and it is a useful tool. To claim that literature in general is more useful than philosophy is not to claim too much defense. He thinks that literature has more or less supplanted

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metaphysical sources of moral socialization, But this claim is not justified because the situation is different in non-Western cultures. Sometimes literature and poetry have been the cause of a nation's backwardness and decline. In Iran, for example, the culture of Sufi literature has not allowed rational culture to fully grow and has thus brought about social and political repression. Too much emphasis on the power of imagination in literature and poetry causes people to stay away from criticizing the social and historical situation and the cruelties that exist in society. Thus, it seems that Rorty considers the primacy of reason only in Western democratic society, not non-Western societies.

According to this American philosopher, reason obeys the imagination. This is not a disadvantage, but rather a benefit that brings philosophy closer to literature and poetry.

In an essay called "Pragmatism and Romanticism" I tried to restate the argument of Shelley's "Defense of Poetry." At the heart of Romanticism, I said, was the claim that reason can only follow paths that the imagination has first broken.<sup>2</sup>

In his neo-pragmatism, Rorty strives to give a prominent place to literature and literary culture versus the culture of the Enlightenment. Therefore, Rorty says that the intellectuals of the West have, since the Renaissance, progressed through three stages: they have hoped for redemption first from God, then from philosophy, and now from literature. This is Rorty's thesis and he refers to it as *Philosophy as a transitional genre*.

I can now state my thesis. It is that the intellectuals of the West have, since the Renaissance, progressed through three stages: they have hoped for redemption first from God, then from philosophy, and now from literature. Monotheistic religion offers hope for redemption through entering into a new relation to a supremely powerful non-human person. Belief in the articles of a creed may be only incidental to such a relationship. In philosophy, however, true belief is of the essence: redemption by philosophy would consist in acquiring a set of beliefs that represent things in the one way they truly are. Literature, finally, offers redemption through making the acquaintance of as great a variety of human beings as possible. Here again, as with religion, true belief may be of little importance (Rorty 2007:91).

He seems to find true redemption in literature, especially in the books of poets and novelists. Of course, he is influenced by Alan Bloom. The term "Self-creation" in poetry and literature is as important as the truth in philosophy but Rorty rejects Philosophy.<sup>3</sup> The "Self-creation" demonstrates that we make our identity within historical contingencies and social events. Here, he is influenced by Nietzsche's thoughts. In other words, Rorty found Friedrich Nietzsche's critique of epistemology (namely, perspectivism) to be useful and helpful tool in getting us to stop thinking of knowledge as something we find, and instead as something that we create and above all, he also found perspectivism to be a

helpful tool in that of the private sphere, of private self-creation. We know that this issue allows Rorty to link perspectivism, self-creation, and a clear metaphor, literature, together, to interpret the full implications of Nietzsche's perspectivism. Of course, Nietzsche aims to free subject as the heart of subjectivism and makes it stop. He delivers subjectivism to perspectivism with criticizing solid and a priori categories, and far more important, with disabling reason's ideas that prepare the condition of unconditional knowledge (Arjang 2019: 25). He uses this to give his model of the pragmatist's paradigmatic human being (Ironist), one who goes about creating oneself constantly instead of trying to discover oneself. He argued that we can read philosophers like Derrida, Nietzsche, and Heidegger for our own private enjoyment. But, for Rorty, though, Nietzsche's ideas are not sufficient to explain the dynamics of the self, that is the job of Freud, and Rorty elaborates on the usefulness and applicability of both. Of course, Rorty criticizes Nietzsche for his opposition to democracy.

Rorty's pragmatic reading of Nietzsche has led to literature. Different works of literature will show different sides of the human experience. Thus, one medium of literature, poetry, has a greater significance for Rorty. Therefore, at the beginning of Chapter two of *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* Rorty presents a poem by Phillip Larkin as a means of discussing the supremacy of poetry over philosophy since Nietzsche's time. Richard Rorty, in the second chapter of *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, called 'The Contingency of Selfhood', uses the last part of a poem by Philip Larkin (1922-1985), *Continuing to Live* to clarify his ideas about the self.

I think Larkin's poem owes its interest and its strength to this reminder of the quarrel between poetry and philosophy, the tension between an effort to achieve self-creation by the recognition of contingency and an effort to achieve universality by the transcendence of contingency. The same tension has pervaded philosophy since Hegel's time, and particularly since Nietzsche. The important philosophers of our own century are those who have tried to follow through on the Romantic poets by breaking with Plato and seeing freedom as the recognition of contingency. These are the philosophers who try to detach Hegel's insistence on historicity from his pantheistic idealism. They accept Nietzsche's identification of the strong poet, the maker, as humanity's hero - rather than the scientist, who is traditionally pictured as a finder. More generally, they have tried to avoid anything that smacks of philosophy as contemplation, as the attempt to see life steadily and see it whole, in order to insist on the sheer contingency of individual existence (Rorty 1989: 25-26).

Rorty uses both philosophical thought and poetry of great poets. This is Richard Rorty's unique method, and has often been heavily criticized by colleagues, friends, and even his students. We see that Rorty moves easily from Wittgenstein to Heidegger or from Dewey to Derrida, but he is as apt to draw from a Philip Larkin poem, from Proust, or from Nabokov novel as from Kant

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or Nietzsche. Because, according to him, common message of these thinkers is “to insist on the sheer contingency of individual existence” (Rorty 1989: 26). In his article, “Philosophy as a Kind of Writing: An Essay on Derrida” Rorty says that philosophy is not an isolated piece of culture, but it is a kind of literal writing or “any literary genre”

All that "philosophy" as a name for a sector of culture means is "talk about Plato, Augustine, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Frege, Russell. . . And that lot." Philosophy is best seen as a kind of writing. It is delimited, as is any literary genre, not by form or matter, but by tradition—a family romance involving, e.g., Father Parmenides, honest old Uncle Kant, and bad brother Derrida (Rorty 1978: 143).

Rorty has identified two types of thinking in philosophy: vertical thinking that continues to Kant and horizontal thinking starting from Hegel's *phenomenology of mind*. He holds that later true philosophy is a genre of literature. In the following phrase, he describes the characteristics of these two types of philosophical thinking:

There, then, are two ways of thinking about various things. I have drawn them up as reminders of the differences between a philosophical tradition which began, more or less, with Kant, and one which began, more or less, with Hegel's Phenomenology. The first tradition thinks of truth as a vertical relationship between representations and what is represented. The second tradition thinks of truth horizontally—as the culminating reinterpretation of our predecessors' reinterpretation of their predecessors' reinterpretation. . . . This tradition does not ask how representations are related to nonrepresentations, but how representations can be seen as hanging together (Rorty 1978: 143).

### **Literary culture and philosophy**

Rorty wants to show that philosophy since Hegel has sought to use literary and poetic language to describe the human condition and its contingency. He in “Philosophy as a Transitional Genre”, underlines the significance of Hegel to his narrative of emancipation and secularization, so explicitly contends that the transition from a philosophy to a literary culture began with this German philosopher. It can be said that it was with Hegel that philosophy reached its most ambitious and presumptuous form, which almost instantly developed into its dialectical opposite; that is, the Hegelian system eventually turned out to be a somewhat utterly nonironical self-consuming artifact. Hegel's system was serious in its desire to depict things as they really were and it sought to fit everything into a single context. This also signifies, of course, that it pretended to represent the totality. Rorty writes:

“Since Hegel's time, the intellectuals have been losing faith in philosophy. This amounts to losing faith in the idea that redemption can come in the form of true beliefs. In the literary culture that has

been emerging during the last two hundred years, the question 'Is it true?' has yielded to the question 'What's new?'" (Rorty 2004: 9).

Rorty insists that Hegel transformed philosophy into a literary genre to answer the questions of his day. According to him, "From within a literary culture, religion and philosophy appear as literary genres. As such, they are optional. Just as an intellectual may opt to read many poems but few novels, or many novels but few poems, so he or she may read much philosophy, or much religious writing, but relatively few poems or novels. The difference between the literary intellectuals' readings of *all* these books and other readings of them is that the inhabitant of a literary culture treats books as human attempts to meet human needs, rather than as acknowledgments of the power of a being that is what it is apart from any such needs. "God" and "Truth" are, respectively, the religious and the philosophical names for that sort of being (Rorty 2007:91). The transition from religion to philosophy However, what exactly does Rorty mean by the term of literary culture? Let us hear the answer from our pragmatist philosopher:

As I am using the terms "literature" and "literary culture," a culture that has substituted literature for both religion and philosophy finds redemption neither in a noncognitive relation to a nonhuman person, nor in a cognitive relation to propositions, but in noncognitive relations to other human beings, relations mediated by human artifacts such as books and buildings, paintings and songs. These artifacts provide a sense of alternative ways of being human. (Rorty 2004: 10)

He believes that philosophy seeks something deep within the human and that it's similar to the concept of God that religion seeks as its ultimate goal. But on the contrary, the literature tells us that human has nothing deep within himself and that with the power of imagination, man has come up with such concepts. For this reason he even seeks moral progress in literature, not philosophy. In sum, Rorty maintains what philosophy could do is nothing but to inspire imagination and so advocates a so-called post-philosophical culture, which emphasizes real cultural and political life over pure contemplation. In this way, Rorty tries to overcome dominating ideas such as Idea, logos, the Absolute, essence, reality, and categorical imperative, as well as the binary oppositions including that between reality and appearance, which in Western metaphysics have reigned ever since the time of the Greeks. Post-philosophical culture is just a culture that has discarded these traditional philosophical ideas (Derong & Liangjian 2005: 633-4).

Rorty believes that moral progress depends on the development of imagination and the promotion of emotion among people. Poets outnumber philosophers in developing this imagination and in promoting sentiment among the people. It can be said that literature that opens the moral imagination, thus providing a possibility of greater sensitivity and sympathy for the suffering of other peoples in world, constitutes what Rorty at times refers to as a sentimental literature



that facilitates sentimental education. Sentiment for him appears to be a subtle combination of feelings and impressions that provide a basis for judgment and action in his neopragmatism. The question may come to mind of readers if Rorty is a romantic thinker. The answer is no, because he has not even written a single page of poetry. He is a literary pragmatist whose pragmatism is literary in color.

Thus, Sentiment and imagination in moral progress are two interrelated concepts that Rorty has included in his view of moral philosophy. Hart says that “in sum for Rorty there exists a line of evolution from opening the moral imagination, to enhanced sympathy-empathy, to cultivating proper moral sentiments, to expanded loyalty and the pursuit of a greater justice. What he calls “inspirational literature” and “inspired reading” can uniquely and powerfully merge in this development. When Rorty attributes inspirational value to works of literature, he means that such works “make people think there is more to this life than they ever imagined”(Hart 2011: 40). So “his point is that moral progress is not a matter of an increase in rationality, nor does it involve developing what Dewey called intelligence”(Asghari 2015:69-70), Rather, it aims to improve the lives of individuals in a democratic society.

Let's go back to the differences between philosophy and literature. Finding the truth in the human mind and making the truth in the human mind is something that is understandable from Rorty's words. I think that this is the fundamental difference between philosophy and literature in Rorty's mind. Of course, we have to admit that his contemporaries have always criticized Rorty's conception of philosophy and we do not intend to go into more detail. However, in the struggle between philosophy and literature Rorty advocates literature. Rorty writes about this struggle:

Kierkegaard rightly said that philosophy began to set itself up as a rival to religion when Socrates suggested that our self-knowledge was knowledge of God – that we had no need of help from a non-human person, because the truth was already within us. But literature began to set itself up as a rival to philosophy when people like Cervantes and Shakespeare began to suspect that human beings were, and ought to be, so diverse that there is no point in pretending that they all carry a single truth deep in their bosoms (Rorty 2007: 93).

Like Kierkegaard, he seeks to replace literature with philosophy, as Socrates replaced philosophy with religion. Here we find that Rorty finds it useful in the Western philosophical tradition to transition from religion to philosophy, from philosophy to literature. He analyzes the usefulness of this transition and transformation both from the perspective of American pragmatism and from the perspective of post-structuralist thought such as Derrida and Foucault. This philosophy is not about proving the essence of things. There is no doubt that Derrida is as much involved in Rorty's thinking as Wittgenstein. So he, under the influence of Derrida and his deconstruction, believes that philosophy is not only pure knowledge, but it is a kind of philosophy of language whose task is no longer to represent the essence of things in the world but self-creation

through literary language and poetic imagination. For this reason, Rorty uses literature, and especially poets, to describe and defend such a philosophy. We know that language and the philosophy of language in Derrida's post-structuralist thought greatly influenced the Rorty's thought formation. In order to understand the nature of literary culture, one must first turn to language.

### **Contingency of Language**

Let us focus here on the question of language as the common focus of philosophy and literature in modern times on Rorty's thought. Rorty writes in *Contingency, Irony, and solidarity* that "If we cease to attempt to make sense of the idea of such a nonhuman language, we shall not be tempted to confuse the platitude that the world may cause us to be justified in believing a sentence true with the claim that the world splits itself up, on its own initiative, into sentence-shaped chunks called "facts." (Rorty 1989: 5).

Two points can be deduced from this statement: First, language is not a fixed nature and second, the reality is made by language. In other words, Language has no fixed essence. Susan Haack points the contingency of language as the conventionality of justification in Rorty: "by the time of *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Rorty has a different defensive strategy: he describes those who, like himself, have grasped the 'contingency' of language, the conventionality of justification, as 'ironists' (Haack 1993:193)

Language has its own contingency, and this is essential to understanding a literary culture. According to him, language plays an important role in literary culture. Of course, In order to understand Rorty's narrative on the rise of literary culture, one has to consider the role that this idea plays in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. At the beginning of the first chapter ("The Contingency of Language"), Rorty advances the argument that what unites the German idealists, the French revolutionaries, and the Romantic poets is that they understood, at the end of the eighteenth century, "that anything could be made to look good or bad, important or unimportant, useful or useless, by being redescribed" (Rorty 1989: 7). In addition, what the German idealists, the utopian revolutionaries, and the Romantic poets had in common was "a dim sense that human beings whose language changed so that they no longer spoke of themselves as responsible to nonhuman powers would thereby become a new kind of human beings" (Rorty 1989: 7). This contingency is a question of his historicism. According to Robert Brandom, the strong conclusion Rorty draws from his conception of the contingency of language is that "No area of culture, and no period of history, gets Reality more right than any other. The difference between the areas and epochs is their relative efficiency in accomplishing various purposes. There is no such thing as Reality to be gotten right – only snow, fog, Olympian deities, relative aesthetic worth, the elementary particles, human rights, the divine right of kings, the Trinity, and the like" (Brandom 2000 :375).

In Rorty's philosophy there is a kind of sanctification of Romanticism, in contrast to a hatred of the Enlightenment and its theoretical aspirations throughout his writings. Rorty is not a poet and has not written a book of poetry or a book on Romanticism but finds it useful for human self-creation.

That is why he has been greatly influenced by Bloom. Broadly characterised, the sort of romanticism that Rorty prefers is the independent, muscular variety celebrated by his literary mentor, Harold Bloom. Throughout his career, Rorty embraced a number of ideas and attitudes associated with Bloom's picture of the romantic poet as engaged in a dialectical struggle for articulacy and autonomy. Rorty's romantic watchwords, accordingly, are imagination, spontaneity, freedom, contingency, plurality, power, and creativity – ideas that he pits against notions such as reason, receptivity, truth, necessity, commensurability, knowledge, and harmony. Most important, perhaps, is the notion of truth as created rather than discovered, enabled by the romantic inversion of the values assigned by Kant to the determinative and the reflective judgement in the third *Critique* (Milnes 2011:24)

### **Conclusion**

It is crucial to note that Richard Rorty, emphasizing on literary culture against enlightenment philosophy, seems to hold that only in his ideal poetized culture would one archive full human dignity and maturity because we can reach the best human solidarity and consensus in this culture. According to him, human solidarity and consensus is the main goal of democratic society. A culture that matures to the point of finally giving up on realism would, he thinks, realise that 'what matters is our loyalty to other human beings clinging together against the dark, not our hope of getting things right' (Rorty 1982: 166). In such a culture, the authority of non-human objectivity would be replaced by human solidarity, and forms of description would not be ranked according to their supposed ability to correspond to the true nature of reality, only according to their usefulness, something which varies from context to context.<sup>4</sup>

Three aspects are important here. First, Rorty presents himself as a pragmatist philosopher who is interestingly attracted to the usefulness of theories, especially, in action and, generally, in human society. Second, he wants to replace philosophical discourse with literary one in his American culture and for doing so, he uses postmodern philosophies such as deconstruction or Levinasian ethics. Three, he, in the final chapter of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, holds that "redescription ourselves is the most things we can do" (Rorty 1979: 358-9) this is the best literature can do, not philosophy or science. In general, Rorty tells us a story in which one thing replaces one another and finds this replacement useful from a pragmatic perspective. For example, according to him, Kantian philosophy replaces Hegelian historical philosophy, Romanticism replaces pragmatism, and eventually philosophy replaces literature.

We see that Rorty in later works such as *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* redefines philosophy as culture criticism or cultural politics. In addition, I think that this desire in his mind roots in early works, but we do not want to consider this issue here because it requires another article. So we can say that imagination against reason, moral progress through imagination, not the reason, solidarity vs. objectivity, the emergence of literary culture after philosophical culture from Hegel onwards, contingency of language, the usefulness of literature (poetry, novels and stories, etc.) in enhancing empathy with one another and ultimately

reducing philosophy to poetry in Richard Rorty's writings point to one thing: the priority of literature to philosophy. If there is one philosopher among contemporary pragmatist philosophers whose literature is at the heart of his thought, he is Rorty. In other words, he is the pragmatist philosopher of literature, even if he himself would reject that label absolutely.

#### Notes

1. But in the Muslim world, Islamic philosophers have always sought to blend literary language with philosophical language. Ibn Sina, for example, sometimes uses literary language in his books to express his rational thought and also it is sometimes seen that a philosopher like Suhrawardi uses a literary story to explain his philosophical perspective. But here our goal is not to get into the details.
2. See "The Fire of Life" by Richard Rorty at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/articles/68949/the-fire-of-lifeRorty>
3. Rorty has expressed the hope that his brand of 'antiphilosophy' might lead to a 'post-Philosophical culture' (Rorty 1982: xl). This sounds like a call to bring philosophy to an end once and for all. See Tartaglia, James (2007) *Rorty and the Mirror of Nature*, Routledge
4. Rorty has expressed the hope that his brand of 'antiphilosophy' might lead to a 'post-Philosophical culture' (Rorty 1982: xl). This sounds like a call to bring philosophy to an end once and for all. See Tartaglia, James (2007) *Rorty and the Mirror of Nature*, Routledge

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