

**Post-Derridean View: A Study of the Writings of Richard
Rorty**

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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ENGLISH

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Abstract

The thesis entitled: *Post-Derridean View: A Study of the Writings of Richard Rorty* explores the postmodernist and post-structural ideas of Richard Rorty who is a famous postmodern philosopher. In the chapter “Brief Candle”, the development of the pragmatic philosophy of Richard Rorty is discussed. Rorty investigated the ideas of Jacques Derrida and read him as a “transcendental philosopher.” The books of Derrida have been translated into many languages and have provoked impassioned debate over the issue of language, sign and signifier. Like Kafka, Derrida brought a radical transformation in literary criticism. In studying literary theory, his thoughts suggest that a text needs to be read to be a text. Derrida is closely associated with the major figures associated with post-structuralism and postmodern philosophy. He was impacted by the philosophical ideas of Bergson, Bakhtin, Saussure and Roland Barthes. Derrida is a prolific writer; he wrote more than forty books and hundreds of essays and had commendable contribution and influence on social sciences, philosophy, art and literature, law, language and linguistics. In his *Of Grammatology* (1974) he reconsiders the assumptions of Western philosophy and analyzes such concepts as “existence of God” “theory of origin” and the dichotomous relationship “essence as an idea”, appearance as “particular” and ego as subject. Richard Rorty investigates the philosophical ideas of Derrida; his non-Kantian dialectical tradition and to examine him as “a philosopher of language.” This study gives an insight to the main currents of postmodernist thoughts and philosophy of Jacques Derrida who brought revolution through his theory of deconstruction. Richard Rorty came under the influence of William James and he conceived “pragmatism” to counter Derrida’s philosophy of deconstruction. He was well aware of the various schools that flourished under the rubric of pragmatism and German idealism. Rorty developed an anti-philosophy and developed his vision of anti-foundationalism and anti-essentialism expressed in his important works such as *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982), *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), *Achieving Our Country* (1998), *Philosophy and Social Hope* (2000) and four volumes of philosophical papers: *Objectivity, Relativism, and*

Truth(1991), *Essays on Heidegger and Others* (1991), *Truth and Progress* (1998) and *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* (2007).

In the second chapter of the thesis entitled: ***Jacques Derrida and the Theory of Deconstruction*** the theories of Derrida are investigated in detail. Derrida was a learned scholar and a professor; he deeply investigated the Newtonian physics, Augustan theology, Darwinian biology and the ethics of Kant. He also read and explored the images and metaphors hidden in the poetry of Schiller and explored the irony of Socrates. Derrida was a voracious reader, he investigated historicism of Hegel, aestheticism of Nietzsche and Schiller and pragmatism of Dewey. In his essay “Structure, Sign, and Play” (1978), Derrida expresses his new vision of language thus: “...the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and without origin which is offered to an active interpretation” (278).

In the third chapter entitled: ***Pragmatism in Richard Rorty’s Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature and Consequences of Pragmatism***. Richard Rorty has been hailed as a lightning rod for conflicting currents in contemporary philosophical thought. The history of philosophy shows that Rorty generated enthusiasm and excitement in the domain of philosophy. His controversial ideas about the nature of mind, language, knowledge, truth, science, ethics and politics have generated new interest in philosophical debates. The book of Rorty *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* begins by revealing the significance of meta-philosophy in life and culture. The approach of Rorty is positive as he discards the nihilistic conclusion that life is meaningless. This led him to transform existentialism into postmodernism. Rorty appeared on the philosophical scene at a time when philosophy has become professionalized, technical and remote from the culture. His work has broken all the barriers of philosophical thought and has moved into the branches of law, historiography, psychotherapy and social theory. Rorty’s *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is centrally concerned with the development of modern philosophy and with the fate of the conception of philosophy.

In the fourth chapter entitled: *The Dialectical Relationship between Truth and Falsehood in Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* the philosophical ideas of Richard Rorty are explored and investigated. Richard Rorty devoted himself to explore the contingency of human situation in imitation of Plato and Hegel. He investigated in detail the rise of historical consciousness and investigated the philosophical views of the traditional thinkers to find out the solution of the contemporary malaise afflicting the modern man after the World War 11. Rorty is one of the most important and interesting philosophers of America who brought tremendous change in the domain of philosophy. Rorty published *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989) defining the role of the ironist in contemporary liberal society. He outlines his vision of a liberal utopia in which the American and humanity at large could find solace in life.

In the fifth chapter entitled: *An Analysis of Richard Rorty's Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth and Truth and Progress; Philosophical Papers* the basic ideas of truth and reality are explored. Rorty criticizes analytic philosophy and the entire tradition of western philosophy since Descartes. His historical attempt is to put philosophy in the position which Kant wished it to have—that of judging other areas of culture on the basis of its special knowledge of the ‘foundations’ of these areas” (8). Rorty argues that “truth is best viewed as a term we use when we agree that a statement is valid, not as Truth in the metaphysical sense of the way the world really is apart from our judgment” (8). Rorty (1982) would later call this a “pragmatist theory of truth” (xiii), expressing his distrust of classical theories of truth. Neil Gross (2008) points out that Rorty was “arguing that contemporary analytic discourse was colored by pragmatic themes” (Gross 158).

In the sixth chapter entitled: *Hope, Faith and Liberalism in Richard Rorty's Philosophy as Cultural Politics* the main philosophical ideas of Richard Rorty are explored. Rorty gave a new status to philosophy which could perform the roles of art literature, science and religion in shaping and changing the thoughts of people. He wanted philosophy to play a positive and crucial role in contemporary liberal democratic society. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the political

philosophy of Richard Rorty and to examine the three main pillars of his liberal thought: hope, romanticism and literature. *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* is the fourth collection of Richard Rorty's philosophical papers. Rorty himself describes the main theme of the book in his Preface: "to weave together Hegel" thesis that philosophy is its time held in thought with a non-representationalist account of language" (ix)

In chapter VII Derrida's method of semiotic interpretations famous as deconstruction has been discussed. Rorty's approach is therapeutic as he examines the philosophical views of Wittgenstein, Heidegger and John Dewey. There is a nice comparative analysis of the hermeneutics of Derrida and Rorty. Bakhtin and Derrida's new theory of language is discussed.

In conclusion Rorty's inspiration from Derrida and his using different tools and strategies to reinterpret and overhaul traditional philosophical ideas has been discussed. His contribution to America is equated with Hegel and Heidegger's contribution to Germany. Rorty followed the traditions of Socrates. he is the first to claim that philosophy had a great role to play in society. Rorty's emphasis was always on solving the problems rather than exploring the truth.

Introduction

In the postmodern era after the World War II, Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) revolutionized the philosophical theories on art and literature. He is known for developing a method of semiotic interpretation famous as deconstruction. His theory of deconstruction is discussed in his various works such as *Speech and Phenomena* (1967), *Of Grammatology*, *Writing and Difference* and *Margins of Philosophy*. All these writings of Derrida greatly impacted the philosophical thoughts of the contemporary thinkers. Derrida published more than forty books and delivered a large number of lectures and influenced social sciences including philosophy, psychoanalysis and politics. He came in contact with prominent cultural critics and thinkers of his time such as Louis Althusser and studied Edmund Husserl and James Joyce. He was invited to deliver a lecture at John Hopkins University where he read a paper on Deconstruction and thus became a founding father of Deconstruction. In his book *Of Grammatology*, Derrida expounds and elucidates the main ideas of deconstruction. Derrida's critical tool serves to interpret the western thought by reversing "binary oppositions" that provides its foundation. Philosophers of hermeneutic tradition are Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Lyotard, Deleuze and Jameson. They wrote on the question of meaning and truth. Lyotard discusses the role of Paralogic language game that challenges the western method of debate and discussion. Saussure defined the social system in terms of language and speech. Terence Hawkes (1977) in his book *Structuralism and Semiotics* observes the significance of binary relationship thus: "Every perceiver's method of perceiving can be shown to contain an inherent bias which affects what is perceived to a significant degree" (17). Derrida argues that language is very important in the cultural development of society. Language is a social construct and all human relations are determined and expressed through language. Saussure argued that language is constructed as a sign of system of sign. The power of discourse lies in a system of signs. Hawkes observes thus: "In a complex system or structure of correspondence between distinct signs, and distinct ideas or meanings to which those signs, distinctive by relate" (21). Saussure argued that the knowledge of the world is shaped

and conditioned by the language. Claude Levi-Strauss is an eminent anthropologist who contributed a lot in the field of structural studies. He decoded the meaning inherent in primitive systems of life and thus made a great contribution in the field of cultural studies. Derrida condemned Strauss and Roland Barthes also rejected the views of Saussure as he followed the path of semiotics and structuralism in his article "The Death of the Author" giving new interpretations in Linguistic philosophy and cultural studies. Derrida followed Roland Barthes and wrote the famous article "Structure, Sign and Play." Derrida argued that structuralism and Semiotics are a continuation of the tradition of Plato's dualism since it preserves bar between signifier and signified.

Richard Rorty (1931-2007) appeared on the cultural and literary scene of America in 1980s when he published his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979). Rorty got education in the university of Chicago and Yale University. He remained as a professor in Princeton University and wrote his famous books *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982) and *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989). Rorty argues that

The idea of knowledge has become as a mirror of nature and is current in the history of western philosophy. Rorty advocated new form of American pragmatism called neo-pragmatism in which scientific and philosophical methods are a set of contingent vocabularies which people discard to follow social conventions. (qtd. in Hawkes *Structuralism and Semiotics* 23)

In contrast to Derrida, Rorty has discussed the issues of media and time philosophy in passing. He rejected many ideas of Derrida and evolved his own neo-pragmatic philosophy. Rorty directs his views against the epistemological mainstream which determines the tradition of modern philosophy. Rorty also directed his attack against Derrida's grammatology and deconstructionism. Rorty argues that the real strength of Derrida lies in his giving up of transcendental project of "an ironist theory" (Rorty 122) which determined *Of Grammatology*. Derrida's introduced his personal philosophy to personalize philosophy by "falling back on private fantasy" (Rorty

125). Derrida developed his negative theory of time as phenomena of “trace, reserve, or difference” (93). Richard Rorty observes thus: “Derrida’s work divides into an earlier, more professional period and a later period in which the writings become more eccentric, personal and original” (125). Rorty observes that Derrida was involved in his public project earlier years but in the later period he turned away from philosophy and shifted to literature and became a writer and appeared not as a philosopher. In this thesis entitled: *Post-Derridean View: A Study of the Writings of Richard Rorty* the theory of deconstruction of Derrida and the review and reinterpretation of Richard Rorty is the main focus. Derrida and Richard Rorty are postmodern philosophers who have set new trends in philosophy, linguistics, history and hermeneutics.

Chapter 1

Brief Candle

This study entitled: *Post-Derridean View: A Study of the Writings of Richard Rorty* is an attempt to explore the postmodernist and post-structural ideas of Richard Rorty who is a famous postmodern philosopher. Rorty investigated the ideas of Jacques Derrida and eulogised him as a “transcendental philosopher.” The books of Derrida have provoked impassioned debate over the issue of language, sign and signifier. His thoughtful philosophy excited Kierkegaard who called his skill as “indirect communication.” Reading the works of Jacques Derrida is an appalling exercise. In this study the efforts are made to explain the meaning of deconstruction and hermeneutics of Derrida within literary theory. He claims that all texts have ambiguity. Derrida followed Socrates and successfully broke the crust of convention questioning philosophical assumptions in his writings. Derrida was a learned scholar and a professor; he deeply investigated the Newtonian physics, Augustan theology, Darwinian biology and the ethics of Kant. He also read and explored the images and metaphors hidden in the poetry of Schiller and explored the irony of Socrates. Derrida was a voracious reader who investigated historicism of Hegel, aestheticism of Nietzsche and Schiller and pragmatism of Dewey. He also investigated the theory of language given by Wittgenstein and Davidson as a means for coordinating human action. The critics of Derrida observe that Derrida has brought poetry into philosophy. Derrida gives the message of patience shown by Franz Kafka (1992) who said: “All human errors are impatience, a premature breaking off of methodical procedure, an apparent fencing in of what is apparently at issue” (“All Human Errors are Impatience”).

Like Kafka, Derrida brought a radical transformation in literary criticism. Derrida (1976) said: “When speech fails to protect presence, writing becomes necessary. In this case, writing then serves as a supplement in which takes the place of speech” (*Of Grammatology* 144). Ruby Cohen (2002) comments thus: “Literature is for Derrida the possibility for any utterance, writing, or mark to be iterated in

innumerable contests and to function in the absence of identifiable speaker, context, reference, or hearer” (*The Future* 59). Derrida argues that, “any structure whether in social studies, science or literature needs re-interpretation from new perspective” (*Of Grammatology* 158). Gutting (2001) observes that “Derrida’s writings require constant attention; his writings are explicit probing of traditional philosophical concepts” (*Pragmatic Liberalism and the Critique of Modernity* 290). Derrida is closely associated with the major figures associated with post-structuralism and postmodern philosophy. He was impacted by the philosophical ideas of Bergson, Bakhtin, Saussure and Roland Barthes. Derrida is a prolific writer; he wrote more than forty books and hundreds of essays and had commendable contribution and influence on social sciences, philosophy, art and literature, law, language and linguistics. Derrida’s philosophical ideas greatly impacted ontology, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and hermeneutics. Derrida started with the reinterpretation of philosophical idea rejecting the ideas propounded by Plato, Descartes and Hegel. In his *Of Grammatology* (1974) he reconsiders the assumptions of Western philosophy and analyzes such concepts as “existence of God” “theory of origin” and the dichotomous relationship “essence as an idea”, appearance as “particular” and ego as subject. Richard Rorty investigates the philosophical ideas of Derrida; his non-Kantian dialectical tradition and to examine him as “a philosopher of language” (*Of Grammatology* 158). This study gives an insight to the main currents of postmodernist thoughts and philosophy of Jacques Derrida who brought revolution through his theory of deconstruction.

Jacques Derrida: The Theory of Deconstruction

Derrida came under the influence of Bakhtin who was a Russian critic and who for the first time subverted the concept of sign in the domain of structuralism. He propounded his own theory of language and believed that the dialogues of human beings have social relevance. They are a medium to convey the existential reality and perform three important functions; they link the speakers with the audience and at the same time the dialogues convey all the social and political problems and hence they lead to social transformation. For Bakhtin, the language is a medium to bring changes in the society. Bakhtin introduced interdisciplinary and inter-textual research. The

dialogues are social construct and differ from man to man and from society to society. Bakhtin believes that social world is made of multiple voices of the people and many perspectives are put in the dialogues. The power of the dialogues is immense as they can excite new interpretative and analytical interest. Indeed, Bakhtin argues that the dialogues represent intertextuality and have interdisciplinary significance. Richard Rorty gave a critique of the sign of Derrida and how it challenges the Western metaphysics and philosophy. Derrida opined that the analytical and logocentric interest in philosophy is widely known in the West. He called it Logos; and this is far away from transcendental reality. Derrida developed the theory of deconstruction in 1960. He gave a revolutionary idea that all texts are packed with ambiguity. The critics of Derrida made serious efforts to explain deconstruction and they opined that it means something which has multiplicity of meanings. Derrida's famous books such as *Writing and Differance*, *Speech and Phenomena* and *Of Grammatology* brought revolution in literary criticism. Rorty called him the philosopher of language because he was the first postmodernist who introduced new forms of language philosophy. Hobson (1998) lashed harsh criticism on Derrida and dubbed him a misinformed and a notorious thinker of language. In semiotics, Deconstruction is a unique tool of critical analysis and has the potential to expose the metaphysical assumptions of language. There is a tendency to view deconstruction as a continuum on the assumption that to deconstruct is to destroy. Deconstruction certainly means the death of a meaning, of absolute truth, of universal value. The theory is discussed in detail in his *Of Grammatology*. Derrida investigated the dialogues of Plato and Socrates and took inspiration from Saussure and learnt from him the art of critical interpretation in criticism and philosophy deconstructing the texts. He gives an insight into the reading of the texts and formulates a system to interpret the texts. Derrida observes that there is a definite complicity between reading and writing. He opines that the text should be read as a text as everything is there in the text. Reading of the text is a serious business for Derrida as it contains all the issues and the images and the metaphors symbolizing the main issues. The language is very important for Derrida. Very often the readers misunderstand the text as human communication is faulty. Derrida observes that phonocentrism is the spoken word while logocentrism is the written word. Derrida

(1976) contends that “when speech fails to protect presence, writing becomes necessary. In this case writing serves as a supplement which takes the place of speech” (*Of Grammatology* 144). Deconstruction is a theory about language and literature. Cohen (2002) expresses: thus: “Literature is for Derrida the possibility for any utterance, writing, or mark to be iterated in innumerable contexts and to function in the absence of identifiable speaker, context, or hearer” (*The Future* 59). Paul Ricoeur was the supporter of Derrida’s philosophy. He defines “deconstruction as a way of uncovering the questions behind the answer of a text or tradition” (qtd. in Klein 95). The notion of textuality is very important in deconstruction. Language is important in society and in the life of an individual. Books are written in a language but speech is recorded in history and culture. Derrida argues that Deconstruction has power to subvert everything that has descended through generation. He explores the dialectical relationship between the sign and the signifier. Ideas are expressed in language through various signs and Derrida explores the relationship between sign and the language in a text. Derrida made a historical statement that “there is nothing outside the text” (*Of Grammatology* 158). Deconstruction performs an operation which is in the nature of subverting, exposing and transgressing. It performs the operation on the traditional ideas and logic. Derrida (1976) argues that any “structure whether in social studies, science or literature needs re-thinking from any position to leave demonstrativeness to interpretation” (*Of Grammatology* 158). Derrida uses deconstruction as a useful tool to say new things He refers to the writing of Rousseau showing relationship between writing and language. Rheinberger (2008) observes that in Derridean criticism, writing is a “dangerous supplement” (qtd. in Derrida *Act of Literature* 34). Derrida observes that “a supplement is something that is secondary, a sign of a sign, taking place of speech already significant” (*Of Grammatology* 281).

The Concept of Trace

Derrida’s important observation is about the difference between idea and sign. Difference brings about the idea of trace. A trace is the absent part of the sign. It is something absent in the text; it is what a sign differs. Derrida achieves a status beyond absolute knowledge. He clarifies the nature and the real position of trace. The trace actually doesn’t exist because it is self- effacing. Derrida further adds that “by

undoing, decomposition and de-sedimenting of structures was not a negative operation” (*Of Grammatology* 87). Derrida opines that deconstruction is not destruction but it is a process of dismantling cultural structures. Construction and deconstruction is a continuous process in social system and often there are cracks in the system where facts are disguised. It is only through the process of deconstruction the evils of the system can be found out. Derrida observes thus: “In locating these points and applying a kind of authority to them, one is able to deconstruct the system” (*Of Grammatology*151). Deconstruction distrusts all systems; it views language as a play of differences and produces a strategy that enables one to discover the powerful. The term “writing” and “difference” were given specific meanings.

Derrida’s Theory of Difference - A New Term to Counter Logocentrism

Derrida argues that Saussure is the father of a system of differences without positive terms. He argues that language is created by negative signifiers. He argues that the blending of negatives create positive ideas. Real meaning emerges from difference. In Western metaphysics an effect of difference can be clearly observed He explores the nature of the ontological structure; the significance of centre and the existence of truth, and God (*Of Grammatology*13). For Derrida “difference is an anarchic concept that makes language; as a play of signifiers. Difference is typically what is involved in writing; this generalizes the notion of writing that breaks down the entire logic of the sign” (“Sign, Structure and Play”172). Derrida points out that language is a system of differences of hermeneutical tradition. Derrida views language as a system, a structure that is some sense produces subjects. Difference represents the principle by which language works. It stands for both differing and deferring. Hawkes (1977) comments thus in *Terence, Structuralism and Semiotics*: “To differ or differentiate, is also to defer: to postpone; to propose a distinction between entities such as will enable one to refer to is, it represents involvement in a structuring process” (147). Christopher Norris (1987) in his book *Derrida* comments thus:

Difference is neither a word nor a concept. It has been most decisively inscribed in the thought of what is conveniently called our epoch. It is

used to show how meaning is a once differential and deferred; the product of a restless play within language that cannot be fixed or pinned down for the purposes of conceptual definition. (15)

Derrida's Structuralism and Post-structuralism

Saussure's notion of a social system is the root of structuralism. It is defined in terms of language and speech. Derrida observes that structuralism is not a fluid idea but it is a way of thinking and the medium to understand the world concerned with the perception and the description of structure. Derrida explores the dialectical relationship between the observer and the observed. It is established that the true nature of things may not be clear in simple language but structuralism makes it clear that in the nature of every situation often ambiguity persists. The units have no value outside structure in the system of language. In fact language is self-defining and is a whole; its independent parts have no significance at all. Parts or units get life only in a whole. The language is a social construct and there exists a system of sign and each sign is the outcome of the relationship of a signifier and a signified. Terence Hawkes observes thus in his book: *Structuralism and Semiotics* (1977) thus: "In a complex system or structure of correspondence between distinct signs, and distinct ideas or meanings to which those signs, distinctive, relate" (21). In his essay "Structure, Sign and Play" (1966) Derrida explains in detail the relationship and significance of structure and signs of language.

One symbol creates a symbol that interprets it, and the symbol also creates a symbol that further interprets it, and the process forms an infinite chain. Deconstructionism is both a postmodern epistemological understanding of written texts, and it is also used as a tool for criticizing political institutions. (15)

Derrida's structuralism was a reaction against the theories of New Criticism. A systematic and methodological framework is provided by structuralism by Derrida. Hawkes observes thus: "The result from the associating of the signifier with the signified is arbitrary" (*Structuralism and Semiotics* 67). Derrida further argues that subjectivism must be avoided as structuralism has its own dangers. In his *Speech and*

Phenomena it is claimed that the object was mainly to deconstruct such ideas of “origin” and “foundation” of language and culture. Derrida comments thus:

Hence forth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no centre, that the centre could not be thought in the form of present being, that the centre had no natural site, that it was not a fixed focus but a function, a sort of non locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutes came into play. (280)

In his essays: “Force and Significations” and “Structure, Sign and Play” Derrida gives a critique of structuralism.

Roland Barthes and Structuralism

Poststructuralism begins with Roland Barthes who followed the path of semiotics and structuralism. He wrote the famous article: “Death of the Author” and introduced new Linguistic philosophy and cultural studies. Saussure observes in his book *Theory of Language* (1980) thus: “meanings are bound up in a system of relationship and difference that determine man’s habits of thought and perception. Language brings a whole network of established significations” (12). Meaning is located at the pole of the “signified” and considered inseparable from signifier. Derrida also introduced the same way of thinking in his article “Structure, Sign and Play” and both these articles dismantled the aura around the author and the external value attached to the meaning and truth. But for Levi-Straus, man equals society and society equals language. Language is the most formative feature of human culture and the problem of truth and meaning attains new dimension. Roy Boyne in his book *Foucault and Derrida: The Other Side of the Reason* (1990) observes thus: “Derrida saw that structuralism had not abandoned the commitment to an unproblematic ontology, even though at first glance it might have seemed as if Saussurian formulation and its subsequent derivatives had moved away from making assumptions about what there really is in the word” (106). Rorty wrote *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982) and *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989). Rorty in his famous article: “Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?” observes that Derrida has little to offer when read as a transcendental philosopher. In this thesis all

the major philosophical issues; linguistic thoughts; ideas relating to structuralism; semiotics; structuralism and post-structuralism are investigated through the lens of the philosophical ideas of Richard Rorty. He also wrote *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers* (1991) and *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers* (1998), *Philosophy and Social Hope* (2000), *Philosophy as Cultural Politics: Philosophical Papers iv* (2007) to bridge the dichotomy between analytic and continental philosophy. Rorty argues that the two traditions compliment rather than oppose each other. Rorty came under the influence of many thinkers such as Darwin, Kant James Heidegger, Bakhtin and Derrida. Rorty injected a bold vision in the philosophy from the perspective of pragmatism. The writings of Rorty excited a number of philosophers and thinkers. Rorty is considered as one of the prominent influential philosopher and thinker like Bertrand Russell. He is a remarkable philosopher and a pragmatic thinker with a broad intellectual range, his works made commendable contribution to literary criticism and his articles appeared in *The Nation* and *The Atlantic* giving an insight into postmodernism, liberalism, pragmatism and anti-foundationalism. Rorty's name is associated with Jacques Derrida, Dewey and Habermas. He did for America what Hegel and Heidegger had done for Germany to portray the philosophical ideas of his country. Rorty gave a new name and place of America in the domain of philosophy and political liberalism.

Richard Rorty was born in 1931 in New York City; he was the son of James Rorty who was an activist and a writer. Rorty graduated from University of Chicago in 1949; completed his Ph. D in 1956 from Yale University. He became a lecturer in Philosophy in Princeton University. Richard Rorty published his article "Mind-Body, Identity, Privacy and Categories" (1965) and edited his anthology *The Linguist Turn* (1967) and established his name in the domain of culture and philosophy

A Journey from Deconstruction to Pragmatism: Jacques Derrida and Richard Rorty

Richard Rorty came under the influence of William James and he conceived "pragmatism" to counter Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction. He was well aware of the various schools that flourished under the rubric of pragmatism and German

idealism. Rorty developed an anti-philosophy and developed his vision of anti-foundationalism and anti-essentialism expressed his ideas in such important works as *Philosophy and Social Hope* (2000) and four volumes of philosophical papers: (1991), *Essays on Heidegger and Others* (1991), *Truth and Progress* (1998) and *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* (2007). But the revolutionary ideas of Rorty continued spreading worldwide. Derrida and Rorty rejected the claim of Hebermas that there exists a link between universalism, rationalism and modern democracy. Richard Rorty made intensive study of Jacques Derrida for the last twenty years; he admired Derrida and his French deconstruction theory. Rorty observes thus about Derrida:

Derrida talks a lot about language, and it is tempting to view him as a philosopher of language whose work one might usefully compare with other inquiries concerning the relations between words and the world. But it would be less misleading to say that his writing about language is an attempt to show why there should be no philosophy of language. (*Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* 142)

Simon Critchley (1996) in his article “Deconstruction and Pragmatism: Is Derrida a Private Ironist or a Public Liberal?” published in his book *Deconstruction* observes that deconstruction is pragmatic as “pragmatism deconstructs all forms of foundationalism such as Platonism, Metaphysical Realism and Neo-Kantianism and argues for the contingency of language, self and community” (19). Jonathan Culler argues that “one might be tempted to identify deconstruction with pragmatism since it offers a similar critique of the philosophical tradition and emphasizes the institutional and conventional constrains on discursive enquiry” (*On Deconstruction* 153). Culler argues that Rorty’s famous book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* proves very useful in understanding Derrida. The difference between Derrida and Rorty is that “Rorty uses analytical arguments against the analytical enterprise” (152). Rorty contends thus:

I take pragmatists and deconstruction to be united in thinking that anything can be anything if you put it in the right context, and that

right just means the context that best serves somebody's purposes at a certain time and place. (qtd. in Critchley 43)

Rorty has examined Derrida from two main perspectives; he is considered as philosopher of language, and as a “private ironist, for his own style to parody the traditional philosophy. Rorty has poor opinion of the theory of deconstruction as he criticizes texts as *Speech and Phenomena, Of Grammatology* of Derrida. He praises what he calls Derrida's “shadowy, deconstructive, good side” (99). Derrida's contribution is his genuine philosophical turn by rejecting the traditional modes of philosophical thoughts. Richard Rorty investigates all the basic premises of Derrida and his cult of deconstruction; the tension between postmodernism deconstruction and the relevance of deconstruction in the modern times. There is certainly logic in the postmodern discourse of Derrida and Rorty as they define ethics in terms of otherness and difference. Rorty contends that the critical methodology of Derrida doesn't provide any systematic framework to solve the conflicting issues relating to culture and society and political democracy. It is pertinent to note that Rorty advocated a therapeutic approach to philosophy in all his writing career. His first book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) is regarded as his most important work. He investigated all the important issues of ethics and aimed to reveal how the problems stem from unconscious assumptions and misleading images of language. Derrida held that language is the last refuge of the Kantian tradition and it is language alone which gives structure to the universe, moral law and the ethics. William James (1938) in his book *Pragmatism and the Meaning of Truth* argued thus:

True ideas are not always straightforward copy of reality but an approximation that allows an individual to summarize his experiences. A true idea is any one upon which we can ride, so to speak; any idea that will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying labor. (34)

There are three parts of the book and the main argument of Rorty argues that epistemology is the arbiter of what is rational in Western cultures. Kant observed that mind is something that adds to reality in the process of creating knowledge. Kant also observed that philosophy is a tribute of reason what can be called “knowledge” or “rationality.” Rorty confronted with the problem to explore the nature of Truth; to answer “What is Truth?.” It is believed that truth is that which is ultimately finality and absolutely real. Truth cannot contradict itself. Rorty advocated a pragmatic theory of truth, believing that language of a man might mirror the truth or reality. He departs from the ideas of traditional philosophers such as Sellars, Quine and Donald Davidson. Postmodern thinkers reject objective truth and they wish to replace objectivity with subjectivity: truth is not discovered, but created or constructed. The postmodernists have given the name meta-narratives. Being a true postmodernist, Rorty observes that “truth is not the sort of thing one should expect to have interesting theory and simply it is just an empty compliment which we pay to those beliefs which are successful in helping us do what we want to do” (10). Without truth there would be no criteria of evaluation. Truth “differs from a concept; the term concept is a metaphor at root. It is more like an imprecise tool than a copy or reflection of reality” (10). In his second book *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982), Richard Rorty propounded the thought provoking theory of pragmatism. In this book, Richard Rorty argues that philosophy rests on mistake; mind is the mirror of nature and of philosophy establishes the relation between the mirror and the mirrored. The book *Consequences of Pragmatism* contains twelve essays which Rorty wrote between 1972 and 1980 with an introduction. In all the philosophical papers the main focus of Rorty is to establish the fact that philosophy is the metaphor of the mirror and the conception of the discipline to which it gives rise are abandoned. Rorty considers philosophy as one problem field, much as alchemy is. Just the base metal cannot be transmuted into gold, similarly truth cannot change in any circumstances. Rorty argues that many alchemists turned chemist, similarly freed of aspirations of foundationalism, the philosophers may turn into cultural critics. The real professional philosopher will be someone who is widely read and thought deeply. He is a real intellectual without portfolio and his main concern is to explore the nature of truth

which operates in the universe everywhere. Norris comments thus in his book *Derrida*, (1987):

Man's inability to attain an absolute conception of reality creates a distinction between appearance and reality that invites universal skepticism. In this respect Rorty's anti-realism has much in common with Kant's idealism. Rorty's rejection of realism and representationalism draws on the arguments that it seeks to dissolve. Rorty interprets philosophical realism as an attempt to reduce representation of reality down to a single representation of reality. (54)

Hawkes has analyzed in detail the pragmatic philosophy of Richard Rorty who emerges as a postmodern philosopher of America. Rorty discarded the old traditional ideas of philosophy and took a practical view of philosophy. He believed that philosophy doesn't give theoretical knowledge but in the contemporary times when man baffled by the existential problem philosophy can provide him the best solutions to cope with the Truth. Hawkes comments thus:

Rorty rejects the practice of representation because he associates it with the concept of mirroring that demands a single identical copy of reality. Rorty regards himself as an exponent of the pragmatist tradition in philosophy. He regards his position as continuous with William James's attempt to depart from the notion that our concepts copy reality. Rorty's pragmatism is in opposition of Derrida's deconstruction; he rejects the notion of representation. (*Structuralism and Semiotics* 23)

Rorty observes that "language has no representational relationship to reality. Language is more like a tool than a representation" (13). Richard Rorty's *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989) further highlight the postmodernist views of philosophy. Rorty has taken three important themes in this book; contingency, irony and solidarity of life. The main part of the book is devoted to explore the nature of contingency that change man's perception of self. The use of language; the events

of the past and the subjective nature of view point brings changes in contingency. Human beings are always subjective and this approach to life affects contingency.

The second issue is “Irony” in this book. In literature irony is an important literary device but Rorty has coined his own meaning of irony. For Rorty irony means “Understanding that things are not what they seem” (13). Irony is an important tool of life; it helps a man to get awareness reminding a person that they could be wrong also. They should hold their beliefs with a sense of humor and detachment. The final topic of discussion in the book is the concept of solidarity. Rorty argues that our fault mode is not oriented toward solidarity, but cruelty. Everyone thinks that they are nice but few people are interested in the welfare of others. Human beings often discuss their view about the world but in narrating the perception of mind is impacted by our whims and like and dislikes. The description of the universe is the reflection of the mind of man than the existential world. Rorty also mentions the problem of reference and subjectivity. He says: “two subjective people agreeing do not make real objectivity”(13). He has discussed in this book the contingency of language and contingency of self-hood. The problem of life and the universe is discussed through human language alone. Each one of us in this world likes to narrate the experiences of life which are reflection of mind. Each individual has set vocabulary in his mind which he uses in transmuting the experiences of life. In this section Rorty talks of the contingency of a liberal community. He emerges as a liberal thinker and philosopher. He is a moral relativist as defends his relativism in philosophy. He believes that if his metaphysics is right then his relativism is not insulting but true. People are scared to admit the truth of human nature. He has discussed the views of Proust, Nietzsche and Heidegger and Derrida. In part two of the book Rorty talks about private hope and liberal hope as he proposes that the Americans must orient politics to promulgate hope in the country. He envisages a better society. In the next book *Achieving Our Country* (1998), Rorty gives his own independent ideas about truth, hope and philosophy. He observes that there are two sides of the Left; the cultural Left and the reformist Left. He condemns the cultural Left which is exemplified by poststructuralist such as Michael Foucault and Jean Francois Lyotard. No doubt all these intellectuals give an insight into the ills of

society. Rorty begins the book by arguing the case of national pride to bring improvement in the country. He also discusses the Vietnam War and observes that national pride has been damaged and hence politics is also affected. He has discussed the ideas of John Wayne, Heidegger and Foucault who argued that people live in a violent, inhuman and corrupt world. The social novels such as *The Jungle*, *An American Tragedy* and *The Grapes of Wrath* belong to this category. In this book, Rorty also mentions the *Democratic Vistas* of Walt Whitman. Rorty observes thus: “The Left, by definition, is the party of hope. It insists our nation remains unachieved” (23). He has discussed in detail the ideas and the achievements of John Dewey and Walt Whitman because he thinks that their ideas are crucial for the development of America bringing hope to all the Americans. Richard Rorty’s *Philosophy and Social Hope* (2000) further contributes to the philosophy of pragmatism. He argues that there is no form of government which can bring utopia. He rejects the utopian view of society. He comments thus:

As we progress toward a better society founded upon solidarity, new problems will arise which will require new solutions. We must have a pragmatic approach to truth, politics and philosophy in order to grapple with the current and future problems. Rorty has examined each perspective; he is concerned about history, the future, epistemology and secularization. (123)

These are important characteristics for the future of a nation. Rorty has given four important conditions that can make a nation great based on his theory of pragmatism: “Philosophy must promote the national pride. People must get hope for a better future and the politics must address and solve the problems of the society. There must be a constructive and pragmatic view of truth. Secularization must be ensured in a society. The progressive Left alone can fulfil each of these requirements” (Rorty 123). Richard Rorty’s *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (1991) further gives his views on his postmodern pragmatism. He investigates the philosophical views of John Dewey on objectivity to serve the purpose of community. Dewey also discusses the role of science and scientific method to bring about the secular democratic

society. Dewey published his famous book *Quest for Certainty* (1925), and *Experience and Nature* (1825) and *Reconstruction of Philosophy* (1957) and explored the ills of society and philosophy and its relevance in the modern world. In this book, Rorty touches upon various issues concerning politics; liberalism; textual criticism and philosophy. Hilary Putnam's philosophical ideas are discussed in detail by Richard Rorty. He explored truth and objectivity; epistemology, ethics and politics. Putnam explores the nature of truth and metaphysical realism. Viewing Putnam's recent work in this way, it becomes clear that his polemic against Richard Rorty's supposed relativism suggests greater difference than there is between Putnam's pragmatic realism and Rorty's ethnocentric pragmatism. Richard Rorty's last book *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* (2007) further explores his postmodern pragmatism rejecting Derrida's deconstruction theory. He begins the book by rejecting the idealism of Hegel and pins hope on pragmatic philosophy which alone is suitable for the modern American liberal society. The main aim of philosophy is to achieve what Rorty called "cultural politics" He has investigated the views of Dewey on pragmatism. In a chapter: "Grandeur, Profundity and Finitude" Rorty observes that pragmatism must be viewed as culmination of a historical process. He calls pragmatism as "a form of romantic polytheism" holding that there "is no actual or possible object of knowledge that would permit you commensurate and rank all human needs" (30). Richard Rorty examines the issues of religion and morality. He rejects Kantian moral laws and talks of universalism, justice and morality in the larger contexts for the future of society and nation. As he says: "Getting rid of rationalistic rhetoric would permit the West to approach the non-West in the role of someone purporting to be making better use of a universal human capacity" (55).

The Texts taken in this Research Project of Richard Rorty

- 1) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979),
- 2) *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982),
- 3) *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989),
- 4) *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*(1991),

- 5) *Truth and Progress; Philosophical Papers (1998)*
- 6) *Philosophy and Social Hope (2000)*
- 7) *Philosophy as Cultural Politics (2007).*

Review of Literature of Past and the Present

Robert B. Brandom (2000) is a prominent critic of postmodern culture and philosophy who has reviewed the philosophy of Richard Rorty from the historical perspective. He opines that Rorty insists on blurring various ideas of Kant including his idealism. Brandom discusses dialectical resolution of Richard Rorty in the spirit of Hegel. He wrote *Making It Explicit* and *Articulating Reasons (2000)*. Donald Davidson (1990) reviews Richard Rorty's latest book *Philosophy as Cultural Politics (2007)* and observed that Rorty scraps all the old and conventional ideas of traditional philosophy of Kant and Hegel. He believes in pragmatism and doesn't put faith in utopian ideas. Rorty is a postmodern metaphysician who exposed all the ills of life and society. He published *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* in 1980.

Barry Allen (1993) in his book *Truth in Philosophy* observes that Richard Rorty is very inflectional philosopher of postmodern era because his philosophical ideas are beyond the confines of professional academic philosophy. His neo-pragmatism is thought provoking. Akeel Bilgrami (1992) is the author of *Belief and Meaning* and *Self Knowledge and Intentionality* in which he has discussed all the major ideas of Richard Rorty and their relevance on the modern. He argues that Rorty takes a fresh look at philosophy from the modern perspective rejecting the old and traditional ideas given by Descartes, Kant and Locke focusing on the metaphysical foundation and considering the demands of democratic politics. Jacques Bouveresse (1996) in his book *Wittgenstein Reads Freud: The Myth of the Unconscious* explores the issues of Richard Rorty from the psychological perspective. He has discussed Rorty's most recent philosophical ideas from fresh perspective. His approach to the philosophical ideas is realistic. James Conant is a Professor of Chicago University who reviewed the works of Richard Rorty from the historical perspective. He observes that Rorty made great contribution to the American thoughts and

philosophy; his main contribution is in the field of analytic philosophy and pragmatism as he rejects Derrida's deconstruction.

Daniel Dennett published *Content and Consciousness* (1969) and *Consciousness Explained* (1992) in which he reviewed the new trends of philosophy in America with analysis of the contribution of Richard Rorty. He discusses all the main ideas contained in Rorty's "Universality and Truth" which explores the nature of truth. Jurgen Habermas (1971) wrote *Knowledge and Human Interests* and *Theory and Practice* (1973). In both the books Habermas gives a critique of postmodern suspension of knowledge and his assertion of the normative framework of communicative rationality. Habermas has given a well-structured sequence of the ideas of Derrida and Rorty and his response to them. The basic focus of Habermas is on the development of language which is isomorphic to the development of community and language. His approach is sociological as he has given a social view of philosophy and language.

John McDowell (1994) wrote *Mind, Value and Reality* and *Meaning, Knowledge and Reality* (1998). Rorty's thinking about epistemology is dangerous. He doesn't consider the value of epistemology in all his works. McDowell has given a critical analysis of all the major convictions of Richard Rorty. Hilary Putnam published three volumes of *Collected Papers* (1978) and the most important of them are *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (1978), *Reason, Truth and History* (1981) and *Realism with a Human Face* (1990). In all these papers Putnam investigates the postmodern pragmatism of Richard Rorty. He has discussed in detail the ideas of Rorty on language and science in mirroring the actions of society and the world and their significance. His main focus is to understand the role of language as discussed by Richard Rorty in his works. Michael Williams published *Groundless Beliefs* (1997) and *Unnatural Doubts* (1992) and in both the books Williams investigates the nature and relevance of pragmatic philosophy of Richard Rorty and his understanding of Derrida's deconstruction. He eulogizes Richard Rorty for his cosmic vision and faith in philosophy which alone can solve the ills of society. His works gave a new recognition to American thoughts after Emerson and Hegel.

The Research Gap in the Past and the Present Research

The intensive review of literature of the past and the present reveals that there is no full length study on the topic “*Post-Derridean View: A Study of the Writings of Richard Rorty*” This thesis explores the philosophical ideas of Richard Rorty and the structuralism of Jacques Derrida. Richard Rorty is a prominent postmodernist American philosopher who launched a crusade against the traditional utopian ideas of Plato and Hegel and introduced practical and pragmatism in the domain of philosophy.

Hypotheses

- 1) The study entitled: *Post-Derridean View: A Study of the Writings of Richard Rorty* is an attempt to explore the postmodernist and post-structural ideas of Richard Rorty who is a famous postmodern philosopher of America.
- 2) Rorty investigated the ideas of Jacques Derrida and discarded the issue of language, sign and signifier and reinterpreted the deconstruction of Derrida from pragmatic point of view.

Objectives of the Proposed Research

- 1) To trace the relevance of the theory of Deconstruction of Jacques Derrida and his postmodernist view of language and its relationship with the society.
- 2) To investigate the growth of the Utopian view of philosophy of Plato, Hegel and Kant and its relevance in the post-modernist society.
- 3) To comprehend the new pragmatic philosophy of Richard Rorty and his contribution to the making of post-modern American democracy.
- 4) To investigate the relevance of philosophical ideas of Richard Rorty in the evolution of hope, romanticism, language, liberalism in America.
- 5) To examine and re-interpret the malaise of the contemporary American capitalist society and the renewed interest in the pragmatism of Richard Rorty.

Research Methodology

In the proposed research project the guidelines of the latest 8th edition of *MLA* style sheet will be observed. The main focus will be on the comparative analysis of the works of Jacques Derrida and Richard Rorty. The theories of postmodernism of Richard Rorty will be applied to analyze the texts. The thesis is based on the textual analysis of Richard Rorty and the main focus will be on the postmodernist issues discussed by Richard Rorty and his concept of postmodernist pragmatism. This study is qualitative in nature the textual analysis of Jacques Derrida and Richard Rorty will be done to explore the ideas and concepts of postmodernist pragmatism and their relevance in the modern world. The data will be collected from the following libraries: Kurukshetra University Library J.N. University Library New Delhi and Punjab University Library

Chapterization

Chapter 1: Brief Candle

Chapter 2: Jacques Derrida and the Theory of Deconstruction

Chapter 3: Pragmatism in Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature and Consequences of Pragmatism*

Chapter 4 :The Dialectical Relationship between Truth and Falsehood in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*

Chapter 5:An Analysis of Richard Rorty's *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth and Truth and Progress ;Philosophical Papers*

Chapter 6 :Hope, Faith and Liberalism in Richard Rorty's *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*

Chapter 7: Hermeneutics of Derrida and Richard Rorty: A Textual Comparative Analysis

Conclusion

Bibliography

Chapter 2

Jacques Derrida and the Theory of Deconstruction

Reading the works of Jacques Derrida is an appalling exercise. In this study the efforts are made to explain the meaning of deconstruction and hermeneutics of Derrida within literary theory. He claims that all texts have ambiguity. Derrida followed Socrates and successfully broke the crust of convention questioning philosophical assumptions in his writings. Derrida was a learned scholar and a professor; he deeply investigated the Newtonian physics, Augustan theology, Darwinian biology and the ethics of Kant. He also read and explored the images and metaphors hidden in the poetry of Schiller and explored the irony of Socrates. Derrida, a voracious reader, investigated historicism of Hegel, aestheticism of Nietzsche and Schiller and pragmatism of Dewey. In his essay "Structure, Sign, and Play" (1978), Derrida expresses "his new vision of language thus: the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and without origin which is offered to an active interpretation" (278). Degenaar observes that Derrida rejects "the notion of deep structure in the text as well as the metaphysical view of Nietzsche that God plays with the world. The death of God is considered as Logos in the Christian world and is an important aspect of Western culture. It liberates man from worldly fetters and leads to the discovery of the power of the human imagination in giving meaning through art and aesthetics" (*A Derridarean Critique of Logocentrism* 188). He also investigated the theory of language given by Wittgenstein and Davidson as a means for coordinating human action. The critics of Derrida observe that Derrida has brought poetry into philosophy. Derrida gives the message of patience shown by Franz Kafka (1994) who said: "All human errors are impatience, a premature breaking off of methodical procedure, an apparent fencing in of what is apparently at issue" ("All Human Error are Impatience"). Like Kafka, Derrida brought a radical transformation in literary criticism. In studying literary theory, his thoughts suggest that a text needs to be read to be a text. Derrida (1976) said: "When

speech fails to protect presence, writing becomes necessary. In this case, writing then serve as a supplement in which takes the place of speech” (*Of Grammatology*144).

Nicholas Royle published *Telepathy and Literature: Essay on the Reading Mind* (190), *After Derrida* (1995), *The Uncanny* (2003), and *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* (1999) and in all these books Royle discussed the linguistic and philosophical ideas of Jacques Derrida who is an extraordinary inventive thinker. Derrida wrote *Of Grammatology* (1976), *The Act of Literature* (1992), *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (1973), *Positions*, (1987) and *Writing and Difference* (1978). In his major works he discussed the concept of centre and argues that centre is not important; he expressed his concern to describe and transform the traditional concept of centre. Derrida argues that centre goes together with structure: “the notion of a structure lacking any centre represents the unthinkable itself” (*Writing and Difference*, 279). His critique of structuralism is discussed in his essay “Force and Significations” and “Structure, Signs and Play.” Derrida has questioned the internal self-sufficiency of a theory given over to system and concept. Structuralism operates when thinking yields to the consistent order and stability. Structuralism survives on the difference between its theory and practice. Derrida’s most of the essays are devoted to dismantle the concept of structure. Jameson also discards the idea of the structure. Derrida argues that the “organizing principle of the structure” would limit the play of the structure and the notion of a specific centre would destroy the centre and the possibility of generating meaning would be lost. Derrida in his book *Writing and Difference* (1978) comments thus:

Hence forth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no centre, that the centre could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the centre had no neutral site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of non locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play. (280)

Derrida argues that logocentric interest in theology and philosophy is contradicted by the West as the western thinkers put their faith in the metaphysics of presence. From

Plato to Rousseau the views about the presence have been differently interpreted. Derrida took inspiration from Saussure to deconstruct presence which is perceived as truth by the western thinkers. Derrida observes that speech has been dominant in the west for 400 years and writing had been suppressed. His critique of speech exposes the dishonesty and false consciousness of the western thinkers. Derrida says: “there is nothing outside the text. Language is a constant movement of differences and everything acquires the instability and ambiguity inherent in language” (*Of Grammatology*13). Derrida’s revolutionary ideas propounded in his *Of Grammatology* have greatly influenced arts, literature, science, and social sciences including law and anthropology gender studies and linguistics. Subversion of sign by Derrida in structuralism opened the door for interdisciplinary and intertextual research. Bakhtin argues that dialogue is a social interactive active; it is multiple in nature. He has laid emphasis on the plurality of the other’s discourse because in a dialogue many voices are hidden.

Bakhtin argues that the social world is made of multiple voices and perspectives. The response of other people in dialogue can change the perspective and can lead to real social and political change. Bakhtin argues that dialogism can create new interest in interdisciplinary study. The new interpretation of sign by Derrida and the theory of dialogism of Bakhtin opened new system of thought in open and written dialogue. Derrida argues in his book *Of Grammatology* that “a system in which the central signified is never present outside a system of differences. The absence of the signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely. He has established new relationship between the signifier and the signified in his study of semiotics” (54). Saussure saw that the connection between the word and the idea it represents is arbitrary. This arbitrary relationship between the signifier and signified implies two things; first, there is a politics of language and a set of words must be established. So language is a device for communication. Roy Boyne (1990) in his book *Foucault and Derrida: The Otherside of Reason* comments thus:

Saussure did not dwell on the political implications of linguistics, focusing rather on the second consequence of his formulation of arbitrariness: the impact of words devices as much from their

difference from other words as it does from the referential relationship between signifier and signified. (105)

The main argument of Derrida is that the meaning comes through the imposition of interpretations. Foucault remarks on Nietzsche that, “Signs are not prior to interpretations and signs are always the product of interpretations” (qtd in Roth *Knowing and History*, 203). In his *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida took up the project to deconstruct such ideas of origin and foundation projecting them to be present in a differential structure. Roy Boyne in his book *Foucault and Derrida- The other side of Reason*, commented thus: “Derrida saw that structuralism had not abandoned the commitment to an unproblematic ontology, even though at first glance it might have seemed as if the Saussurian formulation and its subsequent derivatives had moved away from making assumptions about what there really is in the world” (106). Derrida’s “deconstruction theory is an attempt to understand language, text and meaning and at the same time to understand the postmodern universe which replaces the modern world in which we live today” (106). He thinks that meaning can be attributed to other meanings than the western metaphysics deems by means of deconstruction.

Derrida investigated the nature of the stereotyped structures with an intention to understand the difference between oral and written methods. Meaning can be reconstructed with the help of deconstruction. Derrida launched a war against the dominant meaning conception and the hegemony of the speech tradition. He gave new terms such as “difference”, “trace”, “decentralization”, “undecidability” and “metaphor” in his *of Grammatology* to depict his shift from modernism to postmodernism. He investigated the language problem in detail and came to the conclusion that the meaning has been a philosophical subject. Derrida formalizes the meaning which had become problematic. He developed the deconstruction theory to solve the problem of meaning; to give the proper status to writing and to explore the hidden truth about the structure. He rejected the tradition of Rousseau and the western philosophers with a zeal to liberate the meaning. Deconstruction is the thought method of Derrida and this can be applied in many fields to explore the truth. It refers to the basic “forms and at the same time this process paves way for the

conceptions with different and potential meaning” (Kurt *Darwin and Derrida*, 2). Deconstruction method helps Derrida to give a new way of investigating the text to find out the significance of writing, saying and meaning. He motivated the readers to understand the significance of metaphor in the text and the term is used as a guardian of the meaning. Deconstruction concept of Derrida is “actually a firm criticism of postmodernism” (Boyen *Foucault and Derrida* 228).

Derrida inspires us to deconstruction and the understanding that everything exists with its opposite. For example the “perceptions such as beautiful-ugly, good – bad, can express a meaning as much as they are together, not by themselves” (Boyen *Foucault and Derrida* 103). Sarup (2004) observes that by “using the deconstruction, Derrida has suggested a method in which we can subvert these oppositions only by shadowing that of the opposite terms can only exist within another” (*An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism* 60). The deconstruction is a technical method; it is the tool for reading the text. Deconstruction is based on the idea that language has cultural, historical and flexible meanings. It is not static but dynamic as the language changes from time to time. Balkin (1995) observes thus: “The deconstruction indeed aims to reveal the concealed and other implicit meanings, not to show up the meaninglessness of the text by separating it” (*Deconstructive Practice and Legal Theory* 3). Derrida has given a new concept of reality and observes that reality is not ended, not completed. He argues that a definite unique reality never exists. His aim is not to distort the structure but to restructure it. He deconstructs the interpretation types and indications.

Saussure believes that language includes systematical, regular, logical and continuous relationships and is a structure. Keat and Urry (1994) observe thus: “the language is structure of regularities, so every national language lies under the words of those who speak that language as their mother tongue; the word addresses the actual linguistic action” (*Derrida and Language Deconstruction* 149). Derrida condemns the western tradition and its rationalism. Derrida opines that thought is “frozen and it could not run away from the meaning” (23). He uses the method of deconstruction to discuss the judgements in a rational manner. He is of the firm view that language is full of deep-rooted meaning and preconceptions and the

deconstruction method helps to decode the hidden meanings of the texts. Derrida gives “the idea ending of philosophy but this doesn’t mean the real end of the philosophy but it implies the beginning of a new age for philosophy. In other words it “refers to the end of the metaphysical age” (Kurt *Darwin and Derrida* 2). For Derrida deconstruction is a reading technique. According to Balkin (1995) “the texts may include many meanings that are different from one another or in similar characteristics” (*Deconstructive Practice and Legal Theory* 2). Derrida propounded the theory of deconstruction to address the crisis of language. Balkin further observes that “Derrida mentions the live energy of the meaning stated that the meaning will stay blank and desolate when this liveliness is ended up and therefore the meaning becomes naïve yet blank” (54). Some critics claim that “Derrida is a nihilist. The deconstruction was interpreted as a situation that it is composed of a game of signifiers that are stuck in the language”(54). When Derrida says that “there is nothing outside the text, he states that the meaning changes in accordance with permanent conditions and the meaning does that by itself” (Balkin 57). Caputo who interviewed Derrida on the theory of deconstruction states that “Derrida said that the deconstruction had been in his mind for a long time and he started out to point out this problem thematically in previous years” (qtd. in *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*). Bennington (1993) states that “the philosophy of Derrida is never a language philosophy; on the contrary it includes a meaning beyond it. Because the language needs a renovation in terms of meaning; to be analyzed and escape from the western metaphysics” (*Derrida* 38). Chip Sills and Jenson George (1992) in their book *The Philosophy of Discourse: The Rhetorical Turn in Twentieth Century Thought* observe thus in connection with signifier and signified:

Foucault notes that for Nietzsche, there is no origin of meaning. As interpretation tries to get beneath sign to something more fundamental than them, it discovers only more interpretation. Meaning comes through the imposition of interpretations. Signs, then are not prior to interpretations; instead of signs are always already the product of interpretation. (104)

Derrida opposes the process of totality and attacks the concept of Book. This totality of the signifier cannot be a totality, and totality is dangerous for the society. Jameson also condemns the concept of totality.

Strategy of Deconstruction of Jacques of Derrida

Ellis observes thus:

Deconstruction is a theory about language and literature developed in 1970s; it emerged as a reaction to the primacy of French structuralism and repressive intellectual system. It was propounded by Jacques Derrida who described it as a strict analysis of language in the philosophical and theological texts. The basis of deconstruction is based on its notion of textuality; it exists in books, in speech, history and culture. (David *Archaeology* 80)

Rheinberger (2008) observes that “Deconstruction is not a method, technique or species of critique. It is a useful means of saying new things about the text. It is a supplement is something that is writing can thus be seen as a dangerous supplement” (*Translating Derrida* 85). A supplement is secondary; it is always a sign of a sign. Deconstructive moves of Derrida are engaged in the dismantling of conceptual opposition. Derrida adds thus: “But undoing, decomposing and de-sedimenting of structures was not a negative operation” (85). Boyen further says that “Deconstruction is not destruction but rather the dismantling of cultural, philosophical, institutional structures that starts from textual. Every system is a social construction, something that has been assembled and construction entails exclusions” (*Foucault and Derrida* 54). Derrida says:

Deconstruction seeks out those points or cracks in the system, where it disguises the fact of its incompleteness, its failure to cohere as a self-contained whole. In the locating these points and applying a kind of authority to them, one is able to deconstruct the system. (*Of Grammatology* 151)

Derrida used new strategies to disrupt the tradition of logocentric tradition. Derrida challenged assumptions of language, writing and experience. Derrida is a rigorous thinker who invents his own methodology to subvert the traditional view of history and philosophy. Derrida argues that “the writing exists before anything. There is no graphemical signifier before the writing. The writing comes first” (qtd. in Ucan 225). He argues thus:

Writing has been pushed into the background and written off. But in reality the writing is the fact which indeed provides the expression of the meaning and the language; the meaning needs the writing to live on. If the writing is primary for the meaning, the writing always tells us that the existence has already started. (*Of Grammatology* 9)

The “speaking voice” is the raw material of the graphemics, and the “human voice” is the “human conscious” according to Derrida. Christopher Norris in his book *Derrida* (1987) observes thus:

Deconstruction is not, he says primarily a matter of philosophical contents, themes or theses philosophemes, poems, theologemes or ideology but especially and inseparably meaningful frames, institutional structure, pedagogical or rhetorical norms, the possibilities of law of authority, of representation in terms of its very market. (14)

Deconstruction doesn't do anything but it highlights the inherent structure of the text: Julian Wolfreys (1998) in her book *Deconstruction, Derrida* observes that “It does not take things apart, it is not an operation, it only reveals how things are put together” (14). Derrida argues that there is no idea or thought which is not constructed out of a group of ideas and concepts. Derrida believes that to deconstruct a piece of writing means to effect a strategic reversal. He maintains that all thinking about language, philosophy and culture must henceforth be conceived within the context of an extended writing. Derrida suggests that nothing remained immune to the movement of deconstruction. Peter Dews (1995) comments in his book *The Limits of Disenchantment: Essays on Contemporary European Philosophy* thus:

“Indeed, he writes what remains as irreducible to any deconstruction as they very possibility of deconstruction is perhaps a certain emancipator or a certain idea of justice which is not be equated with any empirical edifice of law”(6). Derrida paves the way for Jameson who sought to conduct material historical investigation. Deconstruction of Derrida extends to every form of discourse whose complexity exceeds its own power of control over language. Christopher Norris (1987) observes thus: “Deconstruction insists on thinking through the paradoxes in the nature of reason (pure and applied) whose effects are most starkly and urgently visible in nuclear strategic debate” (*Derrida* 163). It is contended that deconstruction is not mere exploration of hidden truth; It is not just decoding hidden truth. It is also not decoding of the binary opposition in favour of the minor discriminated term but a strategy of politics and demystification.

Derrida and Writing

Derrida’s deconstruction begins with the intensive analysis of phonocentric tradition. Derrida goes through many texts that support speech over writing. In the history of language and metaphysics speech enjoyed superior status than writing. Saussure is of the opinion that,

Writing is an instrument of oppression, a means of colonizing the primitive mind allowing it to exercise the power of the oppressor. Derrida investigated the theme of lost innocence calling it a romantic illusion. Derrida believes that writing is external to language; speech becomes an agency of violence and corruption. The real meaning is found only in writing. (qtd. in Saussure *Theory of Language* 23).

Terence Hawkes (1977) in his *Structuralism and Semiotics* observes that “it is in the nature of writing and of language not to be confounded to specific structures of meaning” (148). In structuralist writing speech is represented as symbolical of truth. He disagrees with Plato and Rousseau who undermined the strength of writing. Lewis Strauss also committed the error giving primacy to speech and neglecting the power of writing. Hekman (2012) states that “the writing is prior, not the speech. He contends that writing opens the history and the historical existence. He suggests that

the source of the language and the source of the writing cannot be separated from each other”(Derrida and Language 27). Strauss argued the tribal people of Nambikwara could sing only which they could not write. Speech was the main medium of communication. He refuses “dignity of writing” and gives more weightage to “non-alphabetic signs.” Derrida states that: “All the liberating criticism and legitimate denunciation with which Levi-Strauss has harried the presupposed distinctions between historical societies and societies without history” (*Of Grammatology* 121). Jacques Derrida has given a prominent place to writing and it’s the most important part of his intellectual thinking. Gayathri Spivak; “Writing is a metaphor for Derrida, a figure which names an entire structure of investigation, not merely...writing in the narrow sense-graphic notation on tangible material” (qtd. in Julian *Deconstruction Derrida* 69). For Derrida writing is a key figure which announces structure. Spivak states that writing is a broader concept than the empirical concepts. Writing has the potential to function in the radical absence of its author, and of any empirically determined readership. It is not bound to any context. He states thus:”On closer inspection of Austin’s original argument, however, it quickly becomes apparent that Derrida’s assimilation of Austin to the tradition of logocentrism requires a bizarre level of hermeneutic violence”(qtd. in Dews *The Limits of Disenchantment* 69). Derrida argues that no context can be determined by conscious intention. His argument is that unless the context can be saturated, no speech act can proceed successfully. In old societies, speech occupies primary position as discussed in the anthropological study of Strauss. Writing displays the ideal of pure self-presence. Derrida argues thus: “what an extraordinary case, that writing is in fact the pre-condition of language and must be conceived as prior to speech. The word of writing thus comprehends language”(Of Grammatology 7). Writing doesn’t reproduce reality and the term writing is closely related to the elements of signifying difference. Derrida comments thus:

Writing in general covers the entire field of linguistic signs. In that field a certain sort of instituted signifiers may then appear graphic in the narrow and derivative sense of the word, ordered by certain relationship with other instituted hence written even if they are phonic

signifiers. The very idea of institution hence of the arbitrariness of the sign is unthinkable before the possibility of writing and outside its horizon. (44)

Writing is the “endless displacement of meaning which both govern language and places it forever beyond the reach of stable knowledge. Oral language belongs to generalized writing, its effects are hidden” (qtd. in Culler *On Deconstruction*, 101). Derrida says: “writing turns out to be the best illustration of the nature of linguistic units” (qtd. in Culler *On Deconstruction* 101). The written word is independent of the presence of a speaker is an object in its own right enjoys an autonomous productivity Writing exceeds the whole traditional edifice of western attitudes to thought and language. Derrida opines that the progress of writing is a natural progress. Derrida comments thus:

Grammatology would be the science of the written sign conceived in this way: the way in which writing has always been conceived in oriental societies. Its term its conditions, and its presuppositions are not those of a dominant oral version of language, but those of writing itself, It communicates, not as a surrogate for the voice, not orally, but visually and legibly. (*Of Grammatology* 44)

Derrida is very sad to note that Rousseau gives undue importance to speech as it belongs to the domain of nature that is opposed to culture while speech is treated as an original and natural phenomenon the writing becomes secondary and supplementary. Rousseau also retains certain traces of writing and his adoration for writing within his adoration for writing within his text. Through deconstruction Derrida shows the inseparable trap which the writer could not escape.

Jacques Derrida: Difference Against Identity

Derrida coined new words and phrases in his *Of Grammatology* and the word difference has confused and baffled many critics. Difference means alterity in French language and has double meanings “to postpone” and to defer. Kurt argues that “Derrida is separating the meaning, not the word via deconstruction. The term refers

to the process of reinterpretation of the text as a philological method. The deconstruction analyzes how the text differentiates itself and how the meaning changes” (Kurt *Darwin and Derrida* 2). Derrida starts out with the concept of Saussure and states that every difference is a meaning. Lacan observes that it is the fact which has come out as a result of the distortion of reality. Derrida says that: “there is no direct and overlapping relation between the signifier and the signified” (49). According to Derrida “the conventional integrity of the text is distorted by the deconstruction; the meaning is left blank by postponing it and each meaning sends another perception and meaning to the reader” (29). According to him, “the signified part of the signifier cannot be limited”(29). In other words “the meaning continuously postpones itself. Every signifier leads to another meaning and perception. Meaning cannot be limited and always postponed and meanings can be described as correct or definite cannot exist” (29). Derrida leaves the meaning blank in this way. Here Derrida is following the arguments of the postmodern philosophers as they contend that “there is no unique reality, meaning or fact; there are variety and popularity in the universe” (Kurt *Darwin and Derrida* 3). Martin Hobson in his book *Jacques, Derrida: Opening Lines* (1998) observes that “Difference is a term, which without being; a logical operation acts as a negative” (9). Derrida argues that “any definition of any identity is only ever possible because of that which is different from it. Identity is constituted and only possible by differences. He calls the identity that is marked by difference” (*Of Grammatology* 123). Derrida begins the discussion of identity with the principle of identity and difference. Difference is the main and primary term, that makes identity possible. Every concept belongs to a systematic order and constitutes a set system of principles. Identity is always formed in innumerable ways dependent on context. He says: “Identity is never known until perceived in a particular form and the question of identity is always fraught with paradoxes and contradictions. The unity of identity is impossible because of the interplay of contradictory forces in a structure” (Hobson *Jacques, Derrida-Opening lines* 13). Adorno has also given his concept of identity observing that the concept of identity is fluid:

For Adorno, the non-identical is no longer viewed as the isolated particular, which it is forced back into being by identity thinking. The particular is now seen as standing in a pattern of relation to other particulars, a historically sediment constellation which defines its identity. (qtd. in Dews *The Limits of Disenchantment* 30)

Adorno is Marxist and a materialist; he has given his concept of identity resisting the dialectical play of economic forces. Derrida's view of difference is entirely different from Adorno's view of identity. Peter Dews comments thus:

Since absolute difference, lacking all determinacy, is indistinguishable from absolute identity: Derrida's evocations of a trace which is origin of all repletion origin of ideality, not more "ideal than real, no more intelligible than sensible, not more a transparent signification than an opaque energy, provide perhaps the closest twentieth century parallel to the identity philosophy of younger Schelling. (*The Limits of Disenchantment* 30)

Derrida's critique of identity has excited great interest among the critics. In Derrida's scheme of things identity is non-identity.

Derrida's Difference: Evolution of a New Term to Counter Logocentrism

Derrida argues that Saussure is the father of a system of differences without positive terms. He argues that language is created by negative signifiers. He argues that the blending of negatives create positive ideas. Real meaning emerges from difference. In Western metaphysics an effect of difference can be clearly observed He explores the "nature of the ontological structure; the significance of centre and the existence of truth, and God" (*Of Grammatology* 13). For Derrida "difference is an anarchic concept that makes language; as a play of signifiers. Difference is typically what is involved in writing; this generalizes the motion of writing that breaks down the entire logic of the sign" (*Of Grammatology* 172). Derrida views language as a system, a structure that is some sense produces subjects. Difference represents the principle by

which language works. It stands for both differing and deferring. Hawkes (1977) comments thus in *Terence, Structuralism and Semiotics*: “To differ or differentiate, is also to defer: to postpone; to propose a distinction between entities such as will enable one to refer to is, it represents involvement in a structuring process” (147). Christopher Norris (1987) in his book *Derrida* comments thus:

Differance is neither a word nor a concept. It has been most decisively inscribed in the thought of what is conveniently called our epoch. It is used to show how meaning is a once differential and deferred; the product of a restless play within language that cannot be fixed or pinned down for the purposes of conceptual definition. (15)

Difference is a part of neologism evolved by Derrida to express the indeterminacy of meaning. He deconstructs philosophy to highlight the inner contradiction. He took inspiration from Saussure but transforms it into a fluid identity. Saussure contends that “language is a system of differences in hermeneutical tradition” Derrida (1982) states thus defining his term difference:

What is written as difference, then, will be the playing movement that produces by means of something that is not simply an activity; these differences, these effects of difference. This does not mean that difference that produces differences is somehow before them, in a simple and unmodified-in-different-present. Difference is the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences. Thus the name origin no longer suits it. (*Of Grammatology* 11)

Derrida views language as a system, a structure that produces subjects, the verb to differ seems to differ from itself. It indicates differences as distinction, inequality and at the same time it expresses the interpretation to delay. Differance represents the principle by which language works. It stands for both differing and deferring. Linguistic terms become meaningful due to the process deferring and differing. Saussure points out that thus: In language there are only differences:

To differ or differentiate, Derrida argues, is also defer: to postpone; to propose a distinction between entities such as will enable one to refer to the other, or to be distinguished from it. That is, it represents involvement in a structuring. In the one case to differ signifies non-identity in the other case it signifies the order of the same, yet there must be common, although entirely different from within the sphere that relates the two movements of differing to one another. (129).

Derrida argues that difference implies a commitment to difference. Speech is impure, as secondary as any signification. Difference is neither a word nor a concept. In his *Of Grammatology*, Derrida observes that there cannot be a science of difference itself and it is impossible to have a science of the origin. In fact trace is the difference which opens appearance and signification. According to Donald Davidson, “And if Derrida’s right that writing is read, and in the last analysis does not give rise to a hermeneutic deciphering to the decoding of a meaning or truth” (“Derrida and Experience” 348). Derrida believes that meaning is contextual, a function of the shared predicament of speaker and audience. Justien Woltreys (1998) in his book *Deconstruction Derrida* comments thus:

Writing will never be simple voice-painting, it creates meaning by enregistering it, by entrusting it so any engraving, a groove; relief, to a surface whose essential characteristic is to be infinitely transmissible. Meaning or value are therefore never intrinsic or imminent in the written sign, they only become possible by the chance of their representation. Inscription precedes meaning. (69)

Metaphor of Derrida

Jacques Derrida has given a new meaning to metaphor and he has used the term in postmodern perspective. The term metaphor can be expressed as “inexistence of clear meaning.” He argues that the western thinkers have been obsessed with the reality and self suppressing the real meaning of language in their analysis of the metaphor. Derrida used metaphor as a tool to immobilize the meaning as he contends that it is not innocent at all. The function of metaphor in a story or in a discourse is to direct

searching and immobilizing the results. Derrida (1978) says that “the analogy is an impulse that is above the language and is hard to overcome” (Derrida 3). Derrida gives a postmodern interpretation of metaphor and redefines the term. Balkin (2004) comments thus: “It is a thought, which prioritizes a piece and which is its expression, an idea or an inner order. it is a prejudice; the conventional criticism defines this prejudice as idealism” (*Deconstructive Practice and Legal Theory* 55).

Derrida’s Trace and Decentralization

Derrida argues that the “Trace” is neither visual nor verbal. Derrida argues that “everything is concealed in the meaning and the trace cannot be explained by metaphysical concepts. He deconstructs the contexts and changes by giving a new term trace” (*Of Grammatology* 160). Derrida “turns the trace concept into a problem in terms of the psychological analysis. Derrida reads the trace concept in a general writing problematique which cannot be degraded to the gram-meaning only to audible things; in other words, the record of symbols, and which therefore resists to any sensual or symbolic definiteness and to the on reductionism” (160). The trace of an event, a text or a meaning is followed; even if the meaning is past, its trace brings the individual towards it. Direk (2004) observed that “Derrida uses the trace term and uses the expressions of convergence, immediacy and existence to position the thing which we suppose that we understand should not be understood” (*Jaques Derrida* 146). Derrida argues that like difference trace cannot be degraded. Derrida has also put forward the concept of decentralization.

The Concept of Undecidability

In the domain of deconstruction of Derrida, the concept of “undecidability” has wider significance. Derrida observes that the undecidability is “not only an oscillation between contradictory rules which are very well determined and both equally peremptory” (45). A decision that did not pass within the order of undecidability cannot be a free decision: “The time of decision, in the moment, in the moment of its uniqueness, is both in order and out of order” (80). The whole argument of undecidability of Derrida is summed up by Derrida thus: “There is no free decision if there is a conditioning and allegiance to the condition; therefore disengagement has

to be occurred with the existing information and rules to make the free decision possible. The free decision cannot be determined by traditions and methods” (123). Robert Scholes (1988) in his article “Deconstruction and Communication” published in *Critical Inquiry* observes thus

The interest that speech-act theory holds for Derrida assuredly lies in its difference from his own thought...The powerful appeal that Derridean thought has had for American literary critics has its emotional roots a cultural reflex of sympathy for the outlaw. For American students of language and literature, the Derridean theory of writing has seemed to offer a new freedom, an exhilarating escape from stifling rules and responsibilities. (278)

Derrida and the Nature of Truth

Derrida has explored the nature of truth in all his major writings suggesting that the condition of truth is the possibility of writing. Richard Beardsworth (1996) in her *Derrida and the Political* observes thus: “For Derrida, both the possibility and the horizon of metaphysics are predicated on the normative exclusion of writing from the procedure of truth” (10). The distinction between speech and writing constitutes the determining factor to explore the truth in metaphysics or hidden in the text. Phonocentrism is both metaphysical and violent. He explores new method of arriving at truth through the method of deconstruction as he believes that no unique truth is available in this universe. Saussure also maintained that writing is secondary representation of a primary unity of sound and meaning. But Derrida rejected all views of the western metaphysics and gave the primary status to writing. Christopher Norris in his book *Derrida* (1987) observes thus:

Derrida argues that deconstruction has its work cut out since it has to avoid both a premature metaphysics of the real and a fetishized notion of the text which would then fall prey to all manner of the idealist delusions. It should thus be possible to generalize the concept of writing while not winding up, with a new self interiority, a new idealism of the text. (143)

Derrida rejects all forms of epistemological critique and treats philosophy as just one kind of writing among others, with no specific interest in questions of knowledge and truth. He insists that there is no possibility of thinking back beyond origins of this “false” enlightenment of returning to some primitive state of being when language was in touch with the ultimate truths of experience.

Jacques Derrida and the Theory of Translation

Translation theory is one of the greatest contributions of Jacques Derrida in the twentieth century. K. Davis (2001) in his book *Deconstruction and Translation* observed that “all of Derrida’s texts concern translation in various ways” (9). Derrida wrote *What is a Relevant Translation?* (2001) propounded the translation theory claiming the power of the word and everything it has the potential to signify: “At the beginning of translation is the word, nothing is less innocent, pleonastic and natural, nothing is more historical than this proposition, even if it seems too obvious” (180). Derrida’s theory of translation is dependent on his definition of difference. Derrida observes thus: “The process by which difference is approached becomes the process by which words and translation are approached. The very activity of translation cannot be separated from this difference between signifier and signified and become part of the existence and production of the inevitable tension” (180). In 1968, Derrida defined difference and later on his theory was published in *Margins of Philosophy* (1982). He began the address in a French Society thus “I will speak, therefore, of a letter” (3). In his long lecture Derrida highlights the significance of difference and its significance in translation. Derrida argues that “the word difference is based on the French verb “differrer” and has two distinct meanings in French language; to differ and to defer” (4). Derrida comments thus: “to be identical, to be other, discernible, etc (8). Derrida refers to different things and differences of opinion. Derrida summarizes the whole concept such as

The action of putting off until later, of taking into account, of taking account of time and of the forces of an operation that implies an economical calculation, a detour, a delay, a relay, a reserve, a representation. It also implies to temporize, to take recourse,

consciously, in the temporal and temporizing mediation of a detour that suspends the accomplishment or fulfillment of “desire or will and effects this suspension in a mode that annuls or tempers its own effect. (8)

Gemtzler (1993) in his book *Contemporary Translation Theories* comments thus: “Difference refers not to what is there (language), but what is not there, and thus calls into question any ontological approach that attempts to determine a notion of Being based on presence” (14). Davis observes that “meaning is an effect of language, not a prior presence merely expressed in language. It therefore cannot be simply extracted from language and transferred” (*Deconstruction and Translation* 14). R. Begam (1992) in her book *Splitting the Difference* pointed out that

Difference moves along two essentially opposed trajectories of meaning: on the one hand, it gestures towards presence or self-identity...on the other hand, it gestures toward absence or difference...This means that to think difference is to think what is simultaneously same and other, what is simultaneously itself and its opposite. (893)

Derrida devotes most of the pages in his book *Margins of Philosophy* (1982) to explain the term difference and differance. Derrida says that “the sign represents the presence in its absence. It takes the place of the present...The sign, in this sense, is deferred presence” (9). And this aspect of difference is of great importance to translation theory since it touches on the essence of translation and the relation between original and translation. Derrida deconstructs difference thus:

There is no essence of difference; it is that which not only could never be appropriated in the as such of its appearing, but also that which threatens the authority of the as such in general, of the presence of the thing itself in its essence of difference at this point, implies that there is neither a Being nor truth of the play of writing such as it engages difference. (25).

Derrida argues that a translation is never faithful, always somewhat free and it never establishes any identity. “Translation can never be a transparent representation but only an interpretative transformation that exposes multiple and divided meanings, equally multiple and divided” (8). Davis (2001) observed that “Derrida usually speaks of the trace, rather than the signifier, partly to recall its sense of track or even a spoor. (*Deconstruction and Translation* 15). The play of “differences in a text becomes a footprint that contains in it traces of the past and the future, but that can never be pinned to an essence of fixed meaning” (*Margins of Philosophy* 13). Derrida cautions that “the concept of the trace is incompatible with the concept of retention of the becoming past of what has been present. One cannot think the trace – and therefore, *différance* – on the basis of the present, or the presence of the present” (*Margins of Philosophy* 21).

To conclude, he waged a war against the western metaphysics and shifted from modern to the postmodern. He gave the revolutionary terms such as trace, undecidability and deconstruction and metaphor to investigate the hidden meaning of the texts. Derrida supports the necessity of the deconstruction with postmodernist aspects which aim to multiply the meaning of the language, not to distort it. The postmodernist thinkers like Baudrillard and Jameson believe that there is no unique thought. Derrida also believes that there is no unique reality in this universe; on the contrary there are meanings and differences.

Chapter 3

Pragmatism in Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* and *Consequences of Pragmatism*

Richard Rorty has been hailed as a lightning rod for conflicting currents in contemporary philosophical thought. The history of philosophy shows that Rorty generated enthusiasm and excitement in the domain of philosophy. His controversial ideas have generated new interest in philosophical debates. Rorty has praised American democratic culture and progressivism of 1930s. The book of Rorty *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* begins by revealing the significance of metaphilosophy in life and culture. The approach of Rorty is positive as he discards the nihilistic conclusion that life is meaningless. This led him to transform existentialism into postmodernism. His work has broken all the barriers of philosophical thought and has moved into the branches of law, historiography, psychotherapy and social theory. Rorty is a voracious reader as he describes his childhood in his book *Philosophy and Social Hope* (1999) as bookish and solitary: "When I was 12, the most salient books on my parents' shelves were two red-bound volumes, *The Case of Leon Trotsky* and *Not Guilty*. These made up the report of the Dewey Commission on Inquiry into the Moscow Trials" (5). Rorty formulated his own independent and practical view of philosophy as he observes thus:

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, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* 3)

Richard Rorty has divided his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* in three parts; in the first part his approach is therapeutic as he talks of the contribution made

by Wittgenstein, Heidegger and John Dewey in the domain of philosophy. In Part 1, Rorty centers on a philosophy of mind. He looks at what he calls “the invention of the mind going back to Rene Descartes substance of man as a thinking thing” (13). He contends that “Descartes moved the focus away from the notion that the mind is reason, replacing it with the idea of the mind as inner arena. Rorty’s quest is for certainty as he replaces the quest for wisdom” (13). In the Part 2 is concerned with “epistemology and this section places the beginnings of epistemology in the 17th century by connecting it with the Cartesian notion of mind. Rorty borrows the ideas of Sellars and attacks the traditional view of philosophy. He seeks to dismantle the possibility of an epistemological enterprise grounded in certainty” (13). His approach is “pragmatic conception of knowledge, seeing truth as what is better for us to believe rather than an accurate representation of reality” to borrow the words of William James (*Jacques Derrida, Lévi-Straus*, 31). He explores the therapeutic and edifying aspect of philosophy as opposed to systematic approach. Rorty reviews all the major thinkers and comes to the conclusion that philosophy is a higher branch of knowledge and not a mere reservoir of wisdom. In Part three of the book, Rorty considers philosophy to be edifying. He turns to Thomas Kuhn who wrote *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1962) and borrows the phrase “normal science” and generalizes it. He argues that “the idea of normal discourse can apply to any sort of scientific, political and theological discourse. Descartes, Kant and John Locke serve as primary examples of Rorty’s ascription of normal discourse in philosophy, but Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Dewey lead the way in doing abnormal philosophy” (13). Rorty has high opinion of Descartes as he considers him as the “father of modern philosophy.” Rorty came under the influence of Descartes providing the modern view of mind. He also evaluated the philosophical ideas of Kant and came to the conclusion that Truth is far away from Reality. Rorty turns to Plato and Kant and explores all the important movements of the history of philosophy. He opines thus: “The picture which holds traditional philosophy captive is that of mind as a great mirror containing various representations some accurate some not-and capable of being studied by pure, non empirical methods” (12). Philosophy is thus foundational for cultural growth as all the areas are judged through reason and logic in society. Rorty believes thus:

The remoteness of philosophy from the rest of culture follows from its special understanding: “the cultural overseer who knows everyone’s common ground....who knows what everybody else is really doing whether they know it or not, because philosophy knows about the ultimate context...within which they are doing it. (317)

Rorty firmly believed that a philosopher is “the informed dilettante, the poly pragmatic, Socratic intermediary” (318) between various forms of inquiry. Rorty occupies the same status in the domain of philosophy. He is the only modern philosopher of America who is read outside of the discipline of philosophy. He is a voracious reader and has read everything. Charles Guignon (2003) observed thus: “He moves from Dewey to Derrida, but he is as apt to draw from a Philip Larkin poem, from Proust, or from a Nabokov novel as from Kant and Nietzsche” (*Richard Rorty* 3). Guignon further avers that Rorty’s book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* “is in some sense a god that failed book for Rorty” (*Richard Rorty* 3). He also explores the reason why the contemporary philosophy from Plato to Kant is unpopular because of analytical approach. Richard Rorty brought revolution in the domain of philosophy disregarding the philosophical boundaries and propounding his own philosophical assumptions in his seminal book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1990) breaking from the traditional approaches to philosophy and culture. He came under the influence of “Dewey, Heidegger and Wittgenstein calling them as therapeutic philosophers who set aside rather than argue against traditional epistemology and metaphysics” (6). Rorty expressed his doubt about the relevance and applicability of the non-Western philosophy and gave his own pragmatism to solve the contemporary malaise afflicting modern man in this universe. The influence of Richard Rorty in the domain of philosophy is tremendous as his philosophical ideas go beyond the professional academic philosophy. Rorty is known for his originality and provides a new perspective that is interesting and valuable. He is the father of postmodern pragmatism. Rorty is a champion of liberalism and democratic reforms. Rorty followed Dewey but at the same time he deviated from the philosophical assumptions of Dewey in dealing with the problems of philosophy in terms of words and sentences. Rorty is an enthusiastic thinker who advocates cultural

exchange with non-Western philosophy and expressed his ideas against parochialism of Western philosophy. He expressed his discontentment for the boundary between the analytic and old philosophic traditions. He observed that people were “following the ideas of Heidegger blindly to gain respectability within Anglo-American philosophy” (Guignon *Richard Rorty* 401). At the very outset of his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty discusses the issue of epistemology and metaphysics and the gulf that exists between analytic philosophy and pragmatic philosophy. Rorty claimed that “the difference between analytic and other sorts of philosophy is relatively unimportant—a matter of style and tradition rather than a difference of method or of first principle” (8). In the *Preface* to his book he observes thus:

Almost as soon as I began to study philosophy, I was impressed by the way in which philosophical problems appeared, disappeared or changed shape, as a result of new assumptions or vocabularies. From Richard Mckeon and Robert Brumbaugh I learned to view the history of philosophy as a series of alternative solutions to the same problems, but of quite different sets of problems. From Rudolph Carnap and Carl Hempel I learned how new pseudo-problems could be revealed as such by resisting them in the formal mode of speech. From Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss I learned how they could be so revealed being translated into Whiteheadian or Hegelian terms. (11)

Wittgenstein and Davidson advocated a holistic attitude towards the use of language. They observed that there is no language use without justification and no ability to argue what beliefs have. But Rorty argues that the beliefs and desires can be easily expressed in specific language and what is required is ability to use language effectively. Balkin observed that “Rorty is famous for his ecumenical approach; he has the philosophical potential to piece together ideas with his self-professed talent for bricolage” (*Deconstructive Practice and Legal* 23). Rorty’s ambition was to integrate all the ideas of non-Western philosophers in the reservoir of philosophy. He embraced the non-Western philosophy and enlarged the horizon of the domain of philosophy. Rorty has injected a bold antifoundationalist view and excited philosophical debates in literary theory. He highlighted the responsibility of America

as a global power for the promotion of peace and stability. Rorty's book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is "a critique of language, truth, science, morality and politics. He contends that truth is no longer seen as a relation to reality, but instead as a feature of our interactions with one another. In his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty described the truth as warranted assertibility" (176).

The Modern Origins of Epistemology

Rorty observes that in the ancient times, philosophy was "queen of the sciences" as philosophy was considered as a synthesis of knowledge. Knowledge was considered good for human life and knowledge was used for the betterment of society. He referred to Darwin who brought tremendous transformation in all fields of life. Hobbes and Descartes condemned the modern sciences which destroyed the ancient system of philosophy. Today the philosophy has become the syllabus for the schools and is no longer relevant to solve the existential problems of modern man. Rorty has taken the plausible view of the new modern sciences. Descartes made serious efforts to understand the efforts of modern philosophers to come to terms with the distinction between mind and body. He gave supreme position to mind "and this led him to assign to the mind everything intentional and phenomenal" (4). Richard Rorty comments thus:

Descartes, Locke, and Kant had written in a period in which the secularization of culture was being made possible by the success of natural science. But by the early twentieth century the scientists had become as remote from most intellectuals as had the theologians. Poets and novelists had taken the place of both preachers and philosophers as the moral teachers of the youth.(11)

Rorty gave a new direction to the intellectuals engaged in philosophical pursuits. Rorty believes that Descartes is the "father of modern philosophy" in the sense of his sharp division between mind and body. The system of philosophy took a new turn after a century when Kant appeared on the scene; he enters a philosophical world dominated by the problem of epistemology. Kant was disgusted with the failure of philosophy and this led to his Copernican Revolution. Kant argued that philosophy

must take into consideration space, time, substance and causality also. These external forces greatly impact the mind of man and play crucial role in bringing changes in the society. The key to the approach of Kant is his distinction between two types of mental representations: concepts and intuitions. Kant saw his predecessors as either empiricists or rationalists. He argued that both categories of philosophers failed to realize that an experience of an object requires both conceptual and intuitive elements. Rorty argues that “Kant restored philosophy to an autonomous and privileged position in the domain knowledge. The function of philosophy is to give the answers to the problems that confront man” (4). There are certain areas of truth to which philosophy alone had access. Philosophy is the queen of all branches. Rorty observes thus:

Philosophy is no longer, as in ancient times, the culmination of human knowing. Rather, it is the foundation of human knowing, providing the ultimate justification of all epistemic claims and adjudicating conflicts between rival bodies of alleged knowledge. (123)

Rorty argues that epistemology has taken many forms; the main target of Rorty is on naive foundationalism for which there is no knowledge except the information supplied by philosophical institution and argument. The historians of modern philosophy have disagreed with the interpretations of thinkers such as Descartes, Hume and Kant. No scientific knowledge is relevant and applicable without a philosophical vindication. Rorty believes that philosophy plays vital role in the growth of culture and society as he says:

The only examples which I can think of are the distinctions between finite and infinite, between human and divine, and between particular and universal. Nothing, we intuit, could cross those divides. But these examples do not seem very helpful. We are inclined to say that we do not know what it would be for something infinite to exist (33).

Rorty’s critique of epistemology is a questioning of three central modern assumptions:

- 1) That truth is a matter of a special relationship of representation between mind and world
- 2) That justification is a matter of special experiments that ground this special relationship
- 3) That philosophy is required because it alone can explicate the special relationship that defines truth and decides the role of a philosopher in the society.

Rorty maintains that there is no theory of truth and justification has nothing to do with experiences. Philosophy must free itself from the chains of the nihilistic beliefs. In the part one, Rorty bluntly rejects the Kantian aim of making philosophy scientific. Rorty argues thus: “The growth of modern scientific culture motivates the philosopher to conform to an intellectual culture dominated by science. He argues that Kantian aim will lead philosophy down the path of insularity, and detract from its ability to play its part in cultural politics” (67). Rorty denies that “philosophy has a historical essence. He avers that philosophy is a genealogical linkage connecting certain past figures with certain present figures...an ancestral relation of overlapping fibres” (67). The critique of Rorty follows from his critique of the Cartesian picture of the self. In part 1 of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty argued that there is nothing necessary or intuitive about the Cartesian conception of the mental. For Rorty, “knowledge is simply successful coping or what society allows us to get away with saying or what enquiry for the moment is leaving alone” (13).

Contextualizing the Problem of Truth

In his book Rorty seriously deals with the question of truth. He explored the nature of truth investigating the theories and views given by various philosophers since the time of Plato. Rorty argues that truth is something beyond the ultimate outcome that conversation. Rorty comments thus: “nothing counts as justification unless by reference of what we already accept...there is no way to get outside our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other than coherence”(178). Rorty observes that man has failed to evolve a satisfactory theory of truth in spite of philosophizing of

2500 years. Modern philosophers are engaged to deliberate upon metaphysical realism and not on the project of the evolution of a concrete theory of truth. There are two things; one the -thing- in itself and the other the things-as-they-appear to be. What human beings are aware are ideas and what we need to know is truth. Rorty believes that Truth is supreme in the universe and reality is changeable. Taylor observes that very often knowledge doesn't correspond to reality. When we explore the reality we often find ourselves "at grips with a world of independent things" Rorty balked at "speaking truth and objectivity as characteristics of even most favourable epistemic situations. He condemned for example, the absurdity of thinking that the vocabulary used by present science, morality, or whatever has some privileged attachment to reality which makes it more than just a further set of descriptions" (361).

Richard Rorty on Knowledge and Truth

Rorty has provoked controversy by declaring that the death of philosophy should be celebrated. He was never happy with the label of "death-of philosophy theorist." He was unhappy to find that the view of philosophy has narrowed down. Rorty has underlined the major philosophical problems such as the nature of knowledge, the mind-body problem and the question of whether moral values are objective. The philosophical inquiry is generally considered conceptual and not empirical but today there is no consensus on what are the problems of philosophy. In truth the philosophers are not clear about the problems of philosophy and these developments don't surprise Rorty who thinks about "analytic philosophy." He thinks that his account of the inner logic of the analytic movement in philosophy has been confirmed by events. In his famous book *The Linguistic Turn*, Rorty questioned the popular view that "analytic philosophy provides philosophers with new and more scientific methods for solving traditional problems of philosophy. Rorty is known for his radical views as a postmodern philosopher of America" (123)

He published *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1970) a collection of essays and *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* which excited the interest of the critics and the contemporary philosophers. His arguments provoked not just criticism but outrage.

Rorty became a controversial philosopher but many of the philosophers praised him for his pragmatic approach.

Richard Rorty and the Tradition in Philosophy

Rorty breaks the tradition of philosophy and propounded his famous and controversial “therapeutic philosophy.” He observes that “out canonical problems of philosophy are to be set aside rather than solved in a theoretical manner. He expresses his debts to therapists like Wittgenstein and Austin but he differs from them as he lays emphasis on the historical origins of philosophical problems.” (123). Rorty argues that philosophical problems are not perennial. The current problems of “philosophy are artifacts of a historically contingent hence optional, constellation of ideas. Prominent in this constellation are certain conceptions of knowledge is representation of truth” (113). Rorty explored the functioning of Cartesian mind and the philosophical ideas of Locke and observed that the methods of Locke are empirical in nature. His new form of scepticism forces him to take a subjective turn seeking certainty from within. Rorty argues that rationalist metaphysics is an exercise of dogmatism. Rorty also mentions transcendental idealism of Kant to react against the rationalist dogmatism. Kant holds that,

Philosophy helps man to seek the objective view of the world. The existence of God in this universe is an empirical issue. Such matters, because they lie outside the scope of the conditions of objective knowability remain matters of judgement or faith. Kant offers an understanding of philosophy as a rigorous discipline distinct from both speculative metaphysics and empirical psychology. (Rorty123)

Rorty further observes thus:

With Kant, we get our first clear view of epistemology as a non-empirical discipline that determines the cognitive status of all other subjects: that is, whether or not they can understand as aiming at objective knowledge. (123)

Descartes and Kant provide the suitable answer to this question since they have explored the limits of objective knowledge. They have investigated the difference between rational and scientific way of analysis and the role of scepticism in any inquiry. Nobody can deny that philosophy is a part of culture and the history of philosophy is connected with the growth of civilization. Rorty argues that the analytic philosophy of Dummett and Frege is as much revolutionary as the philosophy of Descartes. He laid the foundation of epistemology- philosophy and thus Descartes transformed philosophy but Kant gives the Cartesian revolution and his approach is scientific and sophisticated.

Pragmatism and Truth: Contribution of Richard Rorty

Rorty has depicted the basic theme in his book but other innovative ideas about the modern relevance of philosophy are emphasized in other books of Rorty. Rorty claims that the fundamental error of philosophical tradition and the basic idea is that truth is closely linked with reality. The deep root of the quest for truth lies in the urge of human beings that something is greater than ourselves. Rorty expresses his firm view in the existence of God. His religious approach is positive as he believes that truth is God. He argues that “The focus on truth reflects an increasing self-identification with pragmatism. He holds that truth is not the sort of thing that we can usually theorize about”(113). James observes that human beings look at truth in action and identifies the true with what is good in the way of belief” (*Jacques Derrida, Lévi-Straus* 13). He argues that we should forget metaphysical accounts of truth. Rorty observes that the theory of pragmatism was given by Davidson. Quine, Sellars and Davidson have divergent views on the pragmatic nature of philosophy. Quine is critical of the analytic philosophy but Sellars talks of natural sciences especially physics which explores the hard facts of life and the universe. He argues that physics get at hard facts or “the ultimate nature of reality.” Rorty and Derrida condemn the claim of truth. They argue that “the truth validity can be questioned highlighting the bankruptcy of all the epistemology, The need of today is resolve the contradictions of linguistic philosophy. Rorty is renowned for his ecumenical approach as he loves to piece together with the “talent for bricolage” (*Deconstructive Practice and Legal Theory* 195). Rorty further observes thus:

Moreover the philosophical ideas of Zhuangzi, the Samkhya school, and Dōgen all seem rather more natural choices than the novelists and poets who did, from the mid-'80s onwards, become central to his work. Rorty's reputation for open-mindedness and readiness to step outside the analytic fold, the most compelling reason to think that Rorty would embrace non-Western philosophy is to be found at the very heart of his thinking. (230)

Rorty believes that in the contemporary times Philosophy has a major role to play. In this book Rorty evaluated the views of all the prominent philosophers from Plato to modern times and came to the conclusion that philosophy is not just bookish knowledge. Philosophy should not be confined to the departments of the University but should be read to overcome the serious problems of life. Philosophy has therapeutic effects on human beings. "Unlike the epistemological search for the objective truth, Rorty conceived the project of edification as having no terminating point, being rather an infinite *striving* for new descriptions which incorporate new points of view" (377).

Retrograde thinking is dangerous for society and Rorty argues that in political sphere retrograde ideas are common. Retrograde thinking blocks the progress of society and an enlightened critique of political institutions is essential. Philosophy has cultural significance and every kind of knowledge must appeal to the validating context of cultural assumption. Truth can be explored by the process of investigation. There could be no way to make sense of any theory that issued such a radical challenge to prevailing ideas. Rorty's takes up pragmatic approach as he mistrusts all those grand theories dealing with knowledge, history, and class-consciousness. Rorty claims himself to be postmodernist philosopher. He calls himself a postmodern bourgeois liberal.

Rorty argues that all the first order natural narratives are really all we possess so that any new attempt to tell the story of stories is a species of grand delusion. Rorty reviews the grand narratives of the past and comes to the conclusion that they have the elements of "Naturalized Hegelianism." In each classical text of the past

there is story telling interest and a fervent message to change the face of the society from the point of view of Absolute Reason or historical progress. He agrees with Habermas that man can learn any language of the world and Davidson is right in condemning the idea that the objective truth is meaningful in each form of art and literature. In Rorty's views the world is just a shadow of our discourse. Habermas is a useful philosopher as he wants to put philosophy in the service of human emancipation. Rorty sees Habermas's theory of "communicative reason" as a major step towards completing the tasks that Dewey began reforming the traditional concepts of philosophy. He wanted to use philosophical idea for the betterment of society and for the welfare of the democratic system.

In his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty condemns a number of ideas that have become a part of epistemological projects of philosophy. He believes that knowledge is an accurate representation of mental processes. A red thread is running in the book of Rorty based on the idea that knowledge is "cognition" by which he means that true knowledge always leads to a right path and is an eternal part of culture and civilization. Philosophy also is like science as it moves into the "right way" and for the betterment of society. Best knowledge deserves that name of science. Rorty believes the epistemology in any usual form is an expression of "cognitive concept of knowledge" Rorty observes thus: "Knowledge is distinguished from non-knowledge by its being caused in an appropriate way. That is why the notion of a theory of knowledge will not make sense unless we have confused causation and justification" (152). Rorty argues that knowledge has to be true but the main problem before a philosopher is to find out true belief and one which passes for true because it is so well justified. Passing for true doesn't make a statement true. Robert Brandon in his book *Rorty and his Critics* (2000) observed that "Rorty deviates from the old and the traditional pragmatic tradition of a theory of truth. True often doesn't have the same logical meaning as "justified" but the logical distinction between them makes no difference and can well be dropped" (233). Rorty maintains thus: "Knowledge is what we are justified in believing, then we will not imagine that there enduring constraints on what can count as knowledge. Justification is a social phenomenon rather than a transaction between the knowing subject and

reality”(9). Rorty says that “Kant advances in the direction of taking knowledge. Rorty goes all the way from presence and representation to an entirely linguistic and anti-representational view of knowledge. Real knowledge does not require a real something that transcend our belief in order to measure the cognitive quality of conversations. Knowledge revolves entirely within the discourse”(10). People believe in statements; they make statements depending on their likes and dislikes so real knowledge is a serious matter. Rorty explores the functional value of language and its association with knowledge and truth. He believes that nothing but a sentence can justify a sentence showing that a sentence is linked with an idea. The important thing is the social justification of belief which conditions the flow of social relations. There is no such thing as a justified belief as ideas differ and some are positive and some are negative ideas. Conversation is the right medium to explore and find out truth. Plato and Aristotle used this medium to acquire real knowledge. Language is a good medium to explore truth and to arrive at justified knowledge. He observes thus:

We have a variety of language games; the use of words in a language is determined by what he sometimes refers to as algorithms or programs. The input refers to as algorithms or programs. The input of these programs are themselves, tailored to the needs of a particular input-output function, a particular conversion of representation, and the output are ways of copying, ranging from technological strategies to emotional aesthetics, even spiritual attitudes. (370)

Rorty breaks from the traditional view of philosophy and denies truth as the ultimate aim of philosophy. His main contention is that we should think of inquiry, in science or any other area of culture and our focus should be on solving problems and not on exploration of truth. The discredited theory of truth alone makes us think of truth as the name of a goal. We conduct inquiry to get solutions of the existential problems; the area of inquiry is expanding everyday with the growth of science and technology and the nature of truth is also undergoing change. Like Habermas, Rorty rejects the correspondence theory of truth. He argues that such a theory is an objective illusion. Correspondence theories of truth lead to misunderstanding and the facts are distorted; Rorty gives his famous dictum about truth that “true for me but not for you” and

“true in my culture but not in yours” are pointless observations. It is often said “so is true, but not now” and truth differs from situation to situation. Truth for Rorty is a relative thing and may change from person to person. In his book *Truth and Progress Philosophical Papers* (1998), Richard Rorty observes thus: “On the other hand, justified for me but not for you makes perfect sense” (3). He is indebted to Donald Davidson as he realized that nobody can even try to specify the nature of truth. Davidson’s approach is pragmatic who says that it is important to be able to give definition of “true in a given natural language, one can profit from the arguments that there is no possibility of giving a definition of true that works for all languages” (12). Rorty argues that “truth is not a goal of inquiry and if truth is the nature of such a goal then there is no truth. Richard Rorty contends that freedom is more important than truth. Derrida and Foucault also expressed their faith in human freedom” (21).

Truth and Justification

The exploration of truth has been the main concern of all the philosophers of the world since antiquity. Plato, Aristotle explored truth in their own way and their approach had been socialistic, transcendental and cultural. The Greek thinkers believed that truth forms the basis of human thinking and anything going against truth must be discarded. Truth was linked with religion and the pursuit of truth was considered the pursuit of noble values of life which pillow human civilization. Truth is often tested and its justification is considered; a belief may be justified but not something that is true. Rorty followed the guidelines of Davidson and observed that the word true had no explanatory use and had only cautionary use. People use this to justify their actions but always justification of something is not true. Some philosophers use the word true as good, right and true and such uses are not justified. Rorty comments thus:

For any audience one can imagine a better-informed audience and also a more imaginative one- an audience that has thought up hitherto – undreamt-of alternatives to the proposed belief. The limits of justification would be the limits of language, but language (like imagination) has no limits. (22).

For Richard Rorty, the only difference between truth and justification which makes such a difference is the difference between the old and the new audience.

Anti-representationalism

Michael Dummett was the first philosopher who used the term anti-realism. He discussed the difference between realism and anti-realism. He characterized realism as the belief that statement of the disputed class is to be understood only by reference. Davis, K. commented in his book *Deconstruction and translation* that, “the difference between the realist and antirealist is a difference about the meaning of the disputed class of statements. So she claims that the theory of meaning is fundamental in the domain’ of philosophy. For a representationalist, making true and representing are interlinked relations” (12). The difference is the “anti-representationalist So both motions unfortunately believing that all our ideas are shaped by the language we use in common life. Davis insists that our language could not be out of touch with the reality any more than our bodies could” (12). It is useful to bring changes in language as the environment changes and the language is not static. It changes with the growth of science and technology. The notion of representationalist is expressed through the word “quark” and Rorty believes that the great scientists invert description of the world. Poets and political thinkers use their imagination and invert description of events and thus they go far away from reality. Rorty observes in his book *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989) thus: “But there is no sense in which any of these descriptions is an accurate representation of the way the world is in itself” Rorty doesn’t view knowledge as a method to explore reality but he investigates the ways of the people to develop habits of action for coping reality. He has also hinted at the controversies arising between the idealists and realists; between skeptics and anti-skeptics. An anti-representationalist thinks both sorts of controversies useless and pointless. Rorty is in favor of independent thinking and believes in free flow of ideas. Representation, reference and truth are the mediums to use the facts of life. Thomas Nagel is of the view that man cannot ignore such concepts as “representation” and “correspondence” as they are fundamental aspects of philosophical thought. Richard Rorty has his own way of explaining the reality. He observes thus: “Really talking about x is not the same as talking about real

x. “Really here is just a matter of placing the relative ignorance of the person being discussed in the context of the relatively greater knowledge claimed by the speaker” (94). Richard Rorty has taken the issue of anti-representationalist in his other books also. In his book *Objectivity Relativism and Truth* (1991), he observes thus “defining the role of anti-representationalists: Anti-representationalist thinks that there is no way to explain what determinate means in such context except by chanting one of a number of equally baffling words and so they see the realist use of determinate as merely incantatory” (5).

Change of Meaning

Rorty observes that in the postmodern society a philosopher is expected to know about all the typical concepts; he is expected to be conversant with the meanings of words. His empirical approach is appreciated but in reality the empirical approach doesn't produce conceptual change. Rorty claims that once we give up the notion of meaning we also give up the idea of reference. Rorty is of the view that meanings are important as they provide a way to explain the object and determine the significance of the object. Language gives a definite shape to the objects and our culture and literature is determined by the meanings of the objects. Poets and philosophers use different meanings of objects to articulate their thoughts. Concrete shape is given to the objects by the language. He points out thus: “That words gain their meaning from other words rather than by virtue of their representative character, and the corollary that vocabularies acquire their privileges from the men who use them rather than from their transparency to the real”(158). Rorty rejects the idea of distinction between meaning and significance. He doesn't think that the philosophers will ever discover about the nature of knowledge. There is no reference available to determine the nature of knowledge and on this point the historians and the anthropologists are helpless. Rorty outrightly rejects the theory of interpretation as he regards it misleading. The general theory of interpretation has created problems leading to the split between the essentialist and the anti-essentialist. Rorty, in his book *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth* (1991), accentuated that “Nothing could show that an x is what it is and no other things. For to be an x is roughly to be signified by the set of true sentences which contain the term x essentially” (15).

Pragmatism of Richard Rorty: A Break from the Tradition

Richard Rorty is known in the domain of philosophy as a rebel who breaks from the philosophical traditions. He argues that there is no language in the world which can translate reality in real words. The scientific approach can help to take us near reality but complete reality remains elusive. The struggle of a philosopher is to explore the “real nature of reality” Rorty observes that there is no such thing as “nature proper” and there is nothing formulated or framed according to the laws of nature. A philosopher can only struggle to find a criteria but it is not certain that what he finds is true and real according to the laws of nature. Robert Brandom in his book *Rorty and His Critics* (2000) observes thus: “but in addition the right criteria, somehow belonging to nature itself, and thus capable of leading us towards truth” (137). Nature may be the cause of the appearance; our conceptions may be the foundation of nature but no philosopher can claim that certain beliefs are better than others. Newton was a scientist, he got a bright idea of gravity but it is not possible to state how gravity motivated Newton to acquire the concept itself. The knowledge of science urges a philosopher to claim that he is closer to truth than yesterday and this feeling and confidence is misleading and illusive. The world has no way to tell us the solutions of problems confronting man; the conventions are just for the convenience of man. Truth is not the property of anyone in the world. Rorty comments thus: “Where there are no sentences there is no truth, that sentences are elements of human language and that human languages are human creations” (122). Reality only guides human beings to know that their representations are false or correct. Brandom observes thus: “In other words, reality can only let us know that our representations need to be improved, it can no longer be replaced by ever better once because they finally represent the world as it really is” (*Rorty and His Critics* 138). Pragmatism of Rorty is materialistic and postmodern; his ideas are in tune with the spirit of time. He has expressed his liberal consciousness breaking with the orthodox tradition of philosophy. The core of his pragmatic philosophy is his experimental spirit; he says that pragmatism would like to stick with which to beat the people who refuse to share their naturalism. A philosopher should have the courage to say that his antagonist is not “corresponding to the nature of things.” Rorty argues that all objects are already explored and contextualized. Beliefs never represent non beliefs and there is nothing

like absolute truth. Rorty is taking a pragmatic view keeping in mind the cultural transformation going on in the postmodern American society. He is unwilling to give up the naturalism of the scientific world and its physicalism. His approach is neo-Kantian and postmodern. Rorty takes a different view of matter, idea and self basing his arguments on pragmatism. All these metaphysical concepts have intrinsic value and are not dependent upon our activities of knowing. His argument is to consider truth and objectivity as useless. He puts faith on experience and belief. He defines pragmatism as “the view that there are no constraints derived from the nature of objects; the knowledge can only be assessed according to its practical or performative effects” (123). He praises William James and John Dewey as the greatest pragmatist thinkers in the American tradition.

Richard Rorty and Metaphysics

Richard Rorty is called an anti-metaphysician who has deconstructed the tradition of the Western philosophy. He is a staunch critic of realism formulating a thesis of Realism opposite to the Western traditions. He refuses to follow the ideas of a realist and affirms the alternative answer to the realistic problem. He argues that there are issues such as objectivity, knowledge or representation beyond our comprehension. He doesn't show any interest in the activity of “constructive philosophizing.” He is interested in a theory which can make sense of existing practices in the absence of an illusion. He has evolved his own metaphysical theory of philosophy based on nature, truth and objectivity. He defines the desire for objectivity as the desire to explore truth of human reality. He expressed his deep interest in metaphysics and epistemology that regulated the philosophy for centuries.

Ethnocentrism and Richard Rorty

Richard Rorty explores the link between anti-representationalism and political independence. He expressed his faith in liberalism and in democratic principles. He comments thus:

This is to open up encounters with other actual and possible cultures, and to make this openness central to its self-image. This culture is an

ethnos which prides itself on its suspicion of ethnocentrism- on its ability to increase the freedom and openness of encounters, rather than on its possession of truth. (2)

The main source of ethnocentrism of Richard Rorty is his pragmatic philosophy. He seeks inspiration from Dewey and Peirce and Hegel. He doesn't find any objectionable about ethnocentrism. He believes that the ethnos is at the centre of liberal democracy; the American society encourages freedom of people and supports openness. To conclude, Richard Rorty has brought revolution in the domain of Philosophy. He reviewed all the philosophical ideas of the Greek and the Western philosophers and evolved his own pragmatic theory in his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Rorty believes in liberalism and his philosophical ideas are based on the democratic principles. He believes that the function of philosophy is to serve society and philosophical ideas have cultural value. No society can survive without the growth of new ideas that can help man to confront with the existential problems of life. His views on truth, reality and anti-representationalism are revolutionary. He reviews the philosophical ideas of Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Descartes, Kant and Dewey in his book and explores the new currents in the domain of philosophy. Rorty puts faith in the language and believes that language alone can interpret our ideas and help to explain the subtle ideas. Rorty argues that the two traditions compliment rather than oppose each other. Rorty came under the influence of many thinkers such as Darwin, Kant James Heidegger, Bakhtin and Derrida. Rorty injected a bold vision in the philosophy from the perspective of pragmatism.

Chapter 4

The Dialectical Relationship between Truth and Falsehood in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*

Richard Rorty (1931-2007) occupies a prominent position in the domain of pragmatic philosophy in America. He is a postmodern philosopher like Frederic Jameson who holds a vital position who excited many philosophers of Europe and America. Richard Rorty devoted himself to explore the contingency of human situation in imitation of Plato and Hegel. He investigated in detail the rise of historical consciousness and investigated the philosophical views of the traditional thinkers to find out the solution of the contemporary malaise afflicting the modern man after the World War II. Rorty is one of the most important and interesting philosophers of America who brought tremendous change in the domain of philosophy. Rorty's *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989) is an interesting study of philosophical field of moral inquiry and morality. Rorty's arguments for the contingency of language, society and self are at once innovative and revolutionary. The critics of Rorty called him as "the man who killed truth" as he insisted that the idea of language as a mirror of nature must be discarded. He also scrapped the traditional idea about philosophy that it provides fundamental truths. Rorty evolved his own working democratic culture in a "post-truth era." Rorty argues that literature, philosophy and political thought are not the driving force in the society but all progress is the result of historical process and moral progress. He investigates the fundamental changes confronting modern man to create a just society where individuals can flourish and grow. Rorty wanted philosophy to be interpreted as literary criticism. Rorty has provided stimulating perspectives on pragmatism and liberalism in his book. It confirms Rorty's status as a uniquely subtle theorist, whose writing will prove revolutionary and unconventional. Richard Rorty in his book explores the social and philosophical significance of literature as contingency. He investigated each issue through the lens of practical inquiry and the first motivation of Rorty is the analysis of language.

Rorty's Main Venture: Exploration of Truth and Language

Rorty's book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* begins with the exploration of truth and its dialectical relationship with language. At the outset of the book Rorty is concerned with the problem of exploring the fundamental nature of truth and its eternal value in society and for the growth of civilization. The philosophers claim that the world is out there and truth is always valued in all societies since antiquity. Truth has pillowed human civilization and truth has been a source of moral and spiritual strength. Rorty, in his book *Truth and Progress* (1998), emphasised thus:

Truth cannot be out there-cannot exist independently of the human mind because sentence cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own unaided by the describing activities of human beings cannot. (1)

Rorty comments thus: "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" (*Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* 2). Rorty condemns the idea of Plato that contingency can be overcome by the search for truth. Nietzsche observes thus in his passion to explore Truth:

What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins. (qtd. in Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* 40)

Following the same line of arguments Rorty argues that "Old metaphors are constantly dying off into literalness, and then serving as a platform and foil for new

metaphors” (40). Rorty suggests the in order to explore the real truth man has to do away with the traditional understanding of the literal and the metaphorical as two different meanings or interpretations. Rorty further observes thus: “For most contemporary intellectuals, questions of ends as opposed to means-questions about to give a sense to one’s own life or that of one’s community-are questions for arts or politics, or both, rather than for religion, philosophy, or science” (*Truth and Progress*1). He wants human beings to see the way Davidson saw it: “not as the distinction between two sorts of meaning, nor as a distinction between two sorts on interpretation, but as a distinction between familiar and unfamiliar uses of noises and marks. The literal uses of noises and marks are the uses we can handle by our old theories. Our old theories about what people will say under various conditions. Their metaphorical use is the sort which makes us get busy developing a new theory”(40). Rorty contends that language has no meaning as he says: “To have a meaning is to have a place in a language game. Metaphors by definition do not” (41). Rorty further observes “Any attempt to state that meaning would be an attempt to find some familiar use of words-some sentence which already had a place in the language game-and, to claim that one might as we have that. But the unparaphrasability of metaphor is just the suitability of any such familiar sentence for one’s purpose” (42).

Influence of Martin Heidegger on Richard Rorty

Martin Heidegger greatly influenced the ideas and thoughts of Richard Rorty in the direction of process over permanence. In his book *Being and Time*, Heidegger gives his analysis of human existence. He expresses his claim that “the world is the condition we engage with and inhabit; it is constitutive of our lives. We are not to see the world simply as a physical object against which we are set as individual thinking subjects; rather we are being in the –world” (qtd. in Brandom *Rorty and His Critics* 2). Rorty agrees with Heidegger that “the quest for certainty, clarity, and direction from outside can also be viewed as an attempt to escape from time, to view *Sein* as something that has little to do with *Zeist*” (283). Rorty argues that Heidegger wanted to “recapture a sense of what time was like before it fell under the spell of eternity, what we were like before we became obsessed by the need for an overreaching context which would subsume and explain us-before we came to think of our relation

to Being in terms of power” (283). Rorty investigates the ideas of truth given by Heidegger and in his article “Universal and Truth” observes thus:

Philosophers know that what matters is literal truth, not a choice of phonemes, and certainly not metaphors. The literal lasts and empowers. The metaphorical—that which you neither argue about nor justify, that for which can find no uncontroversial paraphrase is important. It passes and leaves no trace. (*Universality and Truth* 4)

Davidson and Philosophy of Language

Rorty turns to Donald Davidson who considered language as tools of human society. Rorty views vocabularies as merely tools for coping with certain kinds of organism. In his “Introduction” to *Consequences of Pragmatism* Rorty observes thus: “Physics is a way of trying to cope with various bits of the universe; ethics is a matter of trying to cope with other bits. Mathematics helps physics do its job; literature and the arts help ethics do” (359). Rorty confirms: “To say that one’s previous language was inappropriate for dealing with some segment of the world (for example, the starry heavens above, or the ranging passions within) is just to say that one is now, having learned a language, able to handle that segment more easily” (*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* 78). He is of the view that it is very difficult to “escape from the contingency of human language in human society. The foundation of society is language; it is the medium of correspondence. Man can give his ideas and meanings only through language that can respond to reality. Language is a human faculty of communication that can never translate reality in words” (13). Rorty talks of the old and obsolete vocabularies of the ancestors in his book *Philosophy and Social Hope*:

So we say that the vocabulary of Greek metaphysics and Christian theology—the vocabulary used in what Heidegger has called the ontological tradition was a useful one for our ancestors’ purposes, but that we have different purposes, which will be served by employing a different vocabulary. Our ancestors climbed up a ladder which we are now in a position to throw away...not because we have reached a final

resting place, but because we have different problems to solve than those which perplexed our ancestors. (360)

Rorty argues that the language changes from time to time and language can never be perfect and is not at all objective. No language is perfect and a true medium of truth in any sense since “the world does not of itself suggest a language by which to describe it” (1). Rorty observes thus:

We need to make a distinction between the claim that the world is out there and the claim that the truth is out there. To say that the world is out there, that it is not our creation, is to say, with common sense, that most things in time and space are the effects of causes which do not include human mental states. To say that truth is out there is simply to say that where there are no sentences elements of human languages and that human languages are human creations. (5)

Rorty has explored the relationship between truth and reality and the role of language in understanding the truth. “The world does not speak. Only we do. The world can, once we have programmed ourselves with a language for us to speak. Only other human beings can do that. The realization that the world does not tell us what language games to play should not, however, lead us to say that a decision about which to play is arbitrary, nor to say that it is the expression of something deep within us” (11). Language is not simply human communication; statements and descriptions about the world. But “true representation of reality does not conform to the ideas of truth and falsehood in the same way as our linguistic practices do” (6). Rorty gives a new view wherein “relationship of language to the world is a casual mode instead of a representative or expressive model” (15). Rorty argues that “languages do not progress toward an accurate description of reality but rather they evolve into a complex set of descriptions it makes perfectly good sense” (15). In this sense languages are “made” instead of “found”(7). These languages are called vocabularies or different set of descriptions. Richard Rorty turned to the prominent philosophers to seek inspiration. Rorty argued that philosophy taught in colleges and universities has become sterile and irrelevant. The true function of philosophy is

redefining the meaning of life, But the academic philosophy has promoted doubt and despair in the world promoting confusion and scepticism:

The notions of criteria and choice (including that of arbitrary choice) are no longer in point when it comes to changes from one language game to another. Europe did not decide to accept the idiom of Romantic poetry, or of socialist politics, or of Galilean mechanics. That sort of shift was no more and act of will than it was the result of argument. Rather, Europe gradually lost the habit of using certain words and gradually acquired the habit of using others. (11)

Rorty explores the mystical ideas of Proust, Nietzsche and Nabokov and their observation about reality and truth. Rorty talks of the wave of scepticism which gripped the psyche of the people of Europe and America and the growth of new philosophical ideas and new vocabularies:

Sceptics like Nietzsche have urged that metaphysics and theology are transparent attempts to make altruism look more reasonable than it is. Yet such sceptics typically have their own theories of human nature. They, too, claim that there is something common to all human beings—for example, the will to power, or libidinal impulse. Their point is that at the deepest level of the self there is no sense of human solidarity, that this sense is mere artefact of human civilization. So such sceptics become antisocial. (6)

Rorty depicts the dismal picture of the university departments which are not serious to explore the meaning and importance truth and are obsessed with their private jargon games. The faculties of universities are dealing with “pseudo-problems” engaged in political issues of the day. Rorty took keen interest in analytic tradition and boldly addressed the issues and problems confronting modern man in his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* making a foray into literature, philosophy and aesthetics. Rorty argues that “truth is no more and no less than what can be framed with language” (2). Rorty further observes thus: “Truth cannot be out there; cannot exist independently of the human mind because sentences cannot so exist, or be out

there but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world in its own-aided by the describing activities of human beings-cannot” (10). In his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* Rorty gives a detailed analysis of disparate writers such as Proust, Nabokov, Derrida and Nietzsche, Orwell and Heidegger in 92 pages of the book. Rorty observes that Proust is to produce “a network of small, interanimating contingencies” (100). He derives the insight that the great problem of irony is to show the vocabulary of others is limited. He explores Heidegger’s basic problem to understand the progressive role of language and its potential to open new possibilities to explore truth. Rorty argues that Nietzsche and Heidegger are historicists and “slayers of metaphysical chimeras”. He took inspiration from their concept of irony and learnt its significance. Rorty is very frank in his approach insisting on his own contingency. He wants people to believe that his words have no more truth than anyone else’s. He expresses his views on truth thus:

It has helped us substitute Freedom for Truth as the goal of thinking and of social progress. But even after this substitution takes place, the old tension between the private and the public remains. Historicists in whom the desire for self-creation, for private autonomy, dominates still tend to see socialization as Nietzsche did. (6)

Rorty traces the history of philosophy observing that it was Nietzsche who suggested that the whole idea of “knowing the truth.”

Nietzsche and Language as Metaphors: Critique of Richard Rorty

Richard Rorty investigates the ideas of Nietzsche who explores the use and significance of metaphors used in language. He believes that language is the foundation of human civilization and it is the representation of man’s “intellectual and moral progress becomes a history of increasingly useful metaphors rather than of increasing ill –understanding of how things really are” (40). Rorty relies on the arguments of Nietzsche’s well known image of truth as a “mobile army of metaphors” (40). Human beings struggled to achieve self-knowledge but they were not able to know the truth which was out there all the time. Self-knowledge is considered as self –creation. Rorty is seriously concerned about the value of freedom

and creation of utopias. He investigated the various vocabularies and investigates the meta-vocabulary prevailing in the world. He observes thus:

A historicist and nominalist culture of the sort I envisage would settle instead for narratives which connect the present with the past, on the one hand, and with utopian futures, on the other. More important, it would regard the realization of utopias, and the envisaging of still further utopias, as an endless process—an endless, proliferating realization of Freedom, rather than a convergence towards an already existing Truth. (8)

Richard Rorty continues the arguments of Nietzsche stating that “Old metaphors are constantly dying off onto literalness, and then serving as a platform and foil for new metaphors” (40). Rorty argues that modern man must do away with the traditional ill-understanding of the literal and the metaphorical as two different meanings or interpretations. Rorty wants people to see it the way Davidson saw it: “not as the distinction between two sorts of meaning, nor as a distinction between two sorts on interpretation, but as a distinction between familiar and unfamiliar uses of noises and marks. The literal uses of noises and marks are the uses we can handle by our old theories about what people will say under various conditions. Their metaphorical use is the sort which makes us get busy developing a new theory” (40). For Rorty language in Rorty’s philosophy do not have meaning. He puts this point boldly by saying that “to have a meaning is to have a place in a language game. Metaphors by definition, do not” (40).

The Self-Creating Self

Rorty believes Nietzsche was the first philosopher who suggested to drop who the whole idea of "knowing the truth." His definition of truth as a "mobile army of metaphors amounted to saying that the whole idea of representing reality by means of language, and thus the idea of finding a single context for all human lives, should be abandoned” (14). He comments thus: "this process of coming to know oneself, confronting one's contingency, tracking one's causes home, is identical with the process of inventing a new language—that is, of thinking up some new metaphors”

(250). Nietzsche taught the people that man should believe in the copies of someone's story or model. There is always a difference between the will to truth and the will to self-overcoming. Nietzsche describes it "recreating all it was into a thus I willed it" (250). Plato declared that truth is thrice removed from reality. He contends that the Ideal is real manifestation of Truth but art and literature is the imitation of an imitation. Rorty has high regard for the idealist of Germany and the Romantic poets who rejected the external reality but in their spiritualization of the Self. Rorty explores the relevance of Hegel's "absolute", Nietzsche's "will to power" and Heidegger's "being" in the modern context. He believes that philosophy has done best in the context of modern society. Rorty follows Marcel Proust who wanted to create his paradise out of contingency, out of his self alone and wanted to find out his identity. In his book, the metaphor of notion of beauty versus sublime is recurrent. He argues that there is a perennial hankering after the sublime by the metaphysicians. Marcel Proust is willing to settle for the merely beautiful. Proust "had put the events of his own life in his own order, made a pattern out of all the little things...his job was done" (15).

Rorty continues his investigation of beauty and truth like John Keats of the Romantic Age. He observes thus: "Beauty, depending as it does on giving shape to a multiplicity (of little things), is notoriously transitory....Beauty requires a frame, and death will provide that frame" (15). Rorty continues his arguments and observes that "sublimity is neither transitory, relational, reactive nor finite" (17). Rorty observes that Nietzsche and Heidegger have constantly endeavored to seek sublimity and not just beauty. He is also tempted for one big hidden reality and not just a pattern among appearances. He comments thus: "To try for the sublime is to try to make a pattern out of the entire realm of possibility, not just of some little, contingent realities" (40). In his Robert Brandom article called "Universality and Truth" published in *Rorty and His Critics* (2000) discusses the beauty and sublimity metaphor and observes thus: "On my view, truth is just such an object. It is too sublime, so to speak, to be either recognized or aimed at. Justification is merely beautiful, but it is recognizable....Sometimes, with luck, justification is even achieved, even if temporarily" (23). Richard Rorty gives a critique of the ideas of Nabokov and

George Orwell observing that the political ideas of Nabokov are “topical trash.” Orwell was a courageous author of clumsy allegories and Nietzsche struggled to investigate the nature of reality opposing the liberal politics of J.S. Mill. He comments thus: “The world does not speak. Only we do. The world can, once we have programmed ourselves with a language, cause us to hold beliefs. But it cannot propose a language for us to speak” (40). Rorty quotes scriptures observing that “truth is great and will prevail. Truth will always win in a free and open society” (40). Rorty comments thus:

The method is to redescribe lots and lots of things in new ways, until you have created a pattern which will tempt the rising generation to adopt it, thereby causing them to speak to look for appropriate new forms of nonlinguistic behaviour, for example, the adoption of new scientific equipment or new social institutions. (9)

Richard Rorty and his Liberal Ironism

Rorty also discusses the ironic perspective on self and culture that open the scope of pragmatic approach. In the first section of his book *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* Richard Rorty examines the conceptions of contingency of language and vocabularies and then he proceeds to examine ironism. Rorty observes that one major difference between the traditional philosopher and the ironist is that while the former gives undue importance to the logical arguments, the later sees argument simply as a matter of rhetoric. Rorty comments thus: “The ironist thinks that such arguments—logical arguments are very well in their way, and useful as expository devices, but in the end not much more than ways of getting people to change their practices without admitting that they have done so” (150). Rorty defines an ironist as “...someone who fulfils three conditions: (1) She has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses, because she has been impressed by other vocabularies, vocabularies taken as final by people or books she has encountered; (2) she realizes that argument phrased in her present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve these doubts; (3) insofar as she philosophizes about her situation, she does not think

that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself” (73). Rorty opposes the ironist’s continual doubts about her final as he says:

To be commonsensical is to take for granted that statements formulated in... [the final vocabulary to which the non-ironist is habituated], suffice to describe and judge the beliefs, actions and lives of those who employ alternative final vocabularies. (74)

More important than the distinction between ironism and common sense is Rorty’s opposition between ironism and metaphysics. Realizing the contingency of language, however, “the ironist does not subscribe to the notion of essential, unchanging natures, which can be uncovered by rational deliberation within language games; the ironist is both nominalist and historicist” (74). Rorty explores the meaning and significance of Truth thus: “Truth is independent of the human mind. For “the ironist, searches for a final vocabulary are not destined to converge. For her, sentences like” (123).

All men by nature desire to know or Truth is independent of the human mind are simply platitudes used to inculcate the local final vocabulary... She is an ironist just insofar as her own final vocabulary does not contain such notions. Her description of what she is doing when she looks for a better final vocabulary than the one she is currently using is dominated by metaphors of making rather than finding, of diversification and novelty rather than convergence to the antecedently present. She thinks of final vocabularies as poetic achievements rather than as fruits of diligent inquiry according to antecedently formulated criteria. (76–77)

The Contingency of a Liberal Community

Rorty promotes the ironist stance because it is based on his liberal conception of society. He argues that contemporary liberal culture is a developing and language is a human construct. Rorty defines a liberal society thus:

A liberal society is one whose ideals can be fulfilled by persuasion rather than force, by reform rather than revolution, by the free and open encounters of present linguistic and other practices with suggestions by new practices. But this is to say that an ideal liberal society is one which has no purpose except freedom, no goal except a willingness to see how encounters go and to abide by the outcome. It has no purpose except to make life easier for poets and revolutionaries while seeing to it that they make life harder for others only by words and not deeds. (61)

Like Sartre, Rorty believes in liberalism and supports the growth of democratic liberalism. He argues that in a liberal society each individual is given an opportunity to grow and contribute to the growth of culture. He highlights the fears of nihilistic tendencies:

Liberal societies have produced more and more people who are able to recognize the contingency of the vocabulary in which they state their highest hopes-the contingency of their own consciences-and yet have remained faithful to those consciences. (46)

Rorty investigates the liberal and romantic ideas of the Romantics of the Victorian Age. Rorty intensively investigated the role of the great Romantic poets and explored their view of Truth. Rorty believes that the Romantics really explored the nature of Truth in the Victorian Age. Their view of Truth was transcendental and metaphysical far away from the worldly reality. He observes thus:

What the Romantics expressed as the claim that the imagination, rather than reason, is the central human faculty was the realization that a talent for speaking differently, rather than for arguing well, is the chief instrument of cultural change. What political utopians since the French Revolution have sensed is not that an enduring, substantial human nature has been suppressed or repressed by unnatural or irrational social institutions but rather that changing languages and other social practices may produce human beings of a sort that had

never before existed. The German idealists, the French revolutionaries, and the Romantic poets had in common 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. (7)

At the outset of the chapter, Rorty addresses the critics who accuse him of irrationality and moral relativism. He defends himself by saying that the contemporary society believes in liberalism and with the growth of science and technology it is not possible to continue with old and obsolete ideas. Rorty discusses in detail his vision of liberal utopia. He doesn't give any argument for liberalism but he simply states that the people of democratic countries are becoming liberal. They are free to communicate freely and for them the interests of personal welfare has supreme importance. The crux of Rorty's argument here lies in his assertion that metaphysical foundations, whether religious or philosophical, are not in fact what hold liberal societies together. He observes thus:

What binds societies together are common vocabularies and common hopes and in the case of liberal society specifically social hope, the hope that life will eventually be freer, less cruel, more leisured, richer in goods and experiences, not just for our descendants but for everybody's descendants. (86)

Rorty supports the liberal society as there is a scope of social cooperation and redemption of an individual. Rorty comments thus:

The only way in which science is relevant to politics is that the natural scientists provide a good example of social cooperation, of an expert culture in which argumentation flourishes. It is certainly the case that some results of empirical enquiry have, in the past, made a difference to our self-image. Galileo and Darwin expelled various kinds of spooks by showing the sufficiency of a materialist account of getting rid of spooks...has exhausted the utility of natural science for either redemptive or political purposes. (2)

Rorty believes that only in a liberal society the problems of human beings are solved as man gets the moral strength to confront dilemmas and challenges of life. Rorty charts out the map of the liberal society in these words: “A free society doesn’t mean free from ideology but rather points to simply the sort of discussion that goes on when the press, the judiciary, the elections, and the universities are free, social mobility is frequent and rapid, literacy is universal, higher education is common, and peace and wealth have made possible the leisure necessary to listen to lots of different people and think about what they say” (24). Thus the liberal societies perpetuate independent institutions for the growth and prosperity of the individuals.

Richard Rorty and his Vision of Liberal Utopia

Rorty has given the concept of “liberal utopia” observing that liberal political societies are the best for the welfare of the people. He says: “the search for a single utopian form of political life—the Good Global Society” (104). Rorty has discussed how a liberal society achieves a system of liberal literary culture for the welfare of human beings and for the growth of democratic political institutions. Rorty proceeds to explore the methods which “chance for fulfilment of idiosyncratic fantasies will be equalized” (12). Jürgen Habermas also raised doubts concerning ironism. Briefly, Foucault points out that people are subjugated in a liberal society and there are no equal opportunities for the lower classes of people. Rorty has responded well to the criticism of liberalism of Habermas and Foucault. Rorty believes that institutions could ever embody the “sort of autonomy which self-creating ironists like Nietzsche, Derrida, or Foucault seek” (65). In the liberal society there is freedom of public debates and deliberations and this step leads to the growth and development of civilization: “To realize the relative validity of one’s convictions and yet stand for them unflinchingly, is what distinguishes a civilized man from a barbarian” (46). Rorty argues that the growth of liberalism is best suited for the growth of human civilization: “But I still think that the end of democracy is a likely consequence of nuclear terrorism, and I do not know how to guard against this danger. Sooner or later some terrorist group will repeat 9/11 on a much grander scale. I doubt that democratic institutions will be resilient enough to stand the strain” (3)

Implications for Morality

In the last section of the book, Rorty discusses the implications of morality in a liberal utopia. He explores the vision of morality of John Dewey and Immanuel Kant in his venture to give his philosophical observations about morality and its significance in a democratic free society. Rorty's assertion of the contingency of language is linked with his concept of 'truth'. He argues that self-discovery is in fact the other name of "self-creation" ([27]). Rorty observes that human activity is crucial in a liberal society and there is always a process of becoming free and to achieve identity: "The process of coming to know oneself, confronting one's contingency is identical with the process of inventing a new language for any literal description of one's individuality, which is to say any use of an inherited language-game for this purpose, will necessarily fail" (28). Rorty discusses the view of morality of Nietzsche and Freud observing that it is through an understanding of Freud's conceptions of self and morality that man can learn to accept, and put to work the above described Nietzschean conception of what it means to be a full-fledged human being" (30). Rorty identifies Freud as the "moralist who helped de-divinize the self by tracking conscience home to its origin in the contingencies of our upbringing" (30). Significantly for Rorty it is to see "Freud this way is to see him against the background of Kant" (30). Rorty gives a critique of Kant's moral philosophy and its relevance in the modern society. Kant had claimed that "morality was like nothing else in the world-that it was utterly his distinctive." Rorty maintains "that all institutions about morality have the same contingent basis as all our other values and beliefs" (186). Rorty dismisses the notion of "universal moral principles" observing that "all a moral principle can possibly do is to abbreviate a range of moral institutions. Principles are handy for summing up a range of moral reactions, but they have independent force that can correct such reactions. They draw all their force from our institutions concerning the consequences of acting on them" (186). Rorty talks of "Reason, God and the concept of a law-giver" (187). Rorty talks of John Dewey and his moral ideas and the notion of morality of Kant. In the post-Darwinian view, Rorty observes thus:

All inquiry-in ethics as well as physics, in politics as well as logic-is a matter of reweaving our webs of beliefs and desires in such a way as to give ourselves more happiness and richer and freer lives. All our judgments are experimental and fallible. Unconditionally and absolutes are not things we should for...Darwinians cannot be at ease with the Kantian idea of a distinctively moral motivation, or of a faculty called Humanities. (323)

Rorty examines the role of reason and its role in the cooperative projects. He observes that the aim of philosophy to explore the nature of Truth. No other science can perform this function and help man to confront the existential realities. He observes thus:

To say that moral principles have no inherent nature is to imply that they have no distinctive source. They emerge from our encounters with our surroundings in the same way that hypotheses about planetary motion, codes of etiquette, epic poems, and all our other patterns of linguistic behavior emerge. Like these other emergents, they are good insofar as they lead to good consequences, not because they stand in some special relation either to the universe or to the human mind. (2)

Rorty explores Freudian views of emotions such as pity, compassion, rage and jealousy. He refers to Freudian view thus:

We prepare ourselves by weaving idiosyncratic narratives-case histories, as it were-of our success in self creation, our ability to break free from an idiosyncratic past. He suggests that “we condemn ourselves for failure to break free of that past rather than for failure to live up to universal standards. (33)

Moral discussion is basically self-reflexive venture.Rorty makes a distinction between a “private ethic of self-creation and a public ethic of mutual accommodation,” as well as Freud’s “account of unconscious support of Rorty’s own

emphasis on truth as being rather than made. Freud's subconscious is "in the greater part of its tendency, exactly a poetry-making faculty" (36). Rorty observes that, "life will eventually be freer, less cruel, more leisured, richer in goods and experiences, not just for our descendants but for everybody's descendants" (86). The other important issue is the role of solidarity which plays a complex role in Rorty's conception of a liberal utopia. He argues that solidarity plays a useful role for any person in a society. He concludes that "solidarity is always felt strong between members of specifically outlined groups" (191). He gives a graphic picture of human solidarity and moral progress thus: "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 the solidarity is not thought of as recognition of a core self, the human essence, in all human beings" (192). Rorty is in favour of liberal solidarity giving his preference to solidarity to objectivity. He believes that in a liberal utopia the process of lessening cruelty can be attained. The "narrative arts such as the reportage, novels, movies, TV and the other media instruments help to contain the scenes of cruelty in the liberal society" (25). These narratives help in creating solidarity in the liberal society. B. Douglas in his article: "Political Liberalism and Universalism: Problems in the Theories of David Gauthier and Richard Rorty" (1997) comments thus:

Rorty's ideal narrative is one which connects the present with the past, on the one hand, and with utopian futures, on the other. It would be a narrative that captures the imagination of the people, one with powerful poetic language, one that has the ability to pervade the culture, or even different cultures, and bring them all together as one of us. (3)

Rorty argues that narratives can sustain solidarity as he relies on the democratic structures and institutions that provide peace and stability in the society. Rorty observes that the Bible is the only narrative in the world that has integrated people from all continents. In Douglas's views "it can bear no witness to Rorty's idea of solidarity through narratives, for its appeal likely lay in its transcendent and thus enchanting quality" ("Political Liberalism and Universalism" 3). Douglas cites

examples of Martin Luther King's powerful speeches, the daily TV reports on human plight and injustice and indiscriminate, poverty and bomb blasts instilling sympathy in people and strengthening solidarity.

In his book *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* Richard Rorty explores serious questions relating to life, society, and democratic liberal utopia. He has explored the nature of truth and its relevance in the growth of man and his civilization. What matters to Rorty is not that man has discovered truth of things but because he has been able to give enough justification for one vocabulary to be replaced by another. He argues that justification should be the goal of man but not truth. Rorty has investigated and examined the philosophical observations of Nietzsche, Kant, Nobokov and all the important thinkers of the ancient and modern times on truth, morality and solidarity. Richard Rorty's *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* (2007) depicts the philosophical vision of Rorty as he tried to present literary scholars in a positive light. He argues that they contribute to poeticized culture. Rorty emerges as a neo-sophist, neo-Hegelian and leftist intellectual in his philosophical arguments. He fought against Platonists, realists and Kantian moral philosophers.

In his *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*, Rorty clearly observes that he sees philosophy not as autonomous but as a branch of knowledge which plays an important role for cultural development. Dewey agreed with Hegel that philosophers should contribute to the growth of humanity. Following Dewey, Rorty concentrated on the growth of cultural politics; he encouraged the philosophers of the world to work for the social and cultural hope of humanity. Dewey (1982) observes thus: "Philosophy is not in any sense whatever a form of knowledge but it is a social hope reduced to a working program of action, a prophecy of the future" (*Philosophy and Democracy* 43). Dewey argues that "the history of philosophy is best seen as a series of efforts to modify the people's sense of who they are and what is their attitude. Rorty agrees with Dewey and maintains, "Philosophers an eye to the possibility of changing themselves whether taking one side of social hopes, programmes of social hopes, programs of action, prophecies. It is important to grasp that the means he wants philosophy to men in a Deweyan sense" (*Philosophy and Democracy* 124). Rorty is known for his incisive critical analysis of the philosophical views of the

ancient and modern philosophers. He lashed at the traditional philosophers who failed to give hope and positive ideas for the development of democratic politics and culture. In his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* he “expressed his indebtedness to the great philosophers such as Dewey, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, and then lumped them together as therapeutic philosophers who set aside rather than argue against traditional epistemology and metaphysics” (5-7).

Rorty expressed his concern for the death of philosophy and dedicated himself to give a new impetus to the philosophical thoughts. He emerged as the paradigmatic and anti-philosopher of the twentieth century rejecting all the traditional concepts and ventured to transform the philosophical thoughts. David Hume wrote the massive *History of England* in six volumes and became famous in the world as a cultural critic. Richard Rorty wrote *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* and became famous as a postmodern philosopher of the twentieth century. The book is divided into three parts. The first part is called “Religion and Morality” The second part is called “Cultural Politics and the Question of God” and the third part is called “Philosophy's Place in Culture”. Rorty has taken the analytic view of philosophy. He discusses the philosophical ideas to explore the significance of religion, morality and democratic liberal ideas. He believes in free flow of ideas and in the open society where all people can participate for the development of self and culture. Rorty argues that philosophy is a branch which can solve perennial problems of life, society and culture. Social problems and political problems are relating to recent actions of society and the about the policies of the government but philosophy deals with mind, life and other metaphysical issues. Rorty investigates the philosophical views of the great Romantics who believed in imagination and emotional exuberance. He comments thus: “No imagination, no language. No linguistic change, no moral or intellectual progress. Rationality is games. Imagination creates the games is much more than a postmodern endeavour truly stimulating is that anti-Platonism, in its Shelleyan work of various twentieth-century philosophical ideas” (115). In his section entitled: “Pragmatism as Romantic Polytheism” Rorty reviews the philosophical observations of James, Nietzsche and John Stuart Mill. Nietzsche claims that human beings are called “clever animals”, Mill was a utilitarian thinker

and Nietzsche observes that there “is no will to truth distinct from the will to happiness. All these philosophers think that the terms true and right gain their meaning from their use in evaluating the relative success of efforts to achieve happiness” (36). Rorty explores the difference “between a pragmatist Platonic reason-passion distinction” (76). At the centre of his critique is “his concept and ideas of human soul” (80). He sought inspiration from John Dewey and explored the difference between appearance and reality. Rorty argued that most of the Western intellectuals have become materialists but Rorty defends his concept of high culture and argues: “The secularization of high culture has put us in the habit of thinking horizontally rather than vertically—figuring out how we might arrange for a slightly better future rather than looking up to an outermost framework or down into ineffable deaths” (88).

In his section “Philosophy as transitional Genre” Rorty expresses his views on the Western philosophy stating that “ 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 culture” (91). Hegel’s approach was serious as his system was based on truth and spirituality. He was a seeker of truth and wanted philosophy to bring moral and spiritual grandeur and happiness in the life of the people. Rorty contends: “Since Hegel’s time, the intellectuals have been losing faith in philosophy. This amounts to losing faith in the idea that redemption can in the form of true beliefs” (92). Rorty claims that in the modern world there is a separation from God and Truth. People today have rejected the supremacy of God and have become the seekers of Truth leading an alienated life. They are cut off from their roots of their ancestors. Hegel’s system was to depict the things as they were and he sought to fit everything in this context. Rorty argues that philosophy has to redefine and rethink its purpose as in his section “Naturalism and Quietism” he observes thus: “Philosophy is an almost invisible part of contemporary intellectual life” (147). His idea of a conversational, historicist, or hermeneutic philosophy offers a solution to this problem. Rorty believes that “philosophers, like other intellectuals, make imaginative suggestions for a redescription of human situation; they offer new ways of talking about our hopes and

fears, our ambitions and our prospects. Philosophical progress is thus not a matter of problems being solved, but of descriptions being improved” (133). This study examines the views of Rorty of liberalism and his contribution to the growth democratic liberalism and its justification in the growing culture based on human values and universalism. His political liberalism is a form of anti-foundationalism. He rejected the ideas that there are principles that exist independently of everyday practices.

The main thesis of Richard Rorty is that philosophy is the quest for the essence of Truth or Goodness and philosophy is what Sellars called “an attempt to see how things, in the broadest possible sense of the term, hang together, in the broadest possible sense of the term” (qtd. in Rorty’s *Consequences of Pragmatism* xiv). Rorty attempts to explore the findings of different culture. He argues in *Consequences of Pragmatism* that “foundationalism has become so central to philosophy that to repudiate the idea of foundations seems to repudiate philosophy itself” (xiv). Rorty believes that philosophy can help man to fulfil his needs and interests but this belief is inconsistent with his “anti-authoritarianism.” Philosophers have “the courage to clean up the mess by formulating new principles which justify their having compromised the old principles” (qtd. in *A Defence of Minimalist Liberalism*, 117). Rorty (1995), in his *Rorty and Pragmatism*, propounded the significance of philosophy in the daily life of man thus:

I agree with Marx that our job is to help make the future different from the past, rather than claiming to know what the future must necessarily have in common with the past. We have to shift from the kind of role that philosophers have shared with the priests and sages to a social role that has more in common with the engineers or the lawyers. (198)

Richard Rorty expresses his concern for the social and political problems of the American society. He expresses his views on the growing cruelty in the postmodern society. He believes that the lack of nutrition, education, housing and health care are forms of cruelty. He argues that the great novelists such as Dickens, Carlyle and

Ruskin contributed to contain cruelty in the Victorian Age. Charles Jones in his *Global Justice: Defending Cosmopolitanism* (1999) observed thus:

If we can sympathize with the plight of persons who are victims of torture in far away lands, why can we not also sympathize with those far off persons who lack access to basic nutritional requirements, adequate housing, education, and health care? That is, there is nothing in this argument that explains why expressions of concern should be limited to instances of cruelty. (146)

Rorty examines the political and utilitarian views expressed by J.S. Mill for the betterment of the Victorian people in his book. He argues that most of the political leaders and the philosophers are not serious about the use of cruelty; lack of education and the denial basic facilities in the society:

To give content to cruelty would be to give the priority to philosophy, or at least foundationalism over democracy. The democratic leaders only pin point what counts as cruel but the philosophers alone express their serious concern about the prevalence of cruelty like the novelists. (123)

Rorty puts the problem in his section “Pragmatism as Romantic Polytheism” of the book *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* (2007) thus:

Your devotion to democracy is unlikely to be wholehearted if you behave, as monotheists typically do, that we can have knowledge of an objective ranking of human needs that can over rule the result of democratic consensus. But if your devotion is wholehearted, then you will welcome the utilitarian and pragmatist claim that we have no will to truth distinct from the will to happiness. (27)

Richard Rorty discusses the utilitarian approach of Nietzsche and J.S. Mill in the second portion of his book. He discusses Dewey’s view of democracy who says in his book *The Middle Works of John Dewey* (1978) that “Democracy is neither a form of government nor a social expediency, but a metaphysic of the relation of man

and his experience in nature” (47). Rorty differs with Dewey as he says: “Suppose that a source you believe to be non-human tells you that all men are brothers, that the attempt to make yourself and those you cherish happier should be expanded into an attempt to make all human beings happy” (47). Rorty believes that liberalism and democratic principles are the gifts of Enlightenment. The Western philosophers have put faith in the equality and brotherhood of man. Political liberalism is the avoidance of cruelty as the Westerners believe.

Utilitarianism of Frederic Nietzsche

James and J.S. Mill advocated that every human need should be satisfied. This utilitarian approach became very popular in the Victorian Age and Jeremy Bentham also supported the utilitarian ideology. The religious thinker attacked the utilitarian philosophy as it pandered the animalistic emotions and passions. Human beings are not animals and materialistic pleasures are not enough for the betterment of man. J.S. Mill dedicated himself to achieve a process to gain the maximum happiness of the maximum people. William James, in his book *Varieties of Religious Experience*, discusses in detail romantic utilitarianism and says that: “the pivot round which the religious life revolves is the interest of the individual in his private personal destiny” (44). He repudiates the individualistic and personal point of view of the Utilitarian’s. It is against the spirit of science which gives a picture of nature that “has no distinguishable ultimate tendency with which it is possible to feel a sympathy” (44). Rorty argues that the utilitarianism of J.S. Mill and Bentham is a false philosophy and bad logic. Nietzsche also expressed his cynicism against the utilitarianism as it subverts the process of science and nature. Rorty defends his stance thus: “The driftings of the cosmic atoms are a kind of aimless weather, doing and undoing, achieving no proper history, and leaving no result” (44). Nietzsche has expressed his distrust thus: “Monotheism, this rigid consequence of the doctrine of one normal human type-the faith in one normal god beside whom there are only pseudo-gods was perhaps the greatest danger that has yet confronted humanity” (Rorty 47). William James, in his *Will to Believe* (1979), wrote thus about Mill: “Take any demand, however slight, which any creature, however weak, may make. Ought it not, for its

own sole sake, to be desired?"(149). Rorty discusses the concepts of Romantic utilitarian, pragmatism and polytheism in his book to investigate the role of these ideas in the democratic set up. It is often claimed that a philosopher who believes in the pragmatic theory of truth is controversial. Philosophy can help man to choose the right form of life and god. It is morally offensive to be blind to the anti -democratic forces. James and Dewey talk of fascism which is the death of democratic society. Rorty argues that anti-democratic forces destroy peace and stability of the world and in this situation directs people to find out a right direction for the welfare of society. He explores Platonism and argues that "the will to truth is distinct from the will to happiness. Human beings are divided between a quest for a lower, animal form of happiness and a higher, Godlike form of happiness" (48). He further observes thus:

In a democratic society, everybody gets to worship his or her personal symbol of ultimate concern, unless worship of that symbol interferes with the pursuit of happiness by his or her fellow citizens. Accepting that utilitarian constraint, the one Mill formulated in *On Liberty*, is the only obligation imposed by democratic citizenship, the only exception to democracy's commitment to honour the rights of individuals. (48)

Rorty believes that philosophy has often advanced not by the investigation of the role of philosophy in the human society. He repudiates crude and senseless intellectual approach as he goes on to point out that each human intellectual activity should be directed to improve the condition of society and to achieve democratic liberalism. He observes in *Consequences of Pragmatism* thus:

Hobbes did not have theological arguments against Dante's world-picture; Kant had only a very bad scientific argument for the phenomenological character of science; Nietzsche and James did not have epistemological arguments for pragmatism. Each of these thinkers presented us with a new form of intellectual life, and asked us to compare its advantages with the old. (156)

Rorty on Truth and Truthfulness

Rorty has discussed in detail his views on truth and truthfulness and its importance in life and society. Many critics claim that he is giving up on truth in the context of the postmodern society. Cheryl Misak (2000) emphasized, in his book *Truth, Politics, Morality: Pragmatism and Deliberation*, that: “Rorty thinks that the philosopher should happily jettison the notion of truth along other” (12). Hilary Putnam, in his book *Realism with A Human Face* (1994), took Rorty to be offering an “emotivist view of truth where truth as simply a complaint that we pay to beliefs we approved” (24). Habermas speaks of what he calls an “orientation toward unconditional truth” (48). Truth cannot serve as a goal of inquiry since there is no test of truth other than justification to a community of inquiries. Rorty doesn’t “define truth in terms of fragments since what is agreed upon may not be true. He talks of justification since we possess no criterion for achieving truth different from our criterion for achieving justification” (148). Robert B. Brandom in his book *Rorty and His Critics* (2000) thus:

My claim that if we take care of freedom truth will take care of itself implies that if people can say that they believe without fear, then the task of justifying themselves to others and the task of getting things right will coincide. My argument is that since we can test whether we have performed the first task, and have no further test to apply to determine whether we have performed the second, Truth as end-in-itself drops out. (342)

Pragmatist Philosophy as Cultural Critique

In his book *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* Richard Rorty reveals many metaphysical ideas and gives a positive image of philosophy. In reply to a letter to Hilary Putnam he observes that philosophers ought to “move everything over from epistemology and metaphysics to cultural politics, from claims to knowledge and appeals to self-evidence to suggestions about what we should try” (57). Rorty wrote

many books and published many papers for twenty years and the main focus of his writings is on the investigation of truth and on the crucial theme of philosophy as cultural politics. In his book *Philosophy and the Mirror and the Mirror of Nature* he discusses the relevance of philosophy to “humanity’s ongoing conversation about what to do with itself” (ix). Rorty’s edifying philosophy aims at “continuing the conversation rather than at discovering truth; but without couching the concept of conversation in terms of an edifying philosophical hermeneutics-cum-existentialism” (373). He insists on the edifying end of philosophy. The critics repudiated the approach of Rorty but he defended himself in an article where he addresses this criticism launched by his adversaries: “I am often accused of being an end of philosophy thinker, and I should like to take this occasion to re-emphasize that philosophy is just not the sort of thing it is more misleading than helpful” (123). Rorty investigate the multiple aspects of philosophy such as feminist philosophy, wide swaths of political philosophy, environmental philosophy. His approach is analytical, critical and investigative and pragmatic deviating from the traditional philosophers. Philip Kitcher (2011) observes thus: “What we can witness in all of this work is, philosophy turning itself inside out such that those concerns that once that were core to the discipline are becoming increasingly peripheral in order to make room for pressing cultural critical matters that everyone understands the value of philosophical reflection upon” (*Normative Ethics After Pragmatic Naturalism* 23). Rorty gives the positive nature of philosophy which has social, political and cultural significance. Rorty has taken the broader image of philosophy; he has traced the historical development of philosophy focuses on a split of philosophy and the influence of science and technology on philosophy. In his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* he talks of “the political utopian and the innovative artist for whom the whole metaphor of truth as representations of a world that is discovered rather than developed is pointless” (4). In his chapter on “Private Irony and Liberal Hope”, he discusses the dialectical nature of philosophy. Here Rorty follows Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* and continues with his “argumentative procedure” (78). He comments thus: “A more up to-date word for what I have been calling dialectic would be literary criticism” (79).

To conclude, in his books *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* Richard Rorty gives his pragmatic view of philosophy as he expresses his serious concern over the function of philosophy and its role in the development of culture. He investigates the philosophical views of John Dewey, Hegel, Kant and Nietzsche and gives his own positive view of philosophy in the context of the postmodern society of America. He investigates the historical forces and the role of science and technology that brought about new challenges and uncertainties in the postmodern world for man. He is of the firm view that philosophy is not to explore the truth but to solve the problems of man. Philosophy has positive role to play in the life of man today and human beings don't need the theoretical philosophy taught in the departments in the colleges and the universities. Moreover, by disavowing metaphysical foundations of morality Rorty enables the predominantly literary cultures of liberal societies to see themselves as the vanguards of moral progress.

Chapter 5

An Analysis of Richard Rorty's *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth and Truth and Progress ; Philosophical Papers*

Richard Rorty published *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) and rejected analytic philosophy out rightly giving his new theory of truth. Rorty claims that the academic philosophy had “little more to do” (173). Rorty criticizes analytic philosophy and the entire tradition of western philosophy since Descartes. His historical “attempt is to put philosophy in the position which Kant wished it to have—that of judging other areas of culture on the basis of its special knowledge of the ‘foundations’ of these areas” (8). Rorty used methods of analytic philosophy to point out failings in the analytic tradition. He points out that the analytic tradition was “the vocabulary and the literature with which [he was] most familiar” (8). He also questioned the historical theories of knowledge in the sense of “knowledge that has the quality of being true” (8). Rorty argues that “truth is best viewed as a term we use when we agree that a statement is valid, not as Truth in the metaphysical sense of the way the world really is apart from our judgment” (8). Rorty (1982) would later call this a “pragmatist theory of truth”(xiii), expressing his distrust of classical theories of truth. Neil Gross (2008) points out that “Rorty was arguing that contemporary analytic discourse was colored by pragmatic themes” (*Richard Rorty*158). Rorty wrote about pragmatic truth throughout his career, and it is clear that he was not satisfied to talk about truth. Late in his career, Rorty (1999) writes that truth is “whatever belief results from a free and open encounter of opinions” (119). This view of truth is far from an analytic one. In his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Rorty lays out his critique of the history of epistemology and his “pragmatist theory of truth” in detail.

Richard Rorty devoted himself in life to solve the mysterious problems of truth, objectivity, solidarity and reality. He wrote three volumes of his papers:

“*Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth, Essays on Heidegger and Others*, and *Truth and Progress* to explore the metaphysical issues that confronted humanity since ages. He struggles to understand the role of imagination in intellectual and moral progress and the notion of moral identity. Rorty’s collected papers were written in 1980s and published in two volumes. In these philosophical papers he took up the issues which divide Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophers and contemporary French and German philosophical thoughts. He was engaged to solve the issues of truth and objectivity discarding the traditional views of the classical philosophers of Greek and Germany. He was impacted by Deweyan account of objectivity and inter-subjectivity. He discussed these philosophical problems focusing on utility for the purposes of humanity. He believed that just as the role of a scientist is to take forward humanity similarly the role of a philosopher is to use philosophical ideas to promote democratic principles and to promote freedom and moral stability in the world.

Richard Rorty and his Philosophy of Truth

Richard Rorty is regarded as the most controversial figures in America in the domain of philosophy. He argues that it is no longer necessary to ask questions about the nature of truth. In this chapter efforts are made to analyze conception of truth in the context of postmodernism. Truth is the subject matter of thousand of research papers and philosophical books. Rorty has contended that there is no systematic theory of truth provided by philosophy. The views held by the philosophers about the nature of truth from time to time are ambiguous. The postmodern philosophers expressed their grave concern about the nature of truth and observed that truth in life does matter. Without truth there would be no intelligible criterion of evaluation. As O.S. Guinness, in his book *Time for Truth* (2000), rightly said, "Truth without freedom is a manacle, but freedom without truth is a mirage" (12). Michel Foucault discussed Nietzsche’s concept of “will to power” and observed that any pursuit “a will to knowledge” establishes its own truth. This form of truth is imposed on others and thus human quest for knowledge is written off as the pursuit of power.

Since antiquity the philosophers struggled to explore the nature of truth. However there is still confusion about the nature of truth and like other Greek and

German philosopher Richard Rorty was confronted with the baffling problem of understanding the nature of truth. In the philosophy of science the notion of truth centers on the debate between realism and anti-realism and in the related issue of truth as absolute thing. S. Haack (2006) in his book *Pragmatism, Old and New: Selected Writings* and Blackburn in his book *Truth: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2005) stressed the relevance of truth for science and philosophy. Both opine that truth matters in this universe and take pride in defense of truth against relativism and cynicism. Rorty (2000) on the other hand observes that “truth plays no relevant role in philosophy, politics or science” (2). Rorty struggled to dispel a muddle about the notion of truth and its relations with dogmatism, objectivity and relativism and to offer some technical reason to explore the nature of truth. Rorty observes thus in his essay on “Solidarity or Objectivity” (1989):

The tradition in Western culture that centres on the notion of the search for Truth, a tradition that runs from the Greek philosophers through the Enlightenment, is the clearest example of the attempt to find a sense in one's existence by turning away from solidarity to objectivity. The idea of Truth as something to be pursued for its own sake, not because it will be good for oneself, or for one's real or imaginary community, is the central theme of this tradition. It was perhaps the growing awareness by the Greeks of the sheer diversity of human communities that stimulated the emergence of beliefs. (168)

Blackburn uses the phrase “Truth Wars” to describe the seriousness of the issue. Rorty investigated and explored the philosophical observations made by different philosophers of different ages. Rorty offers a non-systematic, but logical and developed interpretation of present world on the basis of knowledge he appropriated from different sources. Jacques Bouveresse sums up his contribution thus:

For Rorty, the idea that matter, spirit, the self or the other such things have an intrinsic nature that in principle is in no way dependent upon our activities of knowing and that we attempt to represent in increasingly better ways, represents the secular descendent of a

conception which should not have survived the era of the theological world-view from which it emerged. (qtd in Brandon's *Rorty and the Critics* viii)

What is Truth? This is a much debated question among philosophers. Many theories have been advanced trying to explain as to what truth consists in or to put it in another way. It is not simple to know the nature of truth as the question does not have a simple answer. In general it is believed that truth is that which is ultimately, finally, and absolutely real or the way it is. But Rorty argues that it is no longer necessary to ask questions about the nature of truth.

There are two principal ways in which reflective human beings try, by placing their lives in a larger context, to give sense to those lives. The first is by telling the story of their contribution to a community. 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, consisting perhaps of a dozen heroes and heroines selected from history or fiction or both. The second way is to describe themselves as standing in immediate relation to a nonhuman reality. (167)

In his essay on "Solidarity or Objectivity" (1989) Richard Rorty observes thus:

In so far as a person is seeking solidarity, he or she does not ask about the relation between the practices of the chosen community and something outside that community. Insofar as he seeks objectivity, he distances himself from the actual persons around him not by thinking of himself as a member of some other real or imaginary group, but rather by attaching himself to something that can be described without reference to any particular human beings. (167)

Hilary Putnam in his book *Reason, Truth and History* (1981) discussed in detail the nature of Truth like Richard Rorty. He speaks of "substantial notion of truth" arguing that right "assertability is a sufficient condition for truth and truth only a local truth, a truth in a language game" (123). Putnam in his book *Realism with a Human Face*

(1990) uses the phrase “metaphysical realism” for truth. He says: “the idea that truth is a property and a property which, unlike justification, or probability on present evidence, depends on more than the present memory and experience of the speaker- is the insight of realism that we should not jettison” (123). Rorty explores the fundamental ideas of Putnam thus:

One can gloss Putnam's point by saying that "philosophy" is precisely what a culture becomes capable of when it ceases to define itself in terms of explicit rules, and becomes sufficiently leisured and civilized to rely on inarticulate know-how, to substitute phronesis for codification, and conversation with foreigners for conquest of them.(Richard Rorty, “Solidarity or Objectivity” 28)

Putnam has given his own basic ideas about philosophy, truth and solidarity and their relevance to life. He has taken a rationalistic view of truth as his approach is scientific and rational. Rorty observes that Putnam has written under the influence of Davidson and his approach is positive and deterministic. Rorty says:

Putnam argues that the notion that rationality ... is defined by the local cultural norms is merely the demonic counterpart of positivism. It is, as he says, a scientist theory inspired by anthropology as positivism was a scientist theory inspired by the exact sciences. By scientism Putnam means the notion that rationality consists in the application of criteria. (29)

Richard Rorty in his chapter “Science as Solidarity” explores the issues concerning truth and solidarity from scientific angle. He investigates the role of culture in the formation of beliefs of human beings. The chapter is interesting as it resolves many issues concerning truth and solidarity. The arguments of Rorty are concrete and are based on the pragmatic aspects of life. At the very outset of the chapter he observes thus:

In our culture, the notions of science, rationality, objectivity, and truth are bound up with one another. Science is thought of as offering hard,

objective truth: truth as correspondence to reality, the only sort of truth worthy of the name. Humanists ,for example, philosophers, theologians, historians, and literary critics have to worry about whether they are being scientific, whether they are entitled to think of their conclusions, no matter how carefully argued, as worthy of the term true. We tend to identify seeking objective truth with using reason, and so we think of the natural sciences as paradigms of rationality. (38)

Truth and Objectivity

It is interesting to understand the history of objectivity and is useful to distinguish Greek from Kantian objectivity. In simple words it means “telling it like it is”. Kant was disgusted with this approach of understanding truth. Kant argued that objectivity is nothing but a certain conceptual “unity of experience” which is subjective in nature. Truth is objective when it is impersonal, transcendental operation of understanding. Rorty speaks of a wish “to replace both religious and philosophical accounts of a supra-historical ground or an end-of-history convergence with a historical narrative about the rise of liberal institutions and customs, “which he calls a shift from epistemology to politics, from an explanation of the relation between reason and reality to an explanation of how political freedom has changed our sense of what human inquiry is good for” (Rorty 68). In practical life truth that matters is dialogic truthfulness which amounts to inter-subjective belief. Truth is truthfulness and is always based on honesty, frankness and courage. Putnam gives an alternative to both Greek and Kantian views. He argues that an objective approach to truth is the right way as an issue can be discussed and evaluated correctly and fairly to explore its rightness. Rorty (1989) writes:

Truth cannot be out there—cannot exist independently of the human mind because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own—unaided by the describing activities of human beings—cannot. (5)

He ignores universal and metaphysical view of Kant and supports the practical view of truth. Hilary Putnam (1981) described Truth as “the position we are fated to occupy in any case, the position of beings who cannot have a view of the world that does not reflect our interests and values, but who are, for all that, committed to regarding some views of the world and, for that matter, some interests and values as better than others” (*Truth and History* 178). Rorty in his article “Putnam and the Relativist Menace” published in *Journal of Philosophy* (1993) in reply to Putnam says: “ I cannot see what idealized rational acceptability to an ideal community. Nor can I see how, given that if such community is going to have a God’s eye view, this ideal community can be anything more than us as should like to be which is indeed Putnam’s view of truth” (*Truth and History* 452). Rorty rejects Putnam’s views of truth and adds: “identifying idealized rational acceptability with acceptability to us at our best is just what I had in mind when I said that pragmatists should be ethnocentrists rather than relativists” (452). In his book *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* Rorty refers to “prides itself on constantly adding more windows, constantly enlarging its sympathies. It is a form of life which is constantly pseudopods and adapting itself to what it encounters. Its sense of its own moral worth is founded on its relevance of diversity” (204). A critical analysis of his ideas given in his book *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* reveals that he is radical and practical in his approach to truth and he uses the tools of philosophy to comprehend the right nature of truth in the postmodern context. He rejects the idealistic view and approach of Kant and suggests that objectivity is nothing but a certain conceptual unity of experience which in reality is subjective in nature. He wants an objective approach in which everything personal or local is washed out to the impersonal operation of understanding itself. Rorty argues in “practical life judgment acquire objectivity by a relation to practical reasoning and the dialogic reasonableness of others and there is always a fact of the matter” (178) about rightness, about justification of a situation in a concrete manner. Putnam further describes Truth as “the position we are fated to occupy in any case, the position of beings who cannot have a view of the world that does not reflect our interests and values, but who are, for all that, committed to regarding some views of the world and, for that matter, some interests and values as better than others” (*Truth and History* 178). The philosophers argue that man can still see philosophy as a conversation and yet to do away with the notion of truth.

Emphasis on Solidarity instead of Objectivity

In the first chapter of his book entitled "Solidarity or Objectivity?" Richard Rorty discusses in detail the relationship between solidarity and objectivity and the importance of these terms in understanding the truth. But with the emergence of Descartes the new concept of mind and truth was put forward. The mind of man is believed to mirror reality. Thus truth is connected with the mind and a nonhuman description independently. Mind is considered as an arena of appearances representing the world. Rorty rejected the idea of Descartes as he says: "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" (123). 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 the image in the mind's mirror" (178). Here is no way to get outside our beliefs and language so as to find some test other than coherence "(178). 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" (13). His view echoes that of Hilary Putnam who once stated that there is no "God's eye standpoint"(24) 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" (Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* 10). Rorty has advocated an alternative description of truth, which is, truth is inter-subjective agreement or solidarity. He argues that the conversation with the members of the community cannot be the representation of truth because language differs and changes from people to people. Rorty argues: "if one reinterprets objectivity as inter subjectivity or as solidarity then one will drop the question of how to get in touch with mind-independent and language-independent reality" (*Objectivity, Relativism,*

and Truth 13). An attempt is made in this chapter to explore and investigate Rorty's notion of truth as solidarity found in his writings. Rorty argues that objectivity should be reduced to solidarity or what he calls "intersubjective agreement" among members of a community. He contends that science too is a matter of solidarity. Science is a model of human solidarity. But his arguments have been rejected by the critics of Rorty. In his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Rorty (1989) challenges the concept of truth as correspondence to reality as he claims:

Philosophers should not be asked for arguments against, for example, the correspondence theory of truth or the idea of the intrinsic nature of reality. The trouble with arguments against the use of a familiar and time-honored vocabulary is that they are expected to be phrased in that very vocabulary. They are expected to show that central elements in that vocabulary are "inconsistent in their own terms" or that they "deconstruct themselves." This can *never* be shown.... Interesting philosophy is rarely an examination of the pros and cons of a thesis. Usually it is... a contest between an entrenched vocabulary which has become a nuisance and a half-formed new vocabulary which vaguely promises new things. (8-9)

Attack of the Critics on Richard Rorty

Jon Levisohn in his article "*Richard Rorty's Ethical AntiFoundationalism*" challenges the observations and averments made by Rorty and contends that "It appears that for Rorty, the desire for solidarity is more fundamental than the desire for objectivity" (58). 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" (Levisohn 51). Precisely, Rorty considers "solidarity to be the only option available in order to avoid the bad side of Nietzsche" (33). In the words of Levisohn "the non-reduction of either objectivity or solidarity, the validation of both" (*Philosophy of Education* 18). Rorty points out that solidarity and objectivity. Will Wilkonson

observes that Rorty's "Objectivity or Solidarity" is "a case study in the use of false alternatives. His arguments are false and frivolous:

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. ("A Review of Richard Rorty's "Solidarity or Objectivity" 2)

Wilkinson in his article: "A Review of Richard Rorty's "Solidarity or Objectivity" (1999) contends that Rorty's characterization of objectivity is impractical and unrealistic. Susan Haacks "calls grandly transcendental correspondence-truth"(123). Wilkinson also lashes at Rorty's pragmatism which would become "part of our cultural background, part of what we take for granted, a part of life, something we just assume when undertake to converse with each other" (123). Rorty defends his arguments and observes that human beings simply abandon the metaphor of the mind as mirroring or representing reality. This proposal is provocative since it abandons truth or representing reality. This proposal is provocative since it abandons truth. He claims that human 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" Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* 10). Rorty borrows the idea from Darwin that language is an adaptation and words are tools. He borrows from Donald Davidson that belief is "nothing but a reflection on how a language-using organism interacts with what is going on in its neighbourhood. Beliefs are habits of acting rather than as parts of a 'model' of the world constructed by the organism to help it deal with the world" (*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* 10). Simon Blackburn (2003) asserts thus:

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. (*Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* 85)

Rob Reich (1996) points out about Rorty and his claim that philosophy may not have much to give to the knowledge of truth. He says: "Rorty is a bundle of seeming contradictions" (Reich 342). In Teichman's view, "Rorty, in cutting the ground from under their feet (i.e. his critics) he cuts it from under his own" (Teichman 131). Prasanjit Biswas in his book *Postmodern Controversy: Reading Rorty, Derrida and Habermas* (2005) gives his own evaluation of the concept of truth of Rorty:

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 no longer bring the most practical advantages. (130)

Caitlin McCollister is of the opinion that Rorty's solidarity is 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" ("Senior Thesis Proposal" 123). He has summarised the ideas of Rorty thus:

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. (McCollister "Senior Thesis Proposal", 123)

Michael Olsen in his article *"Rorty's Pragmatism Undone: The Necessity of Truth to Knowledge,"* insists there are many problems with Rorty's pragmatism. Thus the only thing that matters is which way the concept of truth is "reshaped" or changed. However, according to Olsen, "an infinite regress looms in the midst of this argument, thus never giving justification (24). Gutting, Gary on his book *Pragmatic Liberalism and the Critique of Modernity* observes that for Rorty arguing for a belief "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" (14). He speaks of "the community of the liberal intellectuals of the secular modern West" (Richard Rorty, *Solidarity or Objectivity* 29). G.E. Moore in his book *Contemporary British Philosophy* (1925) has explained the position of Richard Rorty concerning the relationship between true and false, real and unreal and the role of knowledge in exploring truth of life thus:

We must answer, first, the question "What is real?", then "How do I know reality?", and only then, "How can I be certain of what I know?" In ordering the questions in this way, we acknowledge that there is a reality that we do not and perhaps cannot know but that we can believe in, argue for, and, if necessary, assume. Then we can ask the more limited question, "How do I know reality? (223)

Thus solidarity of each community cannot be in agreement with the other. Levisohn argues in his article, "On Richard Rorty's, Ethical Anti- foundationalism that,

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. (55)

Rorty tried to simplify the meaning of truth in these words in the first chapter of his book *Solidarity or Objectivity*:

For the pragmatist, by contrast, knowledge is like truth, 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, on his view, only be a socio-historical account of how various people have tried to reach agreement on what to believe. (27)

John Lechte in his book *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers* observes that the ideas of Richard Rorty about truth are confusing and baffling. 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’” (12). Indeed, in many places Rorty looks confused and contradictory. But Rorty has used every possible method to clear all the doubts giving solid examples in the post-modernistic language and style. He argues thus:

These distinctions between hard facts and soft values, truth and pleasure, and objectivity and subjectivity are awkward and clumsy instruments. They are not suited to dividing up culture; they create more difficulties than they resolve. It would be best to find another vocabulary, to start afresh. But in order to do so, we first have to find a new way of describing the natural sciences. It is not a question of debunking or downgrading the natural scientist, but simply of ceasing to see him as a priest. 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. (39)

Simon Blackburn has defended the position of Richard Rorty who has linked philosophy with culture. He says: "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" (7). Perhaps Rorty's solidarity is useful in so far it leads us to objectivity. That is the way to explore truth with utmost candor and exactness. To quote Blackburn, "Piece 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” (*Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* 7).

To conclude, Richard Rorty discarded all the traditional analytic theories of truth and propounded his pragmatic theory provoking a wide range of the most diverse charges. The critics called his a relativist. Rorty was a radical thinker as he gave his own controversial theories of truth and reality. In his *Contingency, Law, and Solidarity*, he argues 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” (5). Richard Rorty continued his quest for meaning of truth in his book *Truth and Progress; Philosophical Papers*. He was not satisfied with the analytical philosophy so popular in those days in America. Rorty had realized that philosophy had gone horribly wrong and misleading and was not useful for humanity. He argued that the time has come to return to Dewey and see how philosophy could perform good role for the betterment of society. Rorty explored the thoughts of Greek and the Western philosophy crystallized in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. He found that language is a tool and not a representation of the reality of the world. In his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty warns against interpreting his views as an attack on analytic philosophy as such. He came to the conclusion that analytic philosophy has outgrown itself. His research proved that the analytic philosophy was incompetent to explore truth. He wrote *Truth and Progress* and in his “Introduction” he made a sweeping statement that “There is no truth” and the critics were baffled by this statement of Rorty. He further observed that “actually, almost nobody (except Wallace Stevens) does say it. But philosophers like me are often said to say it. One can say why” (1). He refers to Nietzsche and James who are suspicious of the appearance-reality distinction. Rorty argued that “the appearance-reality distinction be dropped in favor of a distinction between less useful and more useful ways of talking. Truth is correspondence to the way reality really is they think of us as denying the existence of truth” (1). Rorty equates truth with usefulness. Rorty observes that “we keep talking about what is useful to us or what is good for us to believe” For Rorty the aim

of philosophy is not to seek objective truth but to continue the struggle to explore truth and its significance for humanity. He identifies himself with the pragmatists who feel have no desire for metaphysics or epistemology. They have given up the quest for objectivity and started the quest for solidarity. He observes that there is no truth but only that it is “an empty compliment” (10). It is more useful to see it as a matter of solidarity or intersubjective agreement. Rorty thinks truth is not something that exists "out there" but in our vocabularies. The language goes on changing from time to time depending on our needs, interests, and purposes. Man has discovered the truth of things and there is enough justification of it. We can discard our old vocabularies for the new ones. Regarding justification, Rorty thinks, “it is nothing more than a sociological matter, a matter of seeing whether something is acceptable to my peers.” (24). He firmly believes that truth becomes for Rorty simply "a compliment paid to the beliefs which we think so well justified that, for the moment, further justification is not needed”(24). Rorty thus concludes that justification and not truth should be the goal of our inquiry. It is very essential to understand the concept of truth and justification of Rorty. Many critics and thinkers have attacked Rorty stating that truth and justification are two independent conditions of our beliefs and cannot be replaced by another.

The Traditional Approach to Truth and Justification

In general terms it is beloved since antiquity that truth is the condition of knowledge and if a belief is false it cannot contain the elements of truth. If there does no truth exist in the universe and then there is no knowledge. Truth seekers have to work hard to reach at the truth about a matter. The right way to establish truth is possible only through knowledge. Sound reasoning and sound evidence is the right way to acquire knowledge. In other words, for a belief to constitute knowledge, its truth must be justified by sound reasoning and concrete evidence. Human beings are fallible and it is possible “to have knowledge even when one’s true beliefs might have turned out to be false”(Rorty 8). Truth and justification are connected as David A. Truncellito contends: “The reason is, a belief can be unjustified yet, because of luck, it can be true. Conversely, a belief can be justified yet, because of human fallibility, can be

false. In other words, truth and justification are two independent conditions of beliefs and one cannot be replaced by another” (27). Robert Audi (1993) in his book *The Structure of Justification* observes that,

The former entails showing that one is in an epistemically successful state, and apparently does not entail that one's getting there meets, or is, even indirectly, guided by, any normative standards; the latter entails showing that one is in an epistemically acceptable state, which one cannot be in without meeting normative standards. (332)

He further observes that "Justification, we might say, is roughly a matter of a right to believe, and is anchored in a social practice; knowledge is roughly a matter of being right (in a suitable way), and is anchored to the world" (333).

Justification Instead of Truth

In the chapter entitled "*Is Truth a Goal of Inquiry? Davidson versus Rorty*", Rorty launches an attack on truth with this argument: "Pragmatists think that if something makes no difference to practice, it should make no difference to philosophy. His conviction makes them suspicious of the philosophers' emphasis on the difference between justification and truth" (281). Richard Rorty in his article "Is Truth A Goal of Enquiry? Davidson vs Wright" (1995) observes thus about his stand on Truth:

For that difference .makes no difference to my decisions about what to do. If I have concrete, specific, doubts about whether one of my beliefs is true, I can only resolve those doubts by asking if it is adequately justified-by finding and assessing additional reasons pro and con. I cannot bypass justification and confine my attention to truth. Assessment of truth and assessment of justification are, when the question is about what I should believe now (rather than about why I, or someone else, acted as we did), the same activity. If, on the other hand, my doubts are as unspecific and abstract as Descartes' -if they are such that I can do nothing to resolve them-they should be dismissed, as they were by Peirce, as 'make-believe'. Philosophy should ignore them. (281)

Rorty believes that the justification of beliefs cannot be universal and may be little to do with truth. However, Rorty, "doubts about correspondence to reality can only be settled by assessing the coherence of the dubious belief with other beliefs" and here, he says, he agrees with his idealist opponents" (281). He is not contented with the analytic philosophy and gives special characteristics of the pragmatists in these words: For the pragmatists:

The difference between true beliefs considered as useful nonrepresentational mental states, and as accurate (and *therefore* useful) representations of reality, seemed a difference that could make no difference to practice. No one profits from insisting on the distinction, both concluded, except for those who enjoy entertaining makebelieve doubts. (282)

In his various articles and lectures Rorty has suggested that the notion of truth should be discarded and the focus should be on justification. In another article entitled "*Universality and Truth*" (2000), he says very clearly that the universal desire for truth is better redescribed as the universal desire for justification. He argues thus:

The grounding premise of my argument is that you cannot aim at something, cannot work to get it, unless you can recognize it once you have got it. One difference between truth and justification is that between the unrecognizable and the recognizable. We shall never know for sure whether a given belief is true, but we can be sure that nobody is presently able to summon up any residual objections to it, that everybody agrees that it ought to be held. (2)

In various articles and particularly in his book *Truth and Progress*, he explored the nature and the significance of truth in human life and its problematic quest in the modern world. He investigated the role and opinions of all his contemporaries observing that:

Philosophers who, like myself, find this Jamesian suggestion persuasive, swing back and forth between trying to reduce truth to

justification and propounding some form of minimalism about truth. In reductionist moods we have offered such definitions of truth as "warranted assertibility," "ideal assertibility," and "assertibility at the end of inquiry." But such definitions always fall victim, sooner or later, to what Putnam has called the "naturalistic fallacy" argument. (21)

Barry Allen, in his book, *Truth in Philosophy* (1993) and Robert Brandom in his book *Making It Explicit* (1994) comment thus: "His point in analogizing truth to lightness and to goodness was that once you understand all about the justification of actions, including the justification of assertions, you understand all there is to understand about goodness, Tightness, and truth" (qtd in Rorty 21). Rorty further says that truth,

Is too sublime, so to speak, to be either recognized or aimed at. Justification is merely beautiful, but it is recognizable and acceptable. Sometimes, with luck, justification is even achieved. But that achievement is usually only temporary, since sooner or later some new objections to the temporarily justified belief will be developed. (1)

In his "Introduction" to *Truth and Progress* (1998), Rorty says: "there is no such thing as belief being justified sans phrase justified once and for all-for the same reason that there is no such thing as a belief that can be known, once and for all and that is certain and indubitable" (2). He has given two important examples to substantiate his views. There are a load of beliefs such as "Two and two are four"; "The Holocaust took place," about which nobody has any doubt. But there are no beliefs that can be said to be immune to all possible doubt" (2). Now what makes philosophers look for truth rather than justification is, their yearning for unconditionality. Uwe Steinhoff in his article "Truth Vs. Rorty," published in *The Philosophical Quarterly* observes thus: "As I see it, the yearning for unconditionality-the yearning which leads philosophers to insist that we need to avoid contextualism and relativism is, indeed, satisfied by the notion of truth" (359). According to Rorty this yearning for unconditionality is unhealthy for in the ultimate analysis, the price

of unconditionality is actually of no great concern when it comes to practice. Rorty admits there is the yearning for unconditionality in order to avoid "contextualism" and "relativism"

The Reality of Truth

Rorty has advocated for an abandonment of truth but he agrees that there is always certain aspect to truth which cannot be eliminated. Rorty says, "There are many uses for the word true and the word truth should be used cautiously. He has investigated the difference between justification and truth. He admits that "a belief may be justified but not true"(2). Rorty borrowed this idea from Davidson and calls for a 'cautionary' use. This is its use in such expressions as "fully justified, but perhaps not true" (283). Rorty speaks of the cautionary use of truth admitting that "to point out that *justification is relative to an audience*, and that we can never exclude the possibility that some better audience might exist, or come to exist, to which a belief which is justifiable to us would not be justifiable" (283). In "*Universality and Truth*" Rorty further expresses the nature of truth thus:

Outside of philosophy, this cautionary use is used to contrast less-informed with better-informed audiences, past audiences with future audiences. That is, we can never tell when some audience in future might come up with a better justification for changing our vocabularies, i.e. our habits and practices, that will help us better cope with our environment. (4)

It is pertinent to note that Rorty sees no difference between the use of the word "danger" and "true" in terms of their cautious aspect. His arguments are ambiguous and contradictory. However he tries to clear the doubts thus:

It is no more necessary to have a philosophical theory about the nature of truth, or the meaning of the word true, than it is to have one about the nature of danger, or the meaning of the word danger. The principal reason we have a word like 'danger' in the language is to caution people: to warn them that they may not have envisaged all the consequences of their proposed action (4).

Difference between Truth and Inquiry

Rorty insists that truth seeking should not be the goal of human beings as "A goal is something you can know that you are getting closer to, or farther away from" (3). It is not possible to know our distance from truth. It is not possible to know the nature of truth in real terms and hence truth should be discarded. In the struggles, man can reach closer to truth but it is not possible to find out the absolute truth. Rorty therefore concludes, "To try to make truth approachable and reachable is to do what Davidson deplores, to humanize truth" (298). The only "criterion we have for applying the word true; is justification, and justification is always relative to an audience" (3). Thus, for Rorty justification leads to truth He argues thus: "It is unanswerable because there is no way to privilege our current purposes and interests. It is unpragmatic because the answer to it would make no difference whatever to our practice" (4).

Wright in his article *"Is Truth a Goal of Inquiry? Donald Davidson versus Crispin Wright"* observes that Rorty is a "metaphysical activist who thinks that truth and justification are two distinct norms that regulate the process of inquiry and that one should successfully aim at both" (288).

Truth and Unconditional Validity

Habermas, in his article, *"Richard Rorty's Pragmatic Turn"* says he agrees with Rorty in proclaiming that "nothing counts as justification unless by reference to what we already accept" (78). Habermas observes that the ideas of Rorty are reactionary and metaphysical in nature. There is "one fundamental aspect of the meaning of truth found in the correspondence idea of truth that we cannot just write off, which is that of the notion of unconditional validity" (40).

Habermas admits there is relation between truth and justification. Levisohn continues, "We hope for *real* reforms, not just reforms that will seem real to us or to language users whom we can recognize as better versions of ourselves. We aspire to *real* truth in our inquiries, not just something that will come to seem true" (*Probing Pragmatism* 5).

To conclude, Richard Rorty wrote two books *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* and *Truth and Progress; Philosophical Papers* and several articles describing his views on Truth and Solidarity; on truth and justification. He took up the pragmatic view rejecting all the ideas of the traditional philosophers and the analytic thinkers. He explored and investigated the philosophical ideas of Plato, Dewey, Davidson and propounded his theories of truth and reality. He took up the postmodern stance observing that truth is something beyond the reach of man but what is important today is the understanding of reality.

Chapter 6

Hope, Faith and Liberalism in Richard Rorty's *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*

Richard Rorty is a prominent American philosopher who wrote many books and published philosophical papers to bring about global transformation. He gave a new status to philosophy which could perform the roles of art literature, science and religion in shaping and changing the thoughts of people. He wanted philosophy to play a positive and crucial role in contemporary liberal democratic society. Rorty proposes that we must abandon the traditional orthodox view of philosophy. *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* is the fourth collection of Richard Rorty's philosophical papers. Rorty himself describes the main theme of the book in his Preface: "to weave together Hegel's thesis that philosophy is its time held in thought with a non-representationalist account of language" (ix). The main topics discussed in this volume include the role of philosophy in Western culture and the role of imagination in intellectual and moral progress. Rorty believes that philosophy is not dead but has a political purpose as well. He gives the political significance of philosophy. He gives a logical basis of the political significance of philosophy. He argues that philosophy is the pillar of human civilization. In the contemporary situation when liberty is enjoyed by people the role of philosophy has increased. As a pragmatist, Rorty claims that philosophy should be treated as a part of life in life. It can help human beings to change their life.

Rorty also touches upon the notion of moral identity. He takes only those issues which concern humanity at large because he believes that philosophy has a positive role to play in the modern world to relieve the tensions and anxieties of people. Philosophy is not a dull and dry branch of knowledge but has therapeutic effect and his pragmatic approach is highly praised by the critics of Rorty. *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* of Rorty does not have a tight focus as the essays address various themes concerning pragmatism and cultural politics. Robert Brandom, Colin Koopman and Esa Saarinen have expressed their divergent views on

his collection of essays. Rorty has given a wide spectrum of issues concerning mankind today. Barry Allen in his article: "The Cultural Politics of Nonhuman Things" observes that in a democratic society the philosophical ideas of Rorty are very useful in the postmodern society. Susana de Castro in her paper "Richard Rorty: A Pragmatist With a Romantic Soul" opines that Rorty has given a new dimension to philosophy and has taken out of the libraries for the betterment of society. He has used the vocabulary including "redescription, contingency, anxiety of influence, anti-authoritarianism, post-philosophical culture and political culture" (qtd. in Susana 12). Charles Guignon published his paper: "Richard Rorty and the Philosophical Life" associating Rorty's description of a philosophical life in *Contingency* with the spiritual exercises of the ancient schools" (9). In his article: "Cultural Politics, Political Innovation, and the Work of Human Rights," David Hiley extends Rorty's claim that human rights involve questions of cultural politics rather than ontology or truth. Robert Brandom in his article entitled: "An Arc of Thought: From Rorty's 'Eliminative Materialism to His Pragmatism'" observes that Rorty has discussed his radical views on the idea of objective reality. Brandom argues thus: "regarding objective reality, the goal would be to identify what sorts of talk are characteristic of talking of objective reality, and then to show that this sort of talk might turn out to be less than the best way for us to deal with the world and each other. (123)

Rorty rejects any form of final, absolute Truth. He observes that there is not even any metaphysical nature of things or human beings. It means that human beings cannot follow the metaphysical and the traditional theory of truth. As to scientific inquiry, in Rorty's opinion:

We are inclined to say that truth is the aim of inquiry. But I think we pragmatists must grasp the nettle and say that this claim is either empty or false. Inquiry and justification have lots of mutual aims, but they do not have an overarching aim called truth. Inquiry and justification are activities we language-users cannot help engaging in; we do not need a goal called 'truth' to help us do so, any more than our digestive organs need a goal called health to set them to work. Language-users can no more help justifying their beliefs and desires to one another

than stomachs can help grinding up foodstuffs. (...) There would only be a 'higher' aim of inquiry called 'truth' if there were such a thing as ultimate justification—justification before God, or before the tribunal or reason, as opposed to any merely finite human audience. But, given Darwinian picture of the world, there can be no such tribunal. (37-38)

Brandom thinks that we are much less clear about objective-reality-talk than we are about mind-talk. Rorty begins his discussion referring to Dewey's view of philosophy who wrote that "Philosophy is not in any sense whatever a form of knowledge. It is instead a social hope reduced to a working program of action, a prophecy of the future"(6). Dewey holds that the role of philosophy through the ages had been to bring awareness in the people. Dewey broke from the old traditional philosophy for the betterment of society of America. Rorty followed Dewey dealing with issues relevant to contemporary life, "rather than remain ingenious dialectic exercised in professional corners by a few who have retained ancient premises while rejecting their application to the conduct of life" ("Philosophy and Democracy" 58). Richard Rorty discusses the role of philosophy thus:

Philosophers should choose sides in those debates with an eye to the possibility of changing the course of the conversation. They should ask themselves whether taking one side rather than another will make any difference to social hopes, programs of action and prophecies of a better future. (7)

Rorty's Political Philosophy in General

Rorty's new book *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* demonstrates that he is able to defend liberal principles and institutions. The book examines his views on American democracy and the political institutions. His liberal political thoughts brought revolution in the contemporary political history. Rorty contends that "Rorty's idea of philosophy as cultural politics should be seen as an attempt to borrow from and improve on Dewey"(54). Rorty agrees with Dewey that we should care about building better lives and communities. Both Dewey and Rorty agree that doing so requires making room for criticism of one's own cultural norms. Voparil concludes

that "Rorty is cashing out Dewey's own insights about the culturally-situated context of inquiry, thereby advancing pragmatist philosophy" (122). Ramberg in his article: "For the Sake of His Own Generation: Rorty on Deconstruction and Edification," clarifies the place of edification in Rorty's thinking about what philosophy can and should do. In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty famously exhorts philosophers to engage in edification. In *Mirror*, edification is the main alternative to constructive, systematic, or normal philosophy, which Rorty thinks has centered on foundationalist epistemology. Edification involves mainly turning "the conversation of mankind" in new and fruitful directions. Ramberg says this idea is, at best, undeveloped in *Mirror*" (59). Ramberg contends that "in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Rorty develops the idea of edification with his image of the ironist someone who tries to learn other ways of living, thinking, and talking. Rorty thinks our challenge is to be both ironic and liberal, where being liberal means thinking cruelty is the worst thing we do" (23). These ideas, Ramberg believes, give personal, ethical and political substance to Rorty's earlier idea of edification. Ramberg does not, however, address Rorty's own claim that he abandoned the idea of edification, rather than clarified it. In his essay in the volume for the "Library of Living Philosophers" Rorty writes, "the contrast I drew there [in *Mirror*] between 'systematic' and 'edifying' philosophy was not the one I wanted" (13). And: "[In later work] I dropped the awkward 'systematic' vs. 'edifying' distinction I had drawn in *Mirror*" (13).

Shusterman discusses Rorty's positive proposal for philosophy in his article: "Pragmatism and Cultural Politics: Variations on a Rortyan Theme." He argues that Rorty should not be so hostile to theorizing about experience, especially bodily experience. According to Shusterman, Rorty is hostile to theorizing about experience because Rorty thinks it is a manifestation of epistemological foundationalism. Rorty is hostile to foundationalism because (a) there is no special philosophical method that could find a foundation of knowledge, and (b) knowledge does not need a foundation. One can critically examine the "values, forms of knowledge, and disciplines of practice that structure the way we treat our bodies without hoping to establish that our experience of bodies is in any way a foundation of knowledge

(175). Shusterman further contends that “theorizing about the body seems consistent with Rorty's idea of philosophy as cultural politics. Rorty says the root aim of philosophy as cultural politics is to make a “difference to the way human beings live” (177).

Koopman in his article: “Challenging Philosophy: Rorty's Positive Conception of Philosophy as Cultural Criticism,” argues that throughout his career, Rorty was not trying to end philosophy, but trying only to end of a certain type of philosophy, and to propose doing another sort of philosophy in its place. He then provides a barrage of textual evidence for that claim from six different texts written at different points in Rorty's career (82). As Koopman himself shows, “Rorty repeatedly claims that he wants to move away from philosophy of a certain sort (centered on foundationalist epistemology, and the idea that philosophy has a special method), towards some sort of philosophy that is both more tractable and valuable to human lives” (82). Koopman says “Rorty is often . . . charged with not being a true or real philosopher” (145). Koopman observes that there are number of people who think Rorty is not a philosopher. Saarinen in article: “Kindness to Babies and Other Radical Ideas: Rorty's Anti-Cynical Philosophy,” asks “Is Rorty *really* not a *real* philosopher?” (145). He then attempts to explain why Rorty is a real philosopher, and more so than “professional” (147) or “academic” (148) Saarinen contends that “Rorty is a real philosopher because, like Socrates but unlike professional philosophers, he thinks that philosophy can and should help people live better lives” (148-9). Most of the philosophers who actually disagree with Rorty do not seem to care whether he is a real philosopher. (Just look at the volumes edited by Brandom, Charles Guignon and David Hiley, and Randalle Auxier and Lewis Hahn.) They contend that his arguments do not work, or that his assumptions are false, or that his interpretations are bad. Rorty wants philosophers to give up the attempt to develop a uniquely philosophical method in order to secure our contact with objective reality. He variously proposes that they should engage in “edification” or “cultural politics.” Rorty is concerned with edification or cultural politics, it is part of an effort to better human lives. In this way, many contemporary philosophers have found a way to agree with Rorty about the sort of philosophy we should leave behind, while nevertheless disagreeing with him about how to do philosophy in a

way that betters human lives. His image of democracy is expressed thus in an interview:

I mean the ordinary notion of equality of opportunity, which Rawls describes in his book, *A Theory of Justice*, the idea of a society in which the only reason for inequalities is that things would be even worse if they did not exist. (qtd. in Norris *Derrida* 43)

Richard Rorty lashes at the trend towards “professionalization of Philosophy” calling it a “necessary evil” Philosophy has assumed the status of an autonomous quasi-science” (7). He wants philosophy to interact “with other human activities-not just natural science, but art, literature, religion politics as well-the more relevant to cultural politics it becomes, and thus the more useful” (7). Rorty observe thus: “Since truth is a property of sentences, since sentences are dependent for their existence upon vocabularies, and since vocabularies are made by human beings, so are truths” (9). P.B. Shelley in his famous *A Defence of Poetry* observed that it would be possible to imagine a world without the thoughts of philosophers such as Locke, Hume and Voltaire but it is impossible to imagine what the moral condition of the world would have been without the contribution of Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton. Rorty gives great significance to innovation, creation and imagination. He introduces new vocabularies, and new metaphors to bring about global transformation. Rorty’s book is divided into three parts, the first part is called “Religion and Morality from a Pragmatist Point of View” The second part of the book is called “Philosophy’s Place in Culture” and the third part is called “A Pragmatist View of Contemporary Analytic Philosophy.” The book begins with the essay on *Cultural politics and the question of the existence of God* and in this essay Rorty takes a cosmic view of philosophy and culture and opines that “the term cultural politics covers arguments about words to use. He doesn’t understand any justification of the French calling the Germans as “Boches.” There is no reason to call the blacks as “niggers.” Tolerance is the backbone of liberal democracy. Rorty avers that “cultural politics is not confined to debates about hate speech” (11). He urges people of the world to stop using the concepts of “race” and “caste” dividing the human

community. Such words as “noble blood” “mixed blood” “inter-marriage”, and untouchable promote mutual hatred among people. Rorty contends that he doesn’t want philosophy to get the secure status of a science and that “he is content to see philosophers as practicing cultural politics” (124). His philosophical papers are epitome of his “antirepresentationalism and antifoundationalism. He called attention to “the possibility of cultural change to help to find out the ways to make them happier and freer in the modern world” (24). Rorty refers to Karl Marx and his theory of religion. Marx contends that “religious institutions are the main obstacles to the formation of a global cooperative commonwealth” (12). Rorty contends that “many people agree with Marx that we should try to create a world in which human happiness in this world, rather than taking time off to think about the possibility of life after death” (12). At the very outset of his book Rorty observes that talk about “God impedes the search for human progress” (12). The time has come to take a pragmatic attitude toward religion. The spiritual question that God exists or not or that human beings do have “immortal souls” is controversial.

View of Religion of William James and Critique of Richard Rorty

Richard Rorty refers to the pragmatic approach of William James who agreed with John Stuart Mill and his philosophy of liberty. Mill advocated the utilitarian view of happiness and his main concern was to explore the maximum happiness of the maximum people. The utilitarian theory became very popular during the Victorian Age but in the 20th century it was considered as a bad logic and misleading philosophy. Rorty explores James’ view of truth and his pragmatism. Rorty comments thus: “James often comes close to saying that *all* questions, including questions about what exists, boil down to questions about what will help create a better world” (13). James observed that he has a right to believe in the existence of God to get happiness and peace of mind in life. Rorty states thus:

I think that the best way for those of us who find James’ pragmatism sympathetic to restate his position is to say that questions about what is too permissive and what is too restrictive are themselves questions of cultural politics. (14)

Rorty has written several articles and expressed his views about liberalism and democratic principles. He rejects the totality theory of Marx because in the modern world the totality principle is not workable. Rorty gives the following justification:

I want to argue that cultural politics should replace ontology, and also that whether it should or not is itself a matter of cultural politics. Before turning to the defense of these theses, however, I want to underline the importance of such issues for philosophers who, like myself, are sympathetic to William James's pragmatism. James agreed with John Stuart Mill that the right thing to do, and a fortiori the right belief to acquire, is always the one that will do most for human happiness. So he advocated a utilitarian ethics of belief. James often chose to saying that all questions, including questions about what exists, boil down to questions about what will help create a better world. (5)

Rorty connected philosophy directly to morality because in this way social welfare becomes the highest moral good. He observes thus: "the main goal of philosophy in the public sphere is to promote the welfare of the people. The real liberal democracy must be based on a society promoting social welfare of the people" (112). Rorty argues that "in a liberal democracy it is rather the task of decent men and women who sit down around tables, argue things out and arrive at a reasonable consensus" (112). Rorty believes in liberal democratic system and he seems to make efforts to justify liberalism for the betterment of society. Brian Barry claims that "The point of liberalism is that it is universalistic. Rorty seems unable to press for the truth or goodness of liberalism in societies other than those where it is already taken to be true or good; liberalism on his account possesses" (*Culture and Equality* 138). Kelly's words, "no philosophical warrant, and cannot be the basis for a philosophical imperialism of the true and the good" (Kelly 233). John Gray calls Rorty "a liberal relativist, holding liberalism to be suitable and legitimate only for" (151). The job of a philosopher is to work for a liberal society run by the rule of law. Mark Melkonian observes that "when it come to defending liberalism, Rorty's conversation abruptly fades to silence, irony lapses into apologies, and lightmindedness becomes

heavy handedness” (*Richard Rorty's Politics* 183). Jo Borrows claims that Rorty takes “liberalism as a non-ideological given” (329). Rorty insists that we reorient our politics for the betterment of society. He agrees that there is no finality or end to these goals. There is no reason that human beings stop working toward a better society. This is the goal that human beings cannot achieve. Rorty firmly rejects a utopian end and believes that a liberal state will aid in the instigation of better circumstances. There is no panacea that will bring to an end to tribulations of life. He takes a pragmatic view and observes thus about Truth:

Truth cannot be out there—cannot exist independently of the human mind—because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own—unaided by the describing activities of human beings—cannot. (5)

Rorty gives concrete examples to describe the nature of Truth. Man in his daily life wants to know things like “how much money is in my checking account,” “where did I park my car,” or “when does the next train arrive,” but such questions are not the types of truths. The daily routines of life such as parking the car, the train schedules are mundane or philosophically uninteresting (“What’s the Use of Truth?” 25). Rorty claims that it is easy to say that routine details “correspond to reality,” but in reality such events have no connection with Truth. Jurgen Habermas disagreed with Rorty’s views of Truth and in his book *Rorty and His Critics* (2000) gives a compelling argument for his attitude toward analytical philosophy. He explains what he calls Rorty’s “ambivalence toward tradition of analytic philosophy” (31). Rorty held analytic philosophy in high esteem and he felt disillusioned over what he thought analytic philosophy could not provide—access to universal truth. Habermas argues that Rorty’s program for a philosophy that is to do away with all “philosophy seems to spring more from the melancholy of a disappointed metaphysician, driven on by nominalist spurs, than from the self-criticism of an enlightened analytic philosopher who wishes to complete the linguistic turn in a pragmatist way” (32).

Rorty believes that a country will not improve without the active participation of its citizens. These characteristics are important because they reveal the significance of the progress of society. Rorty has laid down the standards;

- 1) Each progressive effort must promote the pride of the country
- 2) People must be active to solve the problems of life and society
- 3) Each society must have a constructive and pragmatic view of truth. We must understand the role of religion in society and the scientists are free to question the religious views based on beliefs. Rorty thinks of means which can achieve a better society and for this a productive and philosophical and intellectual environment is essential. The first important thing for Rorty is to seek out the objective Truth or Reality. Rorty comments thus:

We will supposedly be better able to bring about moral progress. We will no longer be preoccupied with absolute concepts that have ceased to be productive. Instead, we will determine what is right for the political, social, and philosophical context we find ourselves within. These goals are the establishment of a fair and equitable society that is founded upon providing dignity to those within it. (14).

Rorty also discusses the religious ideas of Nietzsche who is pessimistic and nihilistic about religion. He called them as “Bad Nietzsche.” Rorty quotes the view of Brandom who expresses his unconventional views on religion and God thus:

Brandom’s point is that the appeal to God, like the appeal to “the law,” is always superfluous, since, as long as there is disagreement about what the purported authority says, the idea of “authority” is out of place. (17).

Religious Views of Rorty: The Existence of God and the Existence of Consciousness

Richard Rorty expresses his views on the importance of metaphilosophy. He explores the significance of centrality of consciousness in his book. He derived his ideas from

Royle and explored the historical origins of the concept of consciousness. His views on truth, metaphilosophy and consciousness interlinked. Consciousness was a philosophical issue and Rorty used it to explore his ideas of God, Mind and Objective Reality. Rorty contends that religious experiences are irrelevant in life. He asserts thus:

People in a coma lack consciousness. People are conscious as long as they are walking and talking. But there is a special philosophical sense of the term consciousness in which the very existence of consciousness is in dispute. (19)

Rorty firmly believed that the Rylean tradition provided “one of the few clear instances of intellectual progress which analytic philosophy has to its credit”(Rorty 3). Rorty’s metaphilosophy is the pillar of his pragmatic philosophy. He emerges as a unique philosopher of consciousness. It is interesting to note that Rorty thought “substantial philosophical doctrines” were “inseparable” from “metaphilosophical issues – issues about what, if anything, philosophy is good for and about how it is best pursued”(122). Ryle contended that we shouldn’t take consciousness seriously. Rorty observes thus:

Since our physical understanding of the world is purely relational, then, their yearning attracts them to consciousness, for which they have invented a “specifically philosophical game”; the only function of which is to “disjoin pain from pain-behaviour. (12)

Rorty gives the example of Zombies who behave like normal people but have no inner life. Rorty explains the whole idea of consciousness thus:

The light bulb in their brains, so to speak, never goes on. They do not feel anything, although they can answer questions about how they feel in the conventional ways, ways which have the place they do in the language game by virtue of, for example, correlations between their utterances of “it hurts” and their having recently touched hot stoves, been pricked by pins, and the like. Talking to a zombie is just like

talking to anybody else, since the zombie's lack of an inner life never manifests itself by any outward and visible sign. (19)

Rorty believes that a philosopher is not an ordinary person but an expert who has the potential to explore the nature and the mysteries of life and existence. He is called an expert in his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. He is upset to note that the philosophers don't enjoy good status in society. They are unjustifiably ignored by the literate people. Rorty focuses on "different conception of philosophy, one less centered on vision and more focused on method" (*PMN* 406). Rorty describes the philosopher as expert in this way:

In so far as he does this kind of job, the philosopher puts aside the role of questioner of questions and sets himself the task of working within a quite restricted framework of questions, assumptions, and criteria. He is no longer a spectator of all time and all eternity, but is simply asking 'If we say X, can we then consistently say both Y and Z?' (410)

Rorty's main focus in his book is on the relevance of philosophy to "humanity's ongoing conversation about what to do with itself" (ix). For Rorty "edifying philosophy aims at continuing the conversation rather than at discovering truth; but without couching the concept of conversation in terms of an edifying philosophical hermeneutics-cum existentialism" (371). Rorty thinks of cultural criticism for the first time in his new book as he states: "The progress of this conversation has engendered new social practices, and changes in the vocabularies deployed in moral and political deliberation to suggest further novelties is to intervene in cultural politics" (ix). The function of the positive philosophy is to explore man's relation to God; his understanding of Truth and consciousness. Rorty discusses the ideas of Brandom in detail and seriously explores the meaningful existence of God and religion. He raises the question about the existence of God thus: "can we get as good an argument for the utility of God-talk as we can for the utility of talk about time, space, substance, and causality?"(25). Brandom is negative in his answer. Rorty also has the courage to state that "

Giving a transcendental argument for the existence of objects, and of these particular sorts of objects, exhausts the capacity of philosophy to tell you what there just *has* to be (if we are to make inferences at all). There is no further discipline called “ontology” which can tell you what singular terms we need to have in the language – whether or not we need “God” for example. (25)

Rorty investigates the ideas of Brandom and Kant on the question of existence of God in the first section of his book. The traditional philosophers and the religious thinkers argued that God was to fly in the face of common experience. The basis of religion was to follow and believe the presence of the supernatural things. The contemporary philosophers believe that investigating the mind and consciousness begins in the commonsense acceptance that experience is subjective. The traditional beliefs died away with the growth of Enlightenment and scientific discoveries and according to Rorty new concepts and new philosophical ideas have transformed life and attitude of man towards Nature, God and consciousness. Rorty quotes Kant to support his arguments thus:

In Kant’s system, God inhabits logical space but not empirical, physical, space. So, Kant thought, the question of the existence of God is beyond our knowledge, for knowledge of existence is coextensive with knowledge of physical existence. (27)

Rorty explores the difference between truth and falsity; between literal truth and falsity discussing the Sherlock Holmes stories and other mythical stories about Zeus and Semele. It is not possible to find out the Truth about the mythical stories concerning the mythical stories about Uranus and Aphrodite since these cannot be supported by the scientific and historical evidence. Rorty tries to sum up the discussion about the existence of God thus:

The fact that does God exist? is a bad question suggests that a better question would be: do we want to weave one or more of the various religious traditions (with their accompanying pantheons) together with our deliberation over moral dilemmas, our deepest hopes, and our

need to be rescued from despair? Alternatively: does one or more of these religious traditions provide language we wish to use when putting together our self image, determining what is most important to us? If none of them do, we shall treat all such traditions, and their pantheons, as offering mere mythologies. (29)

Rorty observes that human beings must make efforts to understand the nature of truth and consciousness; they must develop some rational approach to survive and prosper. Man is free to form and decide whether to believe and live up to the religious tradition in which he is brought up. He is free to put faith in the mythical stories offering literal truths. The mythical stories have no relevance today. He is free to develop faith in these stories and may continue to believe that prayer and worship will bring transformation in his life. There is no criteria to judge his irrational beliefs and his “adhesion to a tradition to a skeptical mere myth view of it” (30). His language games and what to talk and what not to talk are insignificant: “Cultural politics is the least norm-governed human activity. It is the site of generational revolt, and thus the growing point of culture – the place where traditions and norms are all up for grabs at once” (30). Rorty discusses in detail the nature of truth; the role of religious tradition, the concept of consciousness and God to arrive at his conclusion. He remarks thus:

Getting rid of the concept of consciousness will not rid us of truth; it will simply make us blind to certain truths, and encourage a developing situation in which all truth is thought to reside in science. Which brings us to the gaping lacuna in Rorty’s non-ontological physicalism: for if the world is not essentially physical, why should it be that (to quote Jackson again), if you duplicate our world in all physical respects and stop right there, you duplicate it in all respects? Why should it be that physics can predict “every event in every space-time region. (Rorty 28)

Richard Rorty is right to detect a connection between consciousness and religion. He has explored the significance and relevance of transcendent existence. Rorty

investigates the various forces of history that changed the philosophical thoughts from time to time. Christopher Norris observes thus:

His obsession with religion led him to reject consciousness because he could not stomach even the mere possibility. This led him to neglect his own insight that the fact that the vast majority of our beliefs must be true will ... guarantee the existence of the vast majority of the things we now think we are talking about. (*Derrida* 14)

Interestingly Paul Tillich observed that “In a post Enlightenment Western culture, the vision of a social democratic utopia has begun to play the role of God” (29). In the history of mankind, the religious symbols have played vital role in the development of civilization and it is not easy to dismantle the old culture and old symbols linked with Jesus. In the olden times the main concern of man was to “find meaning in life. He was concerned “formulating a satisfactory self-image or discovering what the Good is” (29). Philosophy helped human beings to put faith in these phrases. Platonic dialogues, Jataka and New Testament had been a source of moral and spiritual inspiration to human beings. For Hegel and for Brandom there is only “The Will to Believe” and there had been a good social practice to believe in the existence of God. Clifford, James rightly said that he was “too willing to sacrifice truth in order to be certain that he would never fall into error” (30).

In his chapter entitled: Pragmatism as Romantic Polytheism” Richard Rorty discusses in detail the fruitful ideas of Kant, Nietzsche, Mill and Mathew Arnold who expressed their ideas on liberty and equality. Nietzsche expresses his views on Truth in his book *The Gay Science* thus: “We do not even have any organ at all for knowing, for truth; we know just as much as may be useful in the interest of the human herd” (25). Darwin also claims that “thinking is for the sake of behavior and his justification of truth as the good in the way of belief” (35). Nietzsche claims that “human beings are clever animals”(36). Beliefs are “to be judged by their utility in fulfilling these animals’ various needs” (36). Rorty opines that when we examine the views of James and Nietzsche it is found that both the philosophers agree that “there is no will to truth distinct from the will to happiness” (36). Rorty gives in detail the

ideas of J.S. Mill, Jeremy Bentham and Nietzsche when he discusses the question of liberty and happiness of the people. He refers to the romantic ideas of S.T. Coleridge who envisages a free and happy society. Bentham and Mill were romantic utilitarian and Mill wrote on his essay *On Liberty* thus:

The grand, leading principle, towards which every argument unfolded in these pages directly converges, is the absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity. (36)

Richard Rorty gives a comprehensive view of the contribution of the philosophical ideas of Matthew Arnold and J.S. Mill. Matthew Arnold, “looked upon poetry as a religion, or rather as Religion and Philosophy as One” (36). Bentham believes that “Poetry not only on par with, but the necessary condition of any true and comprehensive Philosophy” (36). M.H. Abrams observes that for Arnold “poetry could and should take on the tremendous responsibility of the functions once performed by the exploded dogmas of religion and religious philosophy” (*The Mirror and the Lamp* 36). Rorty investigates these moral and religious ideas of Mill and Arnold to highlight the significance of the values of cultural politics. Richard Rorty gives a brief description of the ideas of Mill and Arnold thus:

The substitution of poetry for religion as a source of ideals, a movement that began with the Romantics, seems to me usefully described as a return to polytheism. For if, with the utilitarians, you reject the idea that a nonhuman authority can rank human needs, and thus dictate moral choices to human beings, you will favor what Arnold called Hellenism over what he called Hebraism. You will reject the idea, characteristic of the evangelical Christians whom Arnold thought of as Hebraist that it suffices to love God and keep his commandments. You will substitute what Arnold called the idea of a human nature perfect on all its sides. (32)

In his chapter entitled: “Justice as a Larger Loyalty” Richard Rorty observes that without justice people cannot enjoy liberty and happiness of life. Rorty firmly states that without economic affluence the democratic institutions fail to bring happiness

and justice to people. Democracy and freedom go side by side. In the Third World people are facing acute shortage of food and there is no economic prosperity. Rorty comments thus:

So the rich democracies face a choice between perpetuating their own democratic institutions and traditions and dealing justly with the Third World. Doing justice to the Third World would require exporting capital and jobs until everything is leveled out – until an honest day's work, in a ditch or at a computer, earns no higher a wage in Cincinnati or Paris than in a small town in Botswana. (51)

With the shortage of money there will be “no free public libraries, competing newspapers and networks, widely available liberal arts education, and all the other institutions that are necessary to produce enlightened public opinion, and thus to keep governments more or less democratic” (51). Rorty also discusses the concept of loyalty and its relationship with justice. He examines the views of Kant who insists that “justice springs from reason, and loyalty from sentiment” (51). Juergen Habermas insists that Kantian way of looking at things is the best approach in modern life. Rorty quotes the ideas of Michael Walzer who is wary of terms like reason and universal obligation. Annette Baier in her book *Moral Prejudices* discusses morality thus:

To behave morally is to do what comes naturally in your dealings with your parents and children or your fellow-clan members. It amounts to respecting the trust they place in you. Obligation, as opposed to trust, enters the picture only when your loyalty to a smaller group conflicts with your loyalty to a larger group. (53)

Rorty gives an example to describe the nature of obligation. When the families confederate into tribes men are free to leave parents in the lurch to join the wars. Kant has described the difference between reason and sentiment. The idea of a universal moral obligation is fully explained by Richard Rorty in this part of his book. Moral identity of a person is determined by the group with which one identifies. Rorty explains the whole concept thus:

Moral dilemmas are not, in this view, the result of a conflict between reason and sentiment but between alternative selves, alternative self-descriptions, alternative ways of giving a meaning to one's life. (53)

In the last section of his book: "Philosophy's Place in Culture", Richard Rorty discusses the cultural role of philosophy and its significance in bringing transformation in society. He begins this part of the book thus: "Philosophy occupies an important place in culture only when things seem to be falling apart – when long-held and widely cherished beliefs are threatened. At such periods, intellectuals reinterpret the past in terms of an imagined future" (79). The philosophers offer suggestions from time to time about what can be preserved and what must be discarded. In antiquity, Plato and Aristotle believed that "human beings, unlike the beasts that perish, have a special relation to the ruling powers of the universe" (79). Spinoza and Kant taught Europe how "to replace love of God with love of Truth, and how to replace obedience to the divine will with moral purity" (79). When the democratic and industrial revolutions started new idea about man's relation to society and with his community came into existence. Marx and Mill gave new ideas to define man's relation to society and to his fellow beings. Marx gave the theory of class struggle and for the first time he gave his philosophy of history and the theory of class struggle in his *Das Capital*. There was no intellectual struggle described as the warfare between science and technology. Rorty comments thus:

As high culture became more thoroughly secularized, the educated classes of Europe and the Americas became complacently materialist in their understanding of how things work. In the battle between Plato and Democritus – the one Plato described as waged between the gods and the giants – Western intellectuals have come down, once and for all, on the side of the giants. (79)

The utilitarian philosophy became popular and the religious and political institutions were evaluated on the basis of utility calculus. Rorty comments thus:

They also became complacently utilitarian and experimentalist in their evaluations of proposed social and political initiatives. They share the

same utopian vision: a global commonwealth in which human rights are respected, equality of opportunity is assured, and the chances of human happiness are thereby increased . Political argument nowadays is about how this goal might best be reached. (73)

Plato took up the dialectical approach and argued that conceptualization and argument would bring one to full stop. Rorty gives the views of Berlin who says that Friedrich Schiller introduced “for the first time in human thought the notion that ideals are not to be discovered at all, but to be invented; not to be found but to be generated, generated as art is generated” (87). Richard Rorty sums up his arguments about philosophy and culture thus:

On the view of culture I am suggesting, intellectual and moral progress is achieved by making claims that seem absurd to one generation into the common sense of the later generations. The role of the intellectuals is to effect this change by explaining how the new ideas might, if tried out, solve, or dissolve, problems created by the old ones. Neither the notion of universal validity nor that of a privileged access to truth is necessary to accomplish this latter purpose. (91)

In the last section of his book Richard Rorty discusses the significance of the philosophical ideas in the making of a better, safe free and democratic world. In his chapter: “Pragmatism and Romanticism” Richard Rorty describes all the essential characteristics of a humanistic philosophy and his pragmatic liberalism. He refuses to follow the old and traditional theory of philosophy and the correspondence theory of truth. He refuses to believe that true beliefs are accurate representation of reality. He explores the role of imagination over reason and clearly observes that “reason can only follow paths that the imagination has broken”(111). He quotes Shelley who “stated that poetry is at once the center and the circumference of knowledge” (111). It is not easy to understand the working of the universe and the nature of Truth and Philosophy in real life. Rorty explains the whole situation thus:

We know how to correct our beliefs about the colors of physical objects, or about the motions of planets, or the provenance of wristwatches, but we have no idea how to correct our metaphysical beliefs about the ultimate nature of things. Metaphysics is not a discipline, but a sort of intellectual play space. (113)

It is not easy to understand the Truth, as there is a difference between reality and Truth. Philosophy helps us to understand the nature of Truth and this plays an edifying role in the life of man. God has given man a sense of enquiry; he can use his reason to find out the real nature of things and objects. It is argued that summarizing Rorty's views of truth, goodness and rightness are linked with philosophy of politics and culture. Rorty questions: whether or not there is anything beyond contingent human practice. No philosopher can ignore the role of imagination. Ontology remains popular because we are still reluctant to accept that imagination sets the bound of thought. Philosophy and politics are important but no one can ignore the role of art and literature. Science is important but equally important is romantic imagination which creates art and literature. But science and literature have positive role to play in the formation of cultural politics.

At the heart of both philosophy's ancient quarrel with poetry and the more recent quarrel between the scientific and the literary cultures is the fear of both philosophers and scientists that the imagination may indeed go all the way down. This fear is entirely justified, for the imagination is the source. of language, and thought is impossible without language. Revulsion against this claim has caused philosophers to become obsessed by the need to achieve an access to reality unmediated by, and prior to, the use of language. (113)

To conclude, Richard Rorty gives his new ideas about art literature, science and philosophy in his new book *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* (2007). It was his last book and in this book he seriously explores the significance of philosophical ideas in the life of man. He rejects the analytical philosophy and puts faith in the modern philosophy which can bring global transformation. The philosophical ideas are not

confined to the department of the Universities and he gives a higher status to philosophy. Aristotle observed in his *Poetics* that tragedy is the highest form of art; Rorty forcefully avers that philosophy is the real backbone of a society as it is directly linked with the culture. Philosophy teaches man to understand the real nature of Truth and to abandon all the old supernatural and mythical beliefs to evolve a free, liberal democratic society based on rule of law and justice.

Chapter 7

Hermeneutics of Derrida and Richard Rorty: A Textual Comparative Analysis

In the postmodern culture new wave of hermeneutic interpretation has emerged with the new philosophical interpretations and reconsideration of history of philosophy. Interestingly, philosophers from Nietzsche to Wittgenstein, Lyotard, Deleuze and numerous others belong to the hermeneutic tradition and its relations to the question of meaning and truth. Wittgenstein opposes one dimensional approach towards an understanding of language and argues that people often choose and value certain words and phrases over others. Heidegger also lays emphasis on the significance of language. He has made efforts for “phenomenological destruction” of Western philosophy. Lyotard also discusses Paralogic language game challenging Western philosophy.

Structuralism and Post-structuralism

Saussure's notion of a social system and his theory of language is the backbone of structuralism. He has given a new way of thinking in terms of language and speech. Structuralism is a way of thinking about the world as Terence Hawkes observes: “Every perceiver's method of perceiving can be shown to contain an inherent bias which affects what is perceived to a significant degree” (*Structuralism and Semiotics* 17). There is a relationship between observer and observed and the true nature of things lies not in things but in the relationship which human beings construct and then perceive between them. Terence further argues that “Saussure inherited the traditional view already referred to, that the world consists of independently existing objects, capable to precise objective observation and classification” (*Structuralism and Semiotics* 19). Saussure's contribution in the domain of language can not be underestimated. He proposed that a language should be studied as a unified field, a self-sufficient system. Saussure argued that language is self-defining and so whole

and complete. Language has power to bring out any kind of transformation in the society. Language is self-regulating; it constitutes its own reality. Terence opines thus: "In a complex system or structure of correspondence between distinct signs, and distinct ideas or 'meanings' to which those signs, distinctive by relating between a signifier (a sound or sound image) and a signified (the referent, or concept represented by the signifier). The constitutive importance of social reality and knowledge is the power of discourse as a system of signs" (*Structuralism and Semiotics* 21). Saussure contended that the knowledge of the world is shaped and conditioned by the language that serves to represent it.

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) wrote many essays and devoted to the task of dismantling a concept of structure. He is known for developing a method of semiotic interpretation famous as deconstruction and this philosophical idea is discussed in his various works such as *Speech and Phenomena* (1967), *Of Grammatology*, *Writing and Difference* and *Margins of Philosophy*. Richard Rorty called him as the "philosopher of language" Poststructuralism refuses to accept the idea of the universe as in any sense given or objectivity there in the text. Today the notion of the structure with a specific centre destroys the possibility of generation of meaning. He revolutionized the philosophical theories on art and literature. Derrida says that the substitute does not substitute itself for anything, which has somehow existed before it. Meaning is located at the pole of the signified and is considered inseparable from its opposite, the signifier. Derrida questions the reality of metaphysics of meaning which works on the basis of "logic of supplement." In his *Of Grammatology*, Derrida expounds and elucidates the main ideas of deconstruction. Derrida's critical tool serves to interpret the western thought by reversing "binary oppositions" that provides its foundation. He reinterpreted the theory of language propounded by Wittgenstein and Davidson. The critics of Derrida observe that Derrida has brought poetry into philosophy. Derrida (1976) gave two important terms phonocentrism and logocentrism exploring the difference between the two terms. He argues thus: "When speech fails to protect presence, writing becomes necessary. In this case, writing then serve as a supplement in which takes the place of speech" (144).

Bakhtin and Derrida: New Theory of Language.

Bakhtin introduced interdisciplinary and inter-textual research. Bakhtin argued that the dialogues are the product of society and each dialogue differs from man to man. Bakhtin believes that social world is made of multiple voices of the people and many perspectives are put in the dialogues. The power of the dialogues is immense as they can excite new interpretative and analytical interest. For Bakhtin, the language is a medium to bring changes in the society. Bakhtin introduced interdisciplinary and inter-textual research. The power of the dialogues is immense as they can excite new interpretative and analytical interest. Derrida opined that the analytical and logocentric interest in philosophy is widely known in the West. He called it Logos; and this is far away from transcendental reality. Derrida's famous books such as *Writing and Difference*, *Speech and Phenomena* and *Of Grammatology* brought revolution in literary criticism. Rorty called him the philosopher of language because he was the first postmodernist who introduced new forms of language philosophy. Deconstruction certainly means the death of a meaning, of absolute truth, of universal value. The theory is discussed in detail in his *Of Grammatology*. Deconstruction is discussed as a critical practice which serves to interpret the Western thought by reversing the binary opposition. Derrida has opposed the process of totality; he virulently attacks the very concept of a book. He argues that the idea of a book is the idea of totality. The totality of the signifier cannot be a totality.

Derrida and the Theory of Deconstruction

Derrida gave the theory of deconstruction challenging the assumptions about language, writing and experience. He undermined the logocentric tradition inventing a method to topple the metaphysical tradition of the history of philosophy. Norris, Christopher Norris (1987) has discussed the theory of deconstruction of Derrida commenting thus:

Deconstruction is not, he says primarily a matter of philosophical contents, themes or theses philosophemes, poems, theologemes or ideology but especially and inseparably meaningful frames, institutional structure, pedagogical or rhetorical norms, the

possibilities of law of authority, of representation is terms of its very market. (*Derrida*14)

Derrida doesn't claim to have offered a method but only provides new act of reading which in fact acts as a new method. Deconstruction doesn't do anything as it reveals only the inherent structure of a text. Julian Wolfreys (1998) comments thus: "It does not take things apart, it is not an operation, it only reveals how things are put together" (*Deconstruction Derrida* 14). In his essay "Structure, Sign, and Play" (1978), Derrida expresses his new vision of language thus:

The joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and without origin which is offered to an active interpretation. (278)

The critics of Derrida observe that Derrida has brought poetry into philosophy and most of his arguments depend upon shape and sounds of words on puns and verbal associations. Derrida gives the message of patience shown by Franz Kafka (1994) who said: "All human errors are impatience, a premature breaking off of methodical procedure, an apparent fencing in of what is apparently at issue" ("All Human Error are Impatience" 3). Like Kafka, Derrida brought a radical transformation in literary criticism. In studying literary theory, his thoughts suggest that a text needs to be read to be a text. Hawkes says: "for Derrida to deconstruct a piece of writing is to operate a kind of strategic reversal. He insists that all thinking about language, philosophy and culture be conceived within the context of writing. Derrida argues that nothing remained immune to the movement of Deconstruction" (*Structuralism and Semiotics* 123). Peter Dews (1995) has explained the concept of Derrida's deconstruction thus in simple words:

Indeed, he writes what remains as irreducible to any deconstruction as the very possibility of deconstruction is perhaps a certain emancipatory promise or a certain idea of justice which is not be equated with any empirical edifice of law. (*The Limits of Disenchantment* 6)

Derrida argues that there is no such thought, idea or concept which is not constructed out of group of other thought and concepts. He argues that there is nothing but texts and there is no such thing as reality. There is “nothing outside the text” signifiers that one accedes to a text. In his section from *Of Grammatology* Derrida argues thus:

If one comprehends the system of writing in its proper sense, one comes to understand how concepts such as inside and outside become, at the very least problematized, not at least or the fact that inside and outside are not strictly separable, always being connected to each other, being part of each other as with the figure of the hymn which strictly speaking is neither simply inside nor outside the body of the text. (28)

Deconstruction is a strict analysis of language in the philosophical and theological text. The notion of textuality is very important in deconstruction. Language is important in society and in the life of an individual. Books are written in a language but speech is recorded in history and culture. Derrida argues that Deconstruction has power to subvert everything that has descended through generation.

Richard Rorty and Derrida

Rorty in his famous article: “Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?” reviews the philosophical ideas of Derrida. In this thesis all the major philosophical issues; linguistic thoughts; ideas relating to structuralism; semiotics; structuralism and post-structuralism are investigated by Richard Rorty who wrote *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers* (1991) and *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers* (1998), *Philosophy and Social Hope* (2000), *Philosophy as Cultural Politics: Philosophical Papers iv* (2007). Rorty argues that the two traditions compliment rather than oppose each other. Rorty emerges as a postmodern philosopher who opposed the traditional views of Western philosophy and put forward his pragmatic philosophy of language and culture. Both Derrida and Richard Rorty have different perspectives as they reject a foundationalist conception of philosophy. Rorty investigates the legacy of Enlightenment. It is pertinent to note that those who are interested in understanding the philosophical views of Jacques Derrida and Richard

Rorty should read *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*. Richard J. Bernstein observes thus:

In recent years there have been some striking convergences between Pragmatism and Deconstruction. But there are also significant ways in which these philosophical orientations swerve away from each other and seem incommensurable. Chantal Mouffe's lucid introduction sets the stage for a lively exchange between Richard Rorty and Jacques Derrida. Their crossfire is enriched by the contributions of Simon Critchley and Ernesto Laclau. (*Philosophical Profiles* 123)

Derrida and Rorty oppose the claim of Habermas that there exists a link between universalism, rationalism and modern democracy. Both argue that constitutional democracy represents a moment in the unfolding of reason. Critchley examined the theory of Derrida and observed that he should be seen as a public thinker and his work has ethical and political implications. Rorty's philosophical ideas are important as they are concerned with the individual autonomy and with the question of social justice. The ideas of Rorty promote social engineering and the concept of liberal utopia. Rorty is critical of Habermas who wants to find a viewpoint standing above politics. He comments thus: "We should have to abandon the hopeless task of finding politically neutral premises, premises which can be justified to anybody, from which to infer an obligation to pursue democratic politics" (20). Political liberalism of Richard Rorty is a form of anti-foundationalism. It examines his view of liberal political thought and providing a political justification of liberalism. He has been seriously concerned with what he calls "social hope" which can survive in the postmodern world. This thesis offers a critique of Rorty's views on knowledge, language, truth, science, morality, structuralism and post-structuralism. Rorty (1982) agrees with Elizabeth Anscom that the notion of moral obligation only makes sense if one believes in God. He talks of moral law and moral truth thus:

[...] when the secret police come, when the torturers violate the innocent, there is nothing to be said to them of the form. There is something within you which you are betraying. Though you embody

the practices of a totalitarian society which will endure forever, there is something beyond those practices which condemns you. (Richard Rorty, xii)

The majority of critics argue that Rorty seeks to defend liberal democracy in the postmodern world and all his philosophical observations are directed to achieve this goal. Adam Smith observes that in the contemporary scenario people is skeptic about the notion of truth as they mistrust reason. Thomas Nagel (1986) claims that “in the name of liberation, these movements have offered us intellectual representation” (Richard Rorty11). Nagel thinks of Rorty as “grounding objectivity in consensus” (20). Charles Taylor (1992) observes thus: “Things that were settled by some external reality; traditional law, say, or nature are now referred to our choice” (*The Ethics of Authenticity* 81). Rorty holds that the question of ultimate truth and value must be explored for the development of humanity. Rorty accepts MacIntyre’s (1985) idea “that liberals are utilitarians. For him there is a relationship between the liberal view that “cruelty is the worst thing we do” (qtd in Rorty 2). Rorty (1999) evaluates the views of William James and John Dewey who observe that “ in the end the only moral or epistemological criteria we have or need is whether performing an action, or holding a belief, will, in the long run, make for greater human happiness” (Rorty 7). Rorty is considered as one of the prominent influential philosopher and thinker like Bertrand Russell. He is a remarkable philosopher and a pragmatic thinker with a broad intellectual range, his works made commendable contribution to literary criticism and his articles appeared in *The Nation* and *The Atlantic* giving an insight into postmodernism, liberalism, pragmatism and anti-foundationalism. Rorty’s name is associated with Jacques Derrida, Dewey and Habermas. He did for America what Hegel and Heidegger had done for Germany to portray the philosophical ideas of his country. Rorty (1995) wants people and societies to “put aside the question What is the meaning of human life: and to substitute the question What meaning shall we give to our lives?” (68). Rorty (1998) further claims that “no past human achievement, no Plato’s or even Christ’s can tell us about the ultimate significance of human life. No such achievement can give us a template on which to model our future” (24).

A Journey from Deconstruction to Pragmatism

Derrida has given a new concept of reality. For Derrida deconstruction is a reading technique, the emphasis of the deconstruction is about the plurality of meaning. Richard Rorty came under the influence of William James and he conceived “pragmatism” to counter Derrida’s philosophy of deconstruction. His entire life is dedicated to propagate liberal democracy in America. He wrote *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982), *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), *Achieving Our Country* (1998), *Philosophy and Social Hope* (2000) and four volumes of philosophical papers: *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (1991), *Essays on Heidegger and Others* (1991), *Truth and Progress* (1998) and *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* (2007). Rorty contends that the critical methodology of Derrida doesn’t provide any systematic framework to solve the conflicting issues relating to culture and society and political democracy.

Richard Rorty in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* explored the nature and the significance of philosophy investigating the entire history of philosophy from Plato to the present time. The history of philosophy shows that Rorty generated enthusiasm and excitement in the domain of philosophy. Rorty investigates how philosophy can play a positive role in the development of life and culture. His book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is the beginning of his philosophical journey from traditional view of philosophy to postmodern view of philosophy. Rorty discards the nihilistic approach of Nietzsche and makes efforts to transform existentialism into postmodernism. It had become professionalized confined to the libraries and the departments in the universities. He wanted philosophy to serve the common man in relieving from the stress and tensions of life. His work has broken all the barriers of philosophical thought and has moved into the branches of law, historiography, psychotherapy and social theory. Rorty read the works all the important thinkers and philosophers such as Karl Marx, Proust, Elliot, Plato, Dostoevsky, Kafka and Bakhtin and came to the conclusion that the time has come to reinterpret the role and significance of philosophy. He observes thus:

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. (3)

Rorty's approach is therapeutic as he examines the philosophical views of Wittgenstein, Heidegger and John Dewey. His thrust is on dismantling the assumptions of the analytic tradition in philosophy. In Part 1, Rorty investigates what he calls "a philosophy of mind." In this respect he goes back to the philosophical thoughts of Rene Descartes and contends that Descartes moved away from the notion that the mind is reason. He focuses on the question of the quest for wisdom. The approach of Rorty is pragmatic as he seeks truth in imitation of William James. He asserts that truth means "what is better is for us to believe rather than an accurate representation of reality" (12). Rorty rejected the systematic and analytic approach to philosophy and explores the therapeutic and edifying aspect of philosophy. In the third section of the book Rorty turns to Thomas Kuhn who wrote *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). In Part three of the book, Rorty considers philosophy to be edifying. He turns to Thomas Kuhn who wrote *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1962). He argues that "the idea of normal discourse can apply to any sort of scientific, political and theological discourse. Descartes, Kant and John Locke serve as primary examples of Rorty's ascription of normal discourse in philosophy, but Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Dewey lead the way in doing abnormal philosophy" (12). Rorty has high opinion of Descartes as he considers him as the "father of modern philosophy." The philosophical thought of Kant and Plato taught Rorty the significance of ethical ideas and value system operating in each society. He used the metaphor in the title of the book as he explores the significance of the word "mirror of Nature." Philosophy is important for man because it is directly linked with nature and is a true mirror of society. The word mirror is very significant as it symbolizes the true representation of reality. Truth is the real mirror of nature and nature is the manifestation of all that is true and universal. Rorty comments thus: "The picture which holds traditional

philosophy captive is that of mind as a great mirror containing various representations some accurate some not-and capable of being studied by pure, nonempirical methods” (12). Philosophy has positive and essential role to play; it is directly linked with nature and culture of man since the dawn of civilization. Wordsworth observed that nature is the manifestation of God and he sought the truth of nature and God in establishing his communion with Nature. Matthew Arnold believes that poetry can perform the function of religion. Rorty also explores that philosophy is the true and right knowledge; it is a way of life; a true representation of all that is true to Nature. All ethical and moral ideas and thoughts flow from the philosophical ideas and man away from philosophy is away from Nature; culture and God. Wordsworth turned to Nature in his hours of weariness and when the weight of this unintelligible world was heavy on his heart. Nature had a soothing and tranquilizing effect on him. Similarly, Rorty believes that philosophy has therapeutic effect on man. Philosophy is thus foundational for cultural growth as all the areas are judged through reason and logic in society. Charles Guignon (2003) observes thus: “He moves from Dewey to Derrida, but he is as apt to draw from a Philip Larkin poem, from Proust, or from a Nabokov novel as from Kant and Nietzsche” (*Richard Rorty* 3). He also explores the reason why the contemporary philosophy from Plato to Kant is unpopular because of analytical approach. Richard Rorty brought revolution in the domain of philosophy disregarding the philosophical boundaries and propounding his own philosophical assumptions in his seminal book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1990) breaking from the traditional approaches to philosophy and culture. Rorty discusses the issue of epistemology and metaphysics and the gulf that exists between analytic philosophy and pragmatic philosophy. Rorty claimed that “the difference between analytic and other sorts of philosophy is relatively unimportant-a matter of style and tradition rather than a difference of method or of first principle” (8).

Hobbes and Descartes condemned the modern sciences which destroyed the ancient system of philosophy. Rorty found that the philosophy has become the syllabus for the schools and is no longer relevant to solve the existential problems of modern man. Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Dewey evolved a new way of making

philosophy foundational; they propounded “a new theory of representation” (19) which could give new direction to the modern thinkers. Kant was disgusted with the failure of philosophy and this led to his Copernican Revolution. Kant argued that philosophy must take into consideration space, time, substance and causality also.

Richard Rorty and the Problem of Truth: Davidson and Truth

Rorty had great regard for Davidson who gave him a sound theory of Truth. With the help of Davidson, Rorty was able to handle the most vexing question of Truth from the philosophical point of view. He explored realism and objectivity from the pragmatic perspective. Like Habermas, Rorty rejects the correspondence theory of truth. He argues that such a theory is an objective illusion. Correspondence theories of truth lead to misunderstanding and the facts are distorted; Rorty gives his famous dictum about truth that “true for me but not for you” and “true in my culture but not in yours” are pointless observations. It is often said “so is true, but not now” and truth differs from situation to situation. He is indebted to Donald Davidson as he realized that nobody can even try to specify the nature of truth. In the Greek world Truth was linked with religion and the pursuit of truth was considered the pursuit of noble values of life which pillow human civilization. There are many uses of the word true but the only one which could not be eliminated from daily life is the cautionary use of the word. Truth is often tested and its justification is considered; a belief may be justified but not something that is true. Rorty followed the guidelines of Davidson and observed that the word true had no explanatory use and had only cautionary use. Rorty was disappointed by the views of Davidson on the matter of truth as he contended in this book that Davidson failed to take the pragmatic approach to truth. He says: "Pragmatists think that if something makes no difference to practice, it should make no difference to philosophy" (55).

Richard Rorty in his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* explores the Dialectical relationship between Truth and Falsehood. They want to have an essence into the truth and knowledge. They want philosophy to provide the justification of truth and understanding of the nature of meaning. Philosophy should provide them an account of objective value that will allow human choice and action to stand justified.

The lectures and papers compiled in the form of *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* form an integral part of the diagnosis of Richard Rorty to solve the existential problems of common man. In this book Rorty debunks the ideas of Plato and Kant deconstructing the pretensions of philosophical theory to promote practical and political dimensions of human life. The target he aims at is the thought “that a more comprehensive philosophical outlook would let us hold self-creation and justice, private perfection and human solidarity in a single vision” (Rorty xiv). Rorty sets out to “show how things look if we drop the demand for a theory which unifies the public and the private, and are content to treat the demand of self-creation of human solidarity as equally valid, yet forever incommensurable” (xv). Akeel Bilgrami observes thus:

I have been careful to say repeatedly above that we are exploring a transcendental idealism that rejects *Davidson's version* of what makes truth objective as defined by his claim that we can't tell which of our beliefs is true. This suggests that there is another way of thinking of the objectivity of truth. (Is Truth a Goal of Inquiry? 249)

Rorty outlines his vision of a liberal utopia in which the American and humanity at large could find solace in life. His book is an interesting study of philosophical field of moral inquiry and morality. Rorty argues that literature, philosophy and political thought are not the driving force in the society but all progress is the result of historical process and moral progress. Rorty believes that philosophy can address the problems of society from time to time. In the Greek world, Socrates and Plato faced the challenge to provide the solution and in the 18th century, Hobbes Locke and Rousseau provided their own solutions to free humanity from the clutches of despotic rulers. Rorty goes on to point out that:

Hobbes did not have theological arguments against Dante's world-picture; Kant had only a very bad scientific argument for the phenomenological character of science; Nietzsche and James did not have epistemological arguments for pragmatism. Each of these thinkers presented us with a new form of intellectual life, and asked us

to compare its advantages with the old. (*Consequences of Pragmatism* 156)

Rorty investigates the fundamental changes confronting modern man as he ventures to find out the relationship between truth and falsehood. At the outset of the book Rorty investigates the fundamental nature of truth and its eternal value in society. Human civilization is surviving because of man's faith in Truth. Since antiquity, the philosophers had been struggling to explore the meaning and significance of truth. Truth has been an eternal source of inspiration to man and has been valued in all the societies of the world. Rorty in his book *Truth and Progress* (1998) observes thus, "Truth cannot be out there-cannot exist independently of the human mind because sentence cannot so exist, or be out there"(13). Rorty comments thus, "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" (2). He observes thus in his passion to explore Truth and says: "Old metaphors are constantly dying off into literalness, and then serving as a platform and foil for new metaphors" (40). Rorty agrees with Heidegger that the quest for certainty, clarity, and direction from outside can also be viewed as an attempt to escape from time, to view *Sein* as something that has little to do with *Zeist*" (283). He rejects the theory of language given by Derrida and believes that vocabularies as merely tools for coping with certain kinds of organism. In his "Introduction" to *Consequences of Pragmatism* Rorty observes thus: "Physics is a way of trying to cope with various bits of the universe; ethics is a matter of trying to cope with other bits. Mathematics helps physics do its job; literature and the arts help ethics do" (359). The foundation of society is language; it is the medium of correspondence. Man can give his ideas and meanings only through language that can respond to reality. Rorty talks of the old and obsolete vocabularies of the ancestors. Rorty has explored the relationship between truth and reality and the role of language in understanding the truth. Rorty took keen interest in analytic tradition and boldly addressed the issues and problems confronting modern man in his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* making a foray into literature, philosophy and aesthetics. Rorty argues that "truth is no more and no less than what can be framed

with language” (2). For Rorty language in Rorty’s philosophy do not have meaning. He puts this point boldly by saying that “to have a meaning is to have a place in a language game. Metaphors by definition, do not” (40).

In the first section of his book *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* Richard Rorty examines the conceptions of contingency of language and vocabularies and then he proceeds to examine ironism. Rorty observes that one major difference between the traditional philosopher and the ironist is that while the former gives undue importance to the logical arguments, the later sees argument simply as a matter of rhetoric. Like Sartre, Rorty believes in liberalism and supports the growth of democratic liberalism. He argues that in a liberal society each individual is given an opportunity to grow and contribute to the growth of culture. He highlights the fears of nihilistic tendencies: “liberal societies have produced more and more people who are able to recognize the contingency of the vocabulary in which they state their highest hopes—the contingency of their own consciences—and yet have remained faithful to those consciences” (46). Rorty discusses the view of “morality of Nietzsche and Freud observing that it is through an understanding of Freud’s conceptions of self and morality that man can learn to accept, and put to work the above described Nietzschean conception of what it means to be a full-fledged human being” (30). Rorty identifies Freud as the “moralist who helped de-divinize the self by tracking conscience home to its origin in the contingencies of our upbringing” (30).

To conclude, in his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* he talks of “the political utopian and the innovative artist for whom the whole metaphor of truth as representations of a world that is discovered rather than developed is pointless” (Rorty 4). In his book *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Rorty reads George Orwell and examines his views on liberalism. He considers his views of the relation between preservation of freedom, prevention of cruelty with regard for truth. Akeel Bilgrami observes thus:

Truth in this sense provides no norm nor is it a goal of inquiry. Thus for him, all that remains once we see that the only notion of objective

truth there is lacks any interest for the pragmatist, is to give up any philosophical interest in truth. What philosophers should understand is that in inquiry we only justify our beliefs to the best of our ability against audiences which may find them unjustified. (“Is Truth a Goal of Inquiry?” 249)

Rorty in his books, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* and *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, claimed to have solved the problem giving his realistic theory of truth. He doesn't make any tall claim and grasped the first horn of this dilemma, seeking to change the subject in order “to avoid hinting that this suggestion gets something right, that my sort of philosophy corresponds to the way things really are” a notion that he viewed as being tainted by metaphysics. His way of doing so in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* is to eschew any suggestion that he is arguing, or making truth claims.

Europe did not *decide* to accept the idiom of Romantic poetry, or of socialistpolitics, or of Galilean mechanics. That sort of shift was no more an act of will than it was a result of argument. Rather, Europe gradually lost the habit of using certain words and gradually acquired the habit of using others. (6)

In his books *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* and *Truth and Progress; Philosophical Papers*, Richard Rorty continued his endeavor to explore truth. Rorty's main obsession was to explore the nature of Truth and in his major books he ventured to address the issue of Truth and objective reality. Rorty argues that “truth is best viewed as a term we use when we agree that a statement is valid, not as Truth in the metaphysical sense of the way the world really is apart from our judgment” (8). Rorty (1982) would later call this a “pragmatist theory of truth” (xiii), expressing his distrust of classical theories of truth. His book begins with Rorty's essay “Universality and Truth” which continues his dialogue with Jurgen Habermas. Robert B. Brandom (2000) has recorded the challenges of Rorty and his concern for the new approach to philosophy thus:

For thirty years or more, Rorty has worked to break the grip on analytic philosophy of two problem-defining assumptions. The first is the Kantian idea that knowledge, or thinking generally, must be understood in terms of some relation between what the world offers up to the thinker, on one side, and on the other the active subjective capacities by which the thinker structures for cognitive use what the world thus provides. (*Rorty and His Critics* 11)

Rorty investigated and explored the philosophical observations made by different philosophers of different ages. He read, Hegel, Dewey, Habermas, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Quin, Davidson, Derrida and Foucault. Rorty offers a non-systematic, but logical and developed interpretation of present world on the basis of knowledge he appropriated from different sources. Brandom observes thus:

Rorty's claim is that philosophy now has a desperately important mission; liberating humanity from the most deeply rooted form of superstition, mystification and disavowal of our responsibilities, that we are now in a position to bring into view, one that, if he is right, keeps us from understanding the real lessons we ought to learn from the rise of modern science-the most spectacularly successful social institution of the last three hundred years. (*Rorty and His Critics* 13)

In his essay "Is the Topic of Truth Relevant to Democratic Politics?" Richard Rorty explores the history of objectivity; the essay is useful as it distinguishes Greek from Kantian objectivity. Greek objectivity is a relation between an intellectual product called a logos. In simple words it means "telling it like it is". Kant was disgusted with this approach of understanding truth. Kant argued that objectivity is nothing but a certain conceptual "unity of experience" which is subjective in nature. Truth is objective when it is impersonal, transcendental operation of understanding. Rorty comments thus:

The more of that truth we uncover, the more common ground we shall share, and the more tolerant and inclusivist we shall therefore become. The rise of relatively democratic, relatively tolerant, societies in the

last few hundred years is said to be due to the increased rationality of modern times, where 'rationality' denotes the employment of an innate a truth-oriented faculty. (22)

Hilary Putnam in his book *Reason, Truth and History* (1981) describes as “the position we are fated to occupy in any case, the position of beings who cannot have a view of the world that does not reflect our interests and values, but who are, for all that, committed to regarding some views of the world and, for that matter, some interests and values as better than others” (178). Rorty rejects Putnam’s views of truth and adds: “identifying idealized rational acceptability with acceptability to us at our best is just what I had in mind when I said that pragmatists should be ethnocentrists rather than relativists” (452). The mind of man is believed to mirror reality. Thus truth is connected with the mind and a nonhuman description independently. Mind is considered as an arena of appearances representing the world. Rorty rejected the idea of Descartes as he says: “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” (Rorty 123). In *Truth and Progress* Rorty writes that he is “happy to say that when I put forward large philosophical views I am making claims to truth rather than simply a recommendation to speak differently” (92). Richard Rorty discarded all the traditional analytic theories of truth and propounded his pragmatic theory provoking a wide range of the most diverse charges. The critics called his a relativist. Rorty was a radical thinker as he gave his own controversial theories of truth and reality. In his *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*.he argues 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” (5).

In his book *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* Richard Rorty articulates his vision of pragmatism and his faith in democratic liberalism. He brought revolution in America like Frederic Jameson who discarded all the traditional techniques of American fiction employed by Ernest Hemingway William Faulkner and Joseph Heller. Jameson expressed his faith in democratic liberalism and made serious efforts to review Marxism for the American society. He observed that Marxism supports

totalitarianism and in America society totalitarianism has no place as the Americans believe in liberty and equality. Richard Rorty scrapped the traditional view of philosophy and strongly contended that analytic philosophy is irrelevant today and the time has come for the philosophy to give a direction to the people trapped in a vicious circle of uncertainty and absurdity. Rorty's book *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* explores the political philosophy of Richard Rorty. The main theme of the book of Rorty is to promote liberal values and institutions. Brian Barry claims that "the point of liberalism is that it is universalistic" (*Culture and Equality* 138). Rorty seems unable to press for the truth or goodness of liberalism in societies. Rorty has reviewed the role of philosophy in Western culture and the role of imagination in politics and literature. He offers a logical and non-systematic interpretation of philosophy. He tries to bridge the gap between post-Darwinian philosophy and post-Nietzschean European philosophy. He wants philosophy to perform the function of religion working for the betterment of society. He strongly contends that philosophy is not dry and dull but has the strength to change the life of people. Philosophy can play a positive role to relieve the anxieties of people. Philosophy has therapeutic effect and his pragmatic approach is the backbone of his political and philosophical thoughts. Jameson observes thus: Postmodernism came about as a result of an "accumulated disillusionment with the promises came about of the Enlightenment project and its progress of science, so central to modern thinking" (*The Political Unconscious* 13).

In his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Rorty has given clear description of the role of philosophy and its significance in the real life. Rorty's "substitution of edification for epistemology was intended to promote a conception of culture as a conversation rather than as a structure erected upon foundations" (319). He talks of new culture thus:

In his salon, so to speak, hermetic thinkers are charmed out of their self- enclosed practices. Disagreements between disciplines and discourses are compromised or transcended in the course of the conversation. (317)

In his article: “Cultural Politics, Political Innovation, and the Work of Human Rights,” David Hiley talks of Rorty’s philosophy of cultural politics. Robert Brandom in his article entitled: “An Arc of Thought: From Rorty’s Eliminative Materialism to His Pragmatism” observes that Rorty has discussed his radical views on the idea of objective reality. Brandom argues thus:

Regarding objective reality, the goal would be to identify what sorts of talk are characteristic of talking of objective reality, and then to show that this sort of talk might turn out to be less than the best way for us to deal with the world and each other. (*Culture and Equality* 123)

The book begins with the essay on *Cultural politics and the question of the existence of God* and in this essay Rorty takes a cosmic view of philosophy and culture and opines that “the term cultural politics covers arguments about words to use” Rorty observes thus:

When a culture wants to erect a logical space that includes, say, the gods and goddesses of the Olympian pantheon, nothing stands in its way, any more than anything stood in Conan Doyle’s way when he created the list of Holmesian canonical designators. But to ask, after such a culture has become entrenched, are there *really* gods and goddesses? is like asking are there *really* numbers? or are there *really* physical objects?. (33)

Richard Rorty discusses the views of William James and John Stuart Mill who advocate the value of liberty in the life of man and its significance in the political life. Mill and Jeremy Bentham propounded the Utilitarian philosophy and gave the concept of maximum happiness of the greatest numbers. Mill published his essay on Liberty and advocated the utilitarian view of happiness. Rorty explores James’ view of truth and his pragmatism. Rorty comments thus: “James often comes close to saying that *all* questions, including questions about what exists, boil down to questions about what will help create a better world” (13). James observed that he has a right to believe in the existence of God to get happiness and peace of mind in life. Rorty states thus:

The question at issue between James and his opponents boiled down to this: is there an authority beyond that of society which society should acknowledge – an authority such as God, or Truth, or Reality? Brandom's account of assertions as assumptions of social responsibilities leaves no room for such an authority, and so he sides with James. (21)

Guignon (1986) observes that “He had famously little respect for the boundary between the analytic and continental philosophy traditions, with his free and unselfconscious use of Heidegger's ideas, in particular, being a major factor in helping them gain respectability within Anglo-American philosophy” (*Richard Rorty* 401). Rorty recognized his “listed his main influences as Dewey, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, and then lumped them together as therapeutic philosophers who set aside rather than argue against traditional epistemology and metaphysics” (5-7). He claims that, “the difference between “analytic” and other sorts of philosophy is relatively unimportant – a matter of style and tradition rather than a difference of “method” or of first principles” (8). Richard Shusterman (2010) has analyzed the pragmatic theory of Richard Rorty since he is considered as the most prominent voice in the late twentieth century. He revived the pragmatic tradition putting faith in the credibility of the concept and its relevance in the postmodern age. Richard Shusterman argues thus:

Pragmatism, therefore, is also an essentially pluralistic philosophy. Insisting on the plurality of values and beliefs expressed in the language games of different cultures and even in what we call a single culture, pragmatism affirms its pluralistic open-mindedness (which is more than mere tolerance) toward individuals who adopt these different perspectives. Culture can be made richer through the interchange of different views on life, which can stimulate productive new ways of thinking while also conserving valuable aspects of tradition. Pragmatism itself presents no monolithic school but a variety of related approaches, a collection of different philosophical voices that, while sharing many of the same songs, often interpret them in contrasting ways. (*Aesthetics of Richard Rorty* 71)

Richard Rorty puts his faith in the objective interpretation based on rational approach and he believes that our objects as having fixed essences on which we base our interpretations of significance, interpretation instead goes "all the way down" into the very constitution of our objects. He declares that "All inquiry is interpretation" just as all thought consists in recontextualization" (28). Rorty has analyzed the nature of experience in his book *Cultural politics*; he has focused on linguistic and social practices which form the centre of his project of neo-pragmatism. Interestingly, Rorty has laid down principles of cultural politics in the spirit of anti-authoritarian metaphilosophy. There is the brilliant analytic philosopher of the mind and the emergence of the romantic political philosopher in this book. In his *Preface* Rorty states thus:

I urge that we look at relatively specialized and technical debates between contemporary philosophers in the light of our hopes for cultural change. Philosophers should choose sides in those debates with an eye to the possibility of changing the conversation. They should ask themselves whether taking one side rather than another will make any difference to social hopes, programs of action, prophecies of a better future. If it will not, it may not be worth doing. If it will, they should spell out what that difference amounts to. (x)

Rorty has two important strategies to deal with the principle of cultural politics. He argues that "that cultural politics should replace ontology, and also that whether it should or not is *itself* a matter of cultural politics" (5). The implication here is that his opponents are committed to the view that "cultural politics should not replace ontology, and whether it should or not is itself a matter of ontology." (5). Rorty wrote about philosophy in positive and practical sense and this approach was his great contribution to the development of modern liberal democracy. He invoked Dewey, James and Emerson in defending his pragmatist philosophy. He dismissed professional philosophy and embraced cultural philosophy for the welfare of mankind. In the words of Richard King "He abandoned a provincial self-conception of philosophy which had dominated the discipline through the middle of the twentieth century" ("Self-Realization and Solidarity" 4).

To conclude, Rorty in all his life laid emphasis on the evolution of pragmatism rejecting all the analytical philosophical views. He is a prominent American philosopher who reviewed and reinterpreted the philosophical ideas in the context of postmodern political and philosophical thoughts. He discarded professional and dull view of philosophy and advocated that philosophy should not be confined to the dull and boring teaching departments giving just bookish knowledge. Philosophy has a positive role to play to provide the fundamental solutions to the existential problems of modern man. He was the first postmodern philosopher who took up the therapeutic view of philosophy. Following the ideals of John Dewey, James, Davidson and Emerson, Rorty advocated the pragmatic view of philosophy. He promoted productive philosophical and intellectual environment. He made serious efforts to explore objective Truth or Reality. His main goals are the establishment of a fair and equitable society that is founded upon providing dignity to those within it.

Conclusion

In this study entitled *Post-Derridean View: A Study of the Writings of Richard Rorty* the major texts of Richard Rorty have been investigated with a focus on pragmatism of Rorty and his deconstruction of Derridean structuralism. Richard Rorty was greatly impacted the philosophical thoughts of Derrida who brought a new wave of postmodernism with his publication of *Speech and Phenomena* (1967), *Of Grammatology*, *Writing and Difference* and *Margins of Philosophy*. Derrida was invited to deliver a lecture at John Hopkins University where he read a paper on Deconstruction. Derrida is a founding father of Deconstruction; a strategy of critical questioning directed to expose the metaphysical assumptions and internal contradictions in philosophy. He challenged the tradition of hermeneutic tradition propagated by Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Lyotard, Deleuze and Jameson. They wrote on the question of meaning and truth. Derrida argues that the true nature of things may be said to lie not in things themselves but in the relationship which we construct, and then perceive them. In this case the relationship between observer and observed achieves a kind of primacy. Language is self-defining and a whole and complete. Language is changeable and is capable of undergoing a process of transformation. Saussure argued that language is constructed as a sign of system of sign, each sign is the result of relations between words and meanings between a signifier and signified. Derrida condemned Strauss and Roland Barthes also rejected the views of Saussure as he followed the path of semiotics and structuralism in his article “The Death of the Author” giving new interpretations in Linguistic philosophy and cultural studies.

Richard Rorty (1931-2007) sought inspiration from Derrida and used different tools and strategies to reinterpret and overhaul traditional philosophical ideas. He published his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) and brought revolution in the domain of philosophy. Rorty became an international celebrity in America propounding his pragmatic philosophy. He was appointed as a professor in Princeton University and wrote his famous books *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982) and *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989). Rorty’s main focus in his writings is to advocate the practical significance of philosophy in life as

he argued that knowledge has become a mirror of nature. He borrowed many ideas from Derrida but attacked Derrida's grammatology and deconstructionism. Rorty argues that the real strength of Derrida lies in his giving up of transcendental project of "An ironist theory" (*Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* 122) which determined *Of Grammatology*. Derrida's introduced his personal philosophy to personalize philosophy by "falling back on private fantasy" (Rorty,125). Rorty investigated the ideas of Jacques Derrida and read him as a "transcendental philosopher." Derrida followed Socrates and successfully broke the crust of convention questioning philosophical assumptions in his writings. Derrida was a learned scholar and a professor; he deeply investigated the Newtonian physics, Augustan theology, Darwinian biology and the ethics of Kant. He also read and explored the images and metaphors hidden in the poetry of Schiller and explored the irony of Socrates. Like Kafka, Derrida brought a radical transformation in literary criticism. In studying literary theory, his thoughts suggest that a text needs to be read to be a text. Derrida's philosophical ideas greatly impacted ontology, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and hermeneutics. Derrida started with the reinterpretation of philosophical idea rejecting the ideas propounded by Plato, Descartes and Hegel. Derrida came under the influence of Bakhtin who was a Russian critic and who for the first time subverted the concept of sign in the domain of structuralism. For Bakhtin, the language is a medium to bring changes in the society. Bakhtin introduced interdisciplinary and inter-textual research. He also wrote *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers* (1991) and *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers* (1998), *Philosophy and Social Hope* (2000), *Philosophy as Cultural Politics: Philosophical Papers iv*(2007) to bridge the dichotomy between analytic and continental philosophy. Rorty came under the influence of many thinkers such as Darwin, Kant James Heidegger, Bakhtin and Derrida. This study offers a critique of Rorty's views on knowledge, language, truth, science, morality, structuralism and post-structuralism. He has been a lightning rod for conflicting currents in the domain of postmodern philosophy.

Rorty is considered as one of the prominent influential philosophers and thinkers like Bertrand Russell. He is a remarkable philosopher and a pragmatic thinker with a broad intellectual range, his works made commendable contribution to

literary criticism and his articles appeared in *The Nation* and *The Atlantic* giving an insight into postmodernism, liberalism, pragmatism and anti-foundationalism. He did for America what Hegel and Heidegger had done for Germany to portray the philosophical ideas of his country. Rorty gave a new name and place of America in the domain of philosophy and political liberalism. His philosophical methods can be understood as a sublimation of America's world historic self-understanding.. Culler argues that Rorty's famous book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* proves very useful in understanding Derrida. The difference between Derrida and Rorty is that "Rorty uses analytical arguments against the analytical enterprise" (152). Rorty contends that: "I take pragmatists and deconstruction to be united in thinking that anything can be anything if you put it in the right context, and that right just means the context that best serves somebody's purposes at a certain time and place" (qtd. in Critchley 43). Richard Rorty investigates all the basic premises of Derrida and his cult of deconstruction; the tension between postmodernism and deconstruction and the relevance of deconstruction in the modern times. There is certainly logic in the postmodern discourse of Derrida and Rorty as they define ethics in terms of otherness and difference. Kant observed that mind is something that adds to reality in the process of creating knowledge. Kant also observed that philosophy is a tribute of reason what can be called "knowledge" or "rationality." Rorty confronted with the problem to explore the nature of Truth; to answer "What is Truth?." It is believed that truth is that which is ultimately finality and absolutely real. Truth cannot contradict itself. Rorty relied on a representational theory of perception and advocated a pragmatic theory of truth, believing that language of a man might mirror the truth or reality. Rorty observes that "truth is not the sort of thing on should expect to have interesting theory and simply it is just an empty compliment which we pay to those beliefs which are successful in helping us do what we want to do" (Rorty 10). Without truth there would be no criteria of evaluation. Rorty sees in this metaphor a way to dissolve the debate between realism and skepticism. Robert B. Brandom (2000) is a prominent critic of postmodern culture and philosophy who has reviewed the philosophy of Richard Rorty from the historical perspective. He opines that Rorty insists on blurring various ideas of Kant including his idealism. Brandom

discusses dialectical resolution of Richard Rorty in the spirit of Hegel. He wrote *Making It Explicit* and *Articulating Reasons* (2000). Donald Davidson (1990) reviews Richard Rorty's latest book *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* (2007) and observed that Rorty scraps all the old and conventional ideas of traditional philosophy of Kant and Hegel. He believes in pragmatism and doesn't put faith in utopian ideas.

In this study it is concluded that Rorty made great efforts to investigate the theory of deconstruction of Derrida. Rorty claims that all texts have ambiguity. The important outcome of this study is the analysis of the contribution of Rorty who followed Socrates and successfully broke the crust of convention questioning philosophical assumptions in his writings. Rorty Derrida deeply investigated the Newtonian physics, Augustan theology, Darwinian biology and the ethics of Kant. He explored the images and metaphors hidden in the poetry of Schiller and explored the irony of Socrates. He investigated historicism of Hegel, aestheticism of Nietzsche and Schiller and pragmatism of Dewey.

The death of God is considered as Logos in the Christian world and is an important aspect of Western culture. It liberates man from worldly fetters and leads to the discovery of the power of the human imagination in giving meaning through art and aesthetics. (Degenaar, *A Derridarean Critique of Logocentrism* 188)

The history of philosophy shows that Rorty generated enthusiasm and excitement in the domain of philosophy. Rorty has praised American democratic culture and progressivism of 1930s. The book of Rorty *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* begins by revealing the significance of metaphilosophy in life and culture. The approach of Rorty is positive as he discards the nihilistic conclusion that life is meaningless. Rorty expresses his new vision of philosophy thus:

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 3)

For the first time, Rorty claims that philosophy has a great role to play in society. It is not to be confined in the libraries but can be used as an essential tool to promote culture and democratic system. Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* gives his therapeutic approach as he talks of the contribution made by Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger and John Dewey in the domain of philosophy. Rorty's quest is for certainty as he replaces the quest for wisdom. He seeks to dismantle the possibility of an epistemological enterprise grounded in certainty. His approach is pragmatic conception of knowledge, seeing truth as "what is better for us to believe rather than an accurate representation of reality" (James, *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* 12) to borrow the words of William James. Rorty comes to the conclusion that philosophy is a higher branch of knowledge and not a mere reservoir of wisdom. He turns to Thomas Kuhn who wrote *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1962) and borrows the phrase "normal science" and generalizes it. He argues that the idea of normal discourse can apply to any sort of scientific, political and theological discourse. Rorty turns to Plato and Kant and explores all the important movements of the history of philosophy giving a metaphor that forms the title of the book. Philosophy is thus foundational for cultural growth as all the areas are judged through reason and logic in society. Richard Rorty brought revolution in the domain of philosophy disregarding the philosophical boundaries and propounding his own philosophical assumptions in his seminal book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1990) breaking from the traditional approaches to philosophy and culture. Rorty is known for his originality and provides a new perspective that is interesting and valuable. He is the father of postmodern pragmatism exploring the relationship between anti-representationalism and ethnocentrism and the virtues of the socio-political culture. Rorty is a champion of liberalism and democratic reforms. Rorty followed Dewey but at the same time he deviated from the philosophical assumptions of Dewey in dealing with the problems of philosophy in terms of words and sentences. Rorty's book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is a critique of

language, truth, science, morality and politics. He contends that truth is no longer seen as a relation to reality. In his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty described the truth as “warranted assertibility” (176). The growth of modern scientific culture motivates the philosopher to conform to an intellectual culture dominated by science. He argues that “Kantian aim will lead philosophy down the path of insularity, and detract from its ability to play its part in cultural politics” (67).

Exploration of the Mystery of Truth and Richard Rorty

In his entire life, Rorty was burdened with the mystery of truth and its exploration. He wrote many books to comprehend the nature of Truth. The critics and the philosophers such as Knobe (1995), Charles Guignon (2003), R. Begam (1992) and Gemtzer (1993) observed that the greatest contribution of Richard Rorty is his exploration and investigation of Truth. Rorty observes that man has failed to evolve a satisfactory theory of truth in spite of philosophizing of 2500 years. Modern philosophers are engaged to deliberate upon metaphysical realism and not on the project of the evolution of a concrete theory of truth. There are two things; one the -thing- in itself and the other the things-as-they-appear to be. What human beings are aware are ideas and what we need to know is truth. Rorty believes that Truth is supreme in the universe and reality is changeable. Taylor observes that very often knowledge doesn't correspond to reality and talk of knowledge of reality doesn't require the picture of representations that mirror an inaccessible thing-in-itself. When we explore the reality we are often find ourselves “at grips with a world of independent things” He condemned for example, “the absurdity of thinking that the vocabulary used by present science, morality, or whatever has some privileged attachment to reality which makes it more than just a further set of descriptions” (*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* 361). The philosophical inquiry is generally considered conceptual and not empirical but today there is no consensus on what are the problems of philosophy. In truth the philosophers are not clear about the problems of philosophy and these developments don't surprise Rorty who thinks that “analytic philosophy” is more a way of picking out a sociological than a description of a coherent movement events. In his famous *The Linguistic Turn*, Rorty questioned

the popular view that analytic philosophy provides philosophers with new and more scientific methods for solving traditional problems of philosophy. Rorty is known for his radical views as a postmodern philosopher of America.

Pragmatism and Truth: Contribution of Richard Rorty

Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is centrally concerned with the development of modern philosophy and with the fate of the conception of philosophy. Rorty has depicted the basic theme in his book but other innovative ideas about the modern relevance of philosophy are emphasized in other books of Rorty. Rorty claims that the fundamental error of philosophical tradition and the basic idea is that truth is closely linked with reality. The deep root of the quest for truth lies in the urge of human beings that something is greater than ourselves. Rorty expresses his firm view in the existence of God. His religious approach is positive as he believes that truth is God. Rorty has argued that,

The quest for ultimate reality is as old as philosophy itself. This quest is always associated with partition of matters of human concern; between lower and high people; between nature versus convention, philosophy versus poetry. The focus on truth reflects an increasing self-identification with pragmatism. (Rorty 54)

He holds that truth is not the sort of thing that we can usually theorize about. James observes that human beings look at truth in action and identifies the true with what is good in the way of belief. He argues that we should forget metaphysical accounts of truth. Rorty and Derrida condemn the claim of truth. They argue that the truth validity can be questioned highlighting the bankruptcy of all the epistemology, "the need of today is resolve the contradictions of linguistic philosophy. Rorty is renowned for his ecumenical approach as he loves to piece together with the "talent for bricolage" (Balkin *Deconstructive Practice and Legal Theory* 195). Retrograde thinking is dangerous for society and Rorty argues that in political sphere retrograde ideas are common. Retrograde thinking blocks the progress of society and an enlightened critique of political institutions is essential. Philosophy has cultural

significance and every kind of knowledge must appeal to the validating context of cultural assumption. Truth can be explored by the process of investigation. There could be no way to make sense of any theory that issued such a radical challenge to prevailing ideas. Rorty's takes up pragmatic approach as he mistrusts all those grand theories dealing with knowledge, history, and class-consciousness. Rorty claims himself to be postmodernist philosopher. He calls himself a postmodern bourgeois liberal.

Rorty's main contention is that we should think of inquiry, in science or any other area of culture and our focus should be on solving problems and not on exploration of truth. The discredited theory of truth alone makes us think of truth as the name of a goal. We conduct inquiry to get solutions of the existential problems; the area of inquiry is expanding everyday with the growth of science and technology and the nature of truth is also undergoing change. Like Habermas, Rorty rejects the correspondence theory of truth. He argues that such a theory is an objective illusion. Correspondence theories of truth lead to misunderstanding and the facts are distorted; Rorty gives his famous dictum about truth that "true for me but not for you" and "true in my culture but not in yours" are pointless observations. It is often said "so is true, but not now" and truth differs from situation to situation. Truth for Rorty is a relative thing and may change from person to person. In his book *Truth and Progress, Philosophical Papers* (1998), Richard Rorty observes thus: "On the other hand, justified for me but not for you makes perfect sense" (3). Rorty argues that truth is not a goal of inquiry and if truth is the nature of such a goal then there is no truth. Richard Rorty contends that freedom is more important than truth. Derrida and Foucault also expressed their faith in human freedom. His argument is to consider truth and objectivity as useless. He puts faith on experience and belief. He defines pragmatism as "the view that there are no constraints derived from the nature of objects; the knowledge can only be assessed according to its practical or performative effects" (123). He praises William James and John Dewey as the greatest pragmatist thinkers in the American tradition. Rorty believes that every kind of representation of the objective world is a misleading illusion. Richard Rorty devoted himself to explore the contingency of human situation in imitation of Plato

and Hegel. He investigated in detail the rise of historical consciousness and investigated the philosophical views of the traditional thinkers to find out the solution of the contemporary malaise afflicting the modern man after the World War II. Rorty is one of the most important and interesting philosopher of America who brought tremendous change in the domain of philosophy. His book is an interesting study of philosophical field of moral inquiry and morality. He discusses in detail the postmodern ideas of Proust, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida and Nabokov. Rorty's arguments for the contingency of language, society and self are at once innovative and revolutionary. The critics of Rorty called him as "the man who killed truth" as he insisted that the idea of language as a mirror of nature must be discarded. He also scrapped the traditional idea about philosophy that it provides fundamental truths. In his book *Truth and Progress* (1998) observes thus:

Truth cannot be out there-cannot exist independently of the human mind because sentence cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own unaided by the describing activities of human beings cannot. (Rorty1)

Rorty comments thus: "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" (*Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* 2). Rorty condemns the idea of Plato that contingency can be overcome by the search for truth. Nietzsche observes thus in his passion to explore Truth:

What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins. (*The Will to Power* 40)

Relationship between Truth and Reality

Rorty has explored the relationship between truth and reality and the role of language in understanding the truth. He observes, “The world does not speak. Only we do. The world can, once we have programmed ourselves with a language for us to speak. Only other human beings can do that. The realization that the world does not tell us what language games to play should not, however, lead us to say that a decision about which to play is arbitrary, nor to say that it is the expression of something deep within us” (*Truth and Progress* 11). Language is not simply human communication; statements and descriptions about the world can be true or false if they are justified by experience of the world. But “true representation of reality does not conform to the ideas of truth and falsehood in the same way as our linguistic practices do” (6). Rorty gives a new view wherein “relationship of language to the world is a casual mode instead of a representative or expressive model” (15). Rorty argues that “languages do not progress toward an accurate description of reality but rather they evolve into a complex set of descriptions it makes perfectly good sense” (15). In this sense languages are “made” instead of “found” (7). These languages are called vocabularies or different set of descriptions. Rorty argued that philosophy taught in colleges and universities has become sterile and irrelevant. Friedrich Nietzsche devoted himself on doubts about truth. Rorty argues that “truth is no more and no less than what can be framed with language” (2). Rorty further observes thus: “Truth cannot be out there; cannot exist independently of the human mind because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world in its own-unaided by the describing activities of human beings-cannot” (10). Rorty reviews the nature of truth thus:

It has helped us substitute Freedom for Truth as the goal of thinking and of social progress. But even after this substitution takes place the old tension between the private and the public remains. Historicists in whom the desire for self-creation, for private autonomy, dominates still tend to see socialization as Nietzsche did. (6)

Rorty traces the history of philosophy observing that it was Nietzsche who suggested that the whole idea of “knowing the truth.”

Richard Rorty and his Vision of Liberal Utopia

Rorty has given the concept of “liberal utopia” observing that liberal political societies are the best for the welfare of the people. It is essential to understand this ideal and an examination of Rorty’s conception of utopian politics is quite fruitful. Rorty abandons both materialist and idealist conceptions of foundations. He describes utopian politics thus: “the search for a single utopian form of political life—the Good Global Society” (104). Rorty has discussed how a liberal society achieves a system of liberal literary culture for the welfare of human beings and for the growth of democratic political institutions. Rorty proceeds to explore the methods to achieve the liberal utopia; a society in which “chances for fulfilment of idiosyncratic fantasies will be equalized, is through the clear separation of the spheres of public and private life” (*Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* 32). Rorty clears the doubts of Michel Foucault who expressed his pessimism for the liberal society. Jürgen Habermas also raised doubts concerning ironism. Briefly, Foucault points out that people are subjugated in a liberal society and there are no equal opportunities for the lower classes of people. Rorty has responded well to the criticism of liberalism of Habermas and Foucault. In opposition to Foucault, “Rorty does not believe that institutions could ever embody the sort of autonomy which self-creating ironists like Nietzsche, Derrida, or Foucault seek” (Balkin *Deconstructive Practice and Legal Theory* 65). In the liberal society there is freedom of public debates and deliberations and this step leads to the growth and development of civilization: “To realize the relative validity of one’s convictions and yet stand for them unflinchingly, is what distinguishes a civilized man from a barbarian” (Foucault 46). Rorty argues that the growth of liberalism is best suited for the growth of human civilization. Rorty talks of John Dewey and his moral ideas and the notion of morality of Kant. In the post-Darwinian view, Rorty observes thus:

All inquiry—in ethics as well as physics, in politics as well as logic—is a matter of reweaving our webs of beliefs and desires in such a way as

to give ourselves more happiness and richer and freer lives. All our judgments are experimental and fallible. Rorty cites the principle of social hope being the central motivation in the liberal society. Liberal social hope is the hope that “life will eventually be freer, less cruel, more leisured, richer in goods and experiences, not just for our descendants but for everybody’s descendants. (86)

The other important issue is the role of solidarity which plays a complex role in Rorty’s conception of a liberal utopia. He argues that solidarity plays a useful role for any person in a society. He concludes that “solidarity is always felt strong between members of specifically outlined groups” (191). He gives a graphic picture of human solidarity and moral progress thus: “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 the solidarity is not thought of as recognition of a core self, the human essence, in all human beings” (192). Rorty (1995) in his *Rorty and Pragmatism* gives the significance of philosophy in the daily life of man thus:

I agree with Marx that our job is to help make the future different from the past, rather than claiming to know what the future must necessarily have in common with the past. We have to shift from the kind of role that philosophers have shared with the priests and sages to a social role that has more in common with the engineers or the lawyers. (198)

Hilary Putnam in his book *Reason, Truth and History* (1981) discusses in detail the nature of Truth like Richard Rorty. He speaks of “substantial notion of truth” arguing that right assertability is a sufficient condition for truth and truth “only a local truth, a truth in a language game” (123). Putnam in his book *Realism with a Human Face* (1990) uses the phrase “metaphysical realism” for truth. He says: “the idea that truth is a property and a property which, unlike justification, or probability on present evidence, depends on more than the present memory and experience of the speaker—is the insight of realism that we should not jettison” (123).

Truth and Objectivity

It is interesting to understand the history of objectivity and is useful to distinguish Greek from Kantian objectivity. Greek objectivity is a relation between an intellectual product called a logos. In simple words it means “telling it like it is”. Kant was disgusted with this approach of understanding truth. Kant argued that objectivity is nothing but a certain conceptual “unity of experience” which is subjective in nature. Truth is objective when it is impersonal, transcendental operation of understanding. Rorty speaks of a wish “to replace both religious and philosophical accounts of a suprahistorical ground or an end-of-history convergence with a historical narrative about the rise of liberal institutions and customs” (*Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* 54). He calls a shift from epistemology to politics, “from an explanation of the relation between reason and reality to an explanation of how political freedom has change our sense of what human inquiry is good for” (*Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* 68). In practical life truth that matters is dialogic truthfulness which amounts to intersubjective belief. Truth is truthfulness and is always based on honesty, frankness and courage. Putnam gives an alternative to both Greek and Kantian views. He argues that an objective approach to truth is the right way as an issue can be discussed and evaluated correctly and fairly to explore its rightness. Rorty (1989) writes:

Truth cannot be out there—cannot exist independently of the human mind because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own—unaided by the describing activities of human beings—cannot. (*Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* 5)

A critical analysis of his ideas given in his book *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* reveals that he is radical and practical in his approach to truth and he uses the tools of philosophy to comprehend the right nature of truth in the postmodern context. He rejects the idealistic view and approach of Kant and suggests that objectivity is nothing but a certain conceptual unity of experience which in reality is subjective in

nature. He wants an objective approach in which everything personal or local is washed out to the impersonal operation of understanding itself.

Relationship between Solidarity and Objectivity

In the first chapter of his book entitled “Solidarity or Objectivity?” Richard Rorty discusses in detail the relationship between solidarity and objectivity and the importance of these terms in understanding the truth. But with the emergence of Descartes the new concept of mind and truth was put forward. The mind of man is believed to mirror reality. Thus truth is connected with the mind and a nonhuman description independently. Mind is considered as an arena of appearances representing the world. Rorty rejected the idea of Descartes as he says: “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” (Rorty 123). In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Rorty has argued that there is no

Archimedean point of view is no "divine perspective which allows us to compare the real and these image in the mind's mirror" (178). Here is no way to get outside our beliefs and language so as to find some test other than coherence "(178). 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” (13). Rorty thus concludes that justification and not truth should be the goal of our inquiry. It is very essential to understand the concept of truth and justification of Rorty. Many critics and thinkers have attacked Rorty stating that truth and justification are two independent conditions of our beliefs and cannot be replaced by another.

The Traditional Approach to Truth and Justification

In general terms it is believed since antiquity that truth is the condition of knowledge and if a belief is false it cannot contain the elements of truth. If there does no truth exist in the universe and then there is no knowledge. Truth seekers have to work hard to reach at the truth about a matter. The right way to establish truth is possible only through knowledge. Sound reasoning and sound evidence is the right way to acquire

knowledge. In other words, for a belief to constitute knowledge, its truth must be justified by sound reasoning and concrete evidence. No doubt knowledge involves justification but that does not mean that knowledge requires absolute certainty. Human beings are fallible and it is possible “to have knowledge even when one’s true beliefs might have turned out to be false” (Rorty 8).

Social Relevance of the Study

This study has great social relevance as it explores all the philosophical concepts of new philosophy propounded by Richard Rorty in the context of postmodern America. He explored the following fundamental concepts which are an integral part of life and culture:

- 1) What is the role of philosophy in life and society?
- 2) Is philosophy only a theoretical study of books written by Plato Aristotle and Kant?
- 3) What is Truth?
- 4) What is Reality and how Reality differs from ruth?
- 5) What is the real aim of life?
- 6) What is the significance of understanding of Truth?

In this study all the practical ideas of Richard Rorty highlighting his pragmatic and therapeutic approach. Philosophy is not dull and boring but it is a way of life and the only way to acquire real knowledge about Truth and Living. In the Covid-19 era most f the people are confused and baffled; they feel pessimistic and fond no direction to lead a happy life. The writings of Rchard Rorty give them a new hope to lead a happy life. Understanding the meaning of life, Truth, Reality, Hope and Happiness gives inner strength to the students of Richard Rorty. This study is not an end but a new beginning to develop interest in philosophy which frees man from the anxieties and tensions of life.

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Rorty's main objective is to express the origin of philosophical problems arising out of unconscious assumptions. He relocates his therapeutic approach to transform philosophy itself into therapy. According to his humanist point which is against the claim that reason transcends local opinion, we all are involved in the habit of action evolving over time into the contingent social solidarity which is required to achieve our purposes. Then there will be bounty of ideas and programmes which will be astonishingly novel. So, Rorty's pragmatism and social and political realities can be further discussed in research works.

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