

likely to do so, not that there are neutral premises to which I could appeal to persuade them to do so. My preferred culture is as controversial as everybody else's.

I suspect, actually, that Davidson and I do not really disagree with Kmita about much. We all think that communication is possible between all cultures. We all think, I take it, that where there is communication there is comparison. But presumably none of us think that comparison necessarily leads to agreement, or even to compromise. It may just lead to greater reciprocal dislike.

### MAREK KWIEK: On Some Richard Rorty's Evolution

I would like to take into consideration in this text the possibility of Richard Rorty's evolution of views in terms of — suggested by him — distinction between the private and the public as well as in terms of his dichotomous pair of „solidarity” and „self-creation”. My efforts would aim at showing that Rorty as a commentator on other philosophers is more and more inclined to value the significance of self-creational, developing one's „final vocabulary” way of philosophizing, while on the other hand — as a philosopher himself he has remained, as far as the private sphere goes — in his own philosophizing — rather moderate and full of reserve.

Let us take as a point of our departure here the fact that in his text entitled „Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity” (1984) Rorty unmistakably criticizes Foucault for his writing, as he puts it, „from a point of view light-years away from the problems of contemporary society”, for his being „a dispassionate observer” of the present social order and finally for the lack of „the rhetoric of emancipation” in his work (Rorty, 1991b, p. 173). Besides, his work shows „extraordinary dryness”, „remoteness”, or to put it in a nut-shell: communal „we” is absent from his work. This is what Rorty says in the times when his figure of an „ironist” was crystallized yet. It can be seen easily how much in the author's philosophical thinking the public sphere, the domain of solidarity, dominated then and it was just this domain that determined the estimation of the contemporary French philosophy which Rorty did not want to have much in common with (it can also be seen not less clearly from his polemics with Lyotard in „Cosmopolitanism without Emancipation” where he accuses French philosophers of and worries about their „antiutopianism, their apparent loss of faith in liberal democracy”) (Rorty, 1991a, p. 220). The private, self-creation and self-invention, seems unable to find its way to Rorty's philosophical constellation of the middle of the eighties, though, let us add, formally both spheres were not isolated and opposed to each other in his discourse yet.

The author's change in attitude towards self-creational philosophizing and generally to the private sphere in philosophy is brought about, just to give one example, with the text „Moral Identity and Private Autonomy: The Case of Foucault” (Rorty, 1991b). It is here that Foucault becomes a sole object of interest but it happens this time that his philosophizing did have its value and significance, it would be great if it were not for one detail, extremely important: separation of the two spheres (called there the sphere of moral identity and of private autonomy) on which Foucault's stubborn thought swept, separation — distinct, performed by the author himself — of his two roles, indication of dissimilarity and separateness of the two language games. Thus Foucault would be entitled to self-create his personality, to develop his „final vocabulary” — and no longer would it be an accusation — if he were more willing to separate his moral identity (as a citizen) from his (private) search for autonomy.

In this text thus two equally justified spheres appeared, two potential references of the philosophical discourse, two — incompatible with each other — parts of the human self (which he calls „compartmentalization” of it): the private and the public (just as solidarity and self-creation are „equally valid, yet for ever incommensurable” as he else where says) (Rorty, 1989, p. 68, p. xv). Let us add here that Foucault was for Rorty of that time a convenient example, since his work unmistakably touched upon public matters, although put them in unknown previously light. So some equilibrium between (already separated) public and privatized philosophy, between its self-creational and solidarity motifs, is maintained. Let us note that the most fascinating texts devoted to Derrida were written towards the end of the eighties, just then (1989) there appeared also *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. It seems that Derrida must have waited — to become Rorty’s leading example of ironist philosophizing, the one devoid of „liberal hope” and focused upon self-creation — until Rorty himself exposed one element out of the two remaining in balance. The private became this element, as it is easy to predict.

Analyzing late Derrida’s writings, especially the first part of „The Postcard”, in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Rorty unambiguously accepts the non-public kind of philosophy. He compares the role Derrida plays in philosophy with the one Proust did in the domain of literature — they both mark the new horizon, require new criteria to evaluate their work and to categorize them in a given genre (philosophy and literature, respectively). They extend the bounds of possibility. Rorty says, for example: „I take Derrida’s importance to lie in his having had the courage to give up the attempt to unite the private and the public, to stop trying to bring together a quest for private autonomy and an attempt at public resonance and utility” (Rorty, 1989, p. 125). Derrida in Rorty’s account does not want to participate in such a language game which does not draw a distinction between „phantasy and argument, philosophy and literature, serious writing and playful writing” — but first and foremost Derrida is not willing to write according to the rules of someone else’s „final vocabulary”. Let us pay some attention to the degree of overt admiration contained in Rorty’s (summing-up, anyway) sentence about Derrida in which he says that Derrida „has written a kind of book which *nobody had ever thought of before*” (Rorty, 1989, p. 137 — emphasis mine). Finally, it is not accidental that Derrida’s work in philosophy is compared with Marcel Proust’s cathedral work, putting an end to the great tradition of the French prose from Montaigne on the one hand, and opening new horizons for the novels of the XXth century on the other.

Rorty’s creation of the figure of an „ironist” helps him to counter-balance first and then to overbalance one of the elements of the distinction. Although *Contingency...* for the most part is devoted to a „liberal” ironist and to a liberal utopia, it is pervaded by worship and admiration of a „non-liberal” ironist — of Derrida. (It might be worth-while to note that Rorty’s attitude towards Habermas — who being „liberal”, is not „ironist” — is quite different; at least this asymmetry indicates how important irony is: you can forgive the lack of liberalism (with irony present), but never can it be the case with the lack of irony (with liberalism present).

It seems to me — though I must admit that this feeling may be not satisfactorily grounded — that what pervades *Contingency...* is a kind of tension, perhaps connected in Rorty’s case with his still traditional — at least with reference to himself — account of the role of the philosopher and of philosophy, as well as with the acceptance of a still classical model of an intellectual. This tension is born between an enthusiastic acceptance of a non-public (and obviously non-liberal), just privatized form of a philosophical discourse, exemplified by Derrida’s writing — and still very concrete projects of „liberal

utopia”, a constant care of those „details of pain”, of „humiliation”, „cruelty”, present almost everywhere in this book. It might be thought of from a distance in the following way, for example: me, Richard Rorty, a neopragmatist and a liberal (the question arises whether „postmodern” in Lyotard’s sense of the word?), for some — personal? cultural? institutional? or other? — reasons cannot let myself create such kind of philosophy that Derrida does. Me, Richard Rorty, cannot be „merely ironical”, I can only be a liberal ironist, while what bears more significance to me out of this pair of terms is „liberalism” (and „solidarity”, a chapter about which not accidentally closes the book). I admire though — let us notice the power lying in the original title of the chapter, positive, as it is evident from its contents: „From ironist theory to *private jokes!*” - I admire Derrida’s consistency and persistence, and under the influence of the charm of philosophy of such a kind — I acknowledge self-creational philosophizing to be absolutely equal, if not higher of the two, although to me, Richard Rorty, unfortunately inaccessible... Rorty seems to be fascinated with the poetical side of philosophy no less than with its conceptual, theoretical, argumentative one. In the already mentioned article about Foucault he says about him that he was a philosopher who claimed a poet’s privileges. „One of these privileges is to rejoin ‘What has universal validity to do with *me?*’ I think — he concludes — that *philosophers are as entitled to this privilege as poets*, so I think this rejoinder sufficient” (Rorty, 1991b, p. 198 — emphasis mine). Rorty might have not expected that, in a couple of years, this unnoticed and underestimated Derrida would become his classical example of a philosopher – poet. (Let us also remark how simple, assimilable, understandable Derrida is in Rorty’s account, how good clues he provides to his riddles...)

It should not be forgotten though that it was already in the second half of the seventies that Rorty touched upon the significance of Derrida’s philosophizing, not using then, obviously, the distinctions drawn later on — the private/the public and self-creation/solidarity (not to mention his later famous essay entitled „Philosophy as a Kind of Writing” in which philosophy is seen as a *family romance*, with Father Parmenides, Uncle Kant and bad Brother Derrida) (Rorty, 1982, p. 92). He thought of Derrida then as „a writer who is helping to see philosophy as a kind of writing rather than a domain of quasi-scientific inquiry” (Rorty, 1977, p. 673). There appeared in this article rather the opposition of philosophy and literature, of a writer on the one, and a philosopher on the other hand, or — quite shyly still — of „normal” and „abnormal” philosophy (the last qualification being devoid of any feeling of condemnation, disapproval or of any pejorative colouring). „Abnormal inquiry — called ‘revolutionary’ when it works and ‘kooky’ when it does not — requires only genius”, the author says. It seems to have taken Rorty almost a decade to rekontekstualize the term „philosophy” in such a way that Derrida’s work is entitled to be included there without without further hesitation. It was already in this text written in 1977 that Rorty — although distancing himself from the „Continental” philosophy by locating himself within the „serious” tradition of the Anglo-American philosophical thinking — saw the meaning and purpose in dealing with *philosophers* and not only philosophical claims, the sense of overcoming and surpassing one’s predecessors, and not only solving inherited problems. This philosophical split into two traditions took place in Rorty’s view after Kant, together with Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and it is present today, giving rise to two parallel „philosophies”, linked only by the traditional, common name (Rorty, 1991b, p. 21).

To sum up: what reveals itself in the case of Rorty is an interesting evolution in his approach to philosophy, its role and position in the world, as well as to a philosopher and

his or her tasks. Apart from a publicly „committed” figure, a private philosopher (Rorty says: „I claim that ironist philosophers are private philosophers”) whose work is „useless” to liberals „*qua* liberals”, is born. Towards the end of the period of a metanarrative, also its „producer” (Lyotard) — philosopher in the traditional sense of the word — comes into oblivion, into inexistence. This evolution in the case of Richard Rorty could be shown in the form of the following catchwords, although *explicitly* they appeared only in its last stage which required radical, dichotomous split, namely: *the public — the public and the private — the private*. Rorty’s course seems today to be from quite typical gradual leaving the „public” discourse (within which his object of criticism was Foucault, although when Derrida already glimmered somewhere as an interesting theme from the border line of philosophy and literature), through the acceptance of both types of philosophizing and equal justification of both spheres: the private and the public (just like in „The Case of Foucault”), to overtly expressed in *Contingency*... fascination with „private” and „self-creational” philosophizing of the late Derrida.

With one reservation though: Rorty himself seems not to stick to an „ironist’s” rules: it is not clear whether *his* sole aim is his own final vocabulary; his ideal is obviously not a „strong poet”, he does not create his radically own, idiosyncratic language game, he moves within the domain of inherited questions and problems (though he writes about some of them that it might be better to „dissolve” them than „solve”); he argues with his opponents on the common ground instead of avoiding head-on fights and various tricks, and finally — there is much more of a „liberal” in him than of an „ironist”, more of an advocate of solidarity than of self-creation... It seems an extremely interesting question what next Richard Rorty’s step will be like: but not Rorty’s as a person writing *about* philosophers (since this we know: long live Derrida!), but as a person who himself *is* a philosopher, who must himself struggle with incommensurability of private and public universes. Is it so that „philosophy has become more important for the pursuit of private perfection rather than for any social task”? (Rorty, 1989, p. 94) And if it actually is the case, to which degree this statement would apply to its author? Will he also step into, or is just stepping — as it might be expected from the evolution shyly sketched here — into the private world of philosophical imagination, the world of phantastic — since merely (?) self-creational — projects? That is the question.

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#### RICHARD RORTY: Response to Marek Kwiek

Marek Kwiek writes very perceptively about the changes in my attitudes toward various figures over the years, and raises some very good questions. I am flattered by his close attention to my writings, but I think that there is one point at which he gets me wrong. I do not think it is the case (now or in the past) that I „can forgive the lack of

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