THE RETURN OF THE ETHICAl: HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATIONALISM IN RORTY/ EAGLETON CONTROVERSY

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The Return Of The Ethical: Human Rights Foundationalism In Rorty/ Eagleton Controversy

Etiğin Geri Dönüşü: Rorty/ Eagleton Çatışmasında İnsan Hakları Temelciliği

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4) Nikomakyan Ahlak	4) Nichomachean Ethics
5) Farklılık	5) Difference

ABSTRACT

What use could we possibly have of theory in this world where human rights foundationalism gets growingly irrelevant? This question of Richard Rorty's is answered by Terry Eagleton as "because, theory is an indispensible human endeavour". These two conflicting approaches highlight, in their own ways, many of the most significant questions of today's political agenda. By comparing and contrasting these two thinkers here, we are able to come up with a fresh outlook on topics like human nature, ethics, objectivity and difference, each of these being of utmost importance for designing a political theory of cultural diversity.

ÖZET

İnsan hakları temelciliğinin gittikçe daha alâkasız bir çaba haline geldiği günümüz dünyasında kuramın bize ne faydası var? Richard Rorty'nin sorduğu bu soruya Terry Eagleton "çünkü, kuram insan için vazgeçilemez bir uğraştır," diye cevap veriyor. Bu iki birbirine ters yaklaşımın her ikisi de, kendi bünyesinde, günümüz dünyasının siyasal gündeminin en temel sorularının bir çoğuna karşı cevaplar barındırıyor. Bu iki düşünürü birbirleriyle kıyaslayarak, kültürel çeşitliliğe dair bir siyasal kuram geliştirmek için her biri son derece elzem olan, insan doğası, âhlâk felsefesi, nesnellik ve farklılık gibi konulara dair taze bir bakış açısı kazanabiliriz.

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1. INTRODUCTION

After post-structuralism had paradoxically announced the death of all grand narratives except itself, for postmodernism it was only to make the final touch and bring the disaster's portrait into perfection. While the post-structuralist announced the death of grand narratives, postmodernists were not late to announce the death of philosophy altogether.

Today, in academy and wherever the mainstream theoretical tendency prevails, we no longer can express anything via simple propositions. For example, when one person states that "the grass is green", another one will show up by pointing at the withered grass and say "Look, this is grass too, but not green in colour! Therefore, obviously, not all the grass is green." What is even worse, this person might think that by such a maneouvre they have just invalidated what they regard a truth claim concerning the nature of grass. This person will be a believer of the idea that there is no absolute truth, though such a statement will inevitably be another truth claim about the nature of truth, which is brought into being -whether he accepts it or not- by philosophising; and, the tragedy being, this little victory would be considered enough to supply a refutational basis for any sort of truth claim about the colour of the grass, without even mentioning the truth that all the grass that was then yellow had once been green.

In this era when it is the greatest academic sin to mention a philosophical/ theoretical ground –that, according to postmodernists, is at best *slippery when wet*- on the context of which what is truth, what is not, what is right, what is wrong may be discussed and fixed, there is nothing as natural as the impossibility to judge about systematic human rights violations worldwide, about the tyranny and/or the aggressive

policies of the United States in the Middle East and in the Asian countries which are mostly characterized with Islam and oil, or about the *black* people of the *Black Continent* who perish one by one because of either poverty or AIDS.

We are the children and the grand children of the generation whose heart was broken by Enlightenment, indirectly as it ended up a “failure". And we witnessed this broken hearted generation to commit suicide in a mood that is alike to that of an abandonned lover, in order to take revenge upon his beloved which being Enlightenment in this case and upon everything it reminds them of. God was long dead. Right after, the author and the philosopher were killed successively. These were burried with a mazochistic ritual, with feelings of contentment and pleasure driven from knowing that this, indeed, was the killer’s own funeral. After this collective suicide motivated by such a vengeance drive and so immature feelings of resentment, what was at hand was even more of a *waste land*. And while we carried on polemics alike in significance to the one about the colour of grass above, it sounded futile to think about what sort of a difference could be made in the non-botanic rest of the world that is shaken by misery.

Because, most of the intellectuals today somehow managed to make themselves believe that there was nothing to be done and this was another way of commiting suicide. Now, we are dead-silent in face of the horribly unintelligable truth of the live bombs who brutally end their own lives to destroy hundreds of people along with themselves and manage to spread blood to many acres of land at one sweep. We rest in silence without even noticing that this horrible act of those could be metaphoric for the kind of suicide mentioned above. Postmodernist intellectuals, in the meantime, abhored

the ones who wanted to make changes in the world, condemning them with setting up an hierarchy between themselves and those about whose conditions they wanted to make a change. They held the view that those believing that they really can do something for the good of others who are not capable of doing that for themselves entailed the idea that such persons assumed themselves as superior to those who are the object of their interest. They also condemned these people of being autoriterian because of their interventionism into the course of things.

The wish to do something in order to make things better was, by definition, Romantic and it was long out of fashion. For those who had assumed Enlightenment as a failure, this zeal was both funny and futile, moreover, it was the sign of a latent totalitarianism. We were supposed to consent to our fragmented state, because the idea to fix the broken pieces was the sign of a perverted desire felt about totality and defragmentation and it had to be given up at once for better ends.

The central character Winston of George Orwell's well-known novel *1984* is irritated beyond tolerance from the fact that Ingsoc government that has usurped the right to determine the truth, even rewrites the past according to its own ends and the public easily adopts this newly produced truth by the technique of doublethink, thus lead a life of lies. Winston refering to this unbearable condition writes down to his notebook that: "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows"(Orwell, 68). The novel, though it makes a severe critique of totalitarian systems, would be labeled self-contradictorily totalitarian by the mainstream theoretical tendency, because of its 2+2=4 attitude in defining truth. Nevertheless, Winston's statement is larger than life.

It was the dream of Enlightenment to find out the Absolute Truth and to reunite the whole humanity in the context of this single binding truth. We, in the second half of the 20th century, have learned that there was no single truth, that truth was dependent to the beholder's perspective, that we were fragmented even on the very inside and the idea of integrity was a dream, and the more human beings there were, the more pieces of truth there would be, that we cannot directly look at the Real, because seeing the whole picture would strike us with horror. There, of course, was not such simple truth to be expressed like 2+2=4 and establishing something as truth was a compelling job. But, none of these meant and could mean that we did not need truth.

We are beings who are motivated with this need. Both the history of humanity and the personal histories of human beings show that we, in one way or another, are always in quest of some truth. This truth may sometimes mean "what actually is", and sometimes may gain the meaning of rather "what is preferred to be" or it may take on various meanings depending on needs and contexts. But it is *the quest* that is always firm and fixed. This is a common feature of all human beings regardless of historical situatedness; even, of Winston and Ingsoc government alike. Everyone is in quest of some truth, whether it is with different motivations, for different reasons and ends. Even those who claim that there is not *a* truth *are* in quest of a truth against the existence of truth. Relying on the epic and medieval romance tradition, we can say that this "quest" about ourselves is what makes us what we are and it is one of the reasons why we are separated from the other animal species.

Our lives are a general hermeneutic effort which ends with our deaths. We have all been in quest of deriving meanings since we are born. And in a world where covert

meanings, symbols, images and several complex structures rush around us, we, with the need to understand what is happening around us, try to ground ourselves on what we assume to be truth to judge from there. And we, with the ease of knowing that this platform, at least, stays there for sure and rightfully forever are trying to make sense of the chaos and complexity that we are born into. All the necessities and the efforts to build up a basis for ourselves to understand the rest around us led us to produce theory which postmodernism claims to be nothing further but only our way of justifying our ways. The most prominent example of this postmodern attitude is that of Richard Rorty, a contemporary pragmatist who calls his account of political theory as Postmodernist Bourgeois Liberalism.

The present issues of the political world are mostly characterized with what is most fashionably called cultural diversity. That enhances the importance of cultural theory within the political space. However, despite postmodernism's making a motto of cultural diversity, which has best been referred to by Discovery Channel; at the end of the day it seems that celebrating cultural diversity in words does not ordain us with political solutions for worldwide cultural conflicts. Cultural theory has too much to say about cultural diversity within nation-states but has little to say about, for example, the rising identity conflicts within localities. The problem does not lie with cultural theory's methodology to handle the political world, but with the perspective by which it beholds it. This perspective is postmodernism. Postmodernism is an inefficient and limited means to analyze the present issues of the political world and to design theoretical solutions for them. Hopefully, we do not have before us so fanatic supporters of this mode of thinking as to ask in reply why theory should have bothered to design solutions

to political issues. We rather have those, like Rorty, who say that this effort is outmoded.

Rorty defines the "postmodernist" in his article titled 'Postmodernist Bourgeois Liberalism'. He says that he uses postmodernist "in a sense given to this term by Jean-François Lyotard, who says that the postmodern attitude is that of 'distrust of metanarratives', narratives which describe or predict the activities of such entities as the noumenal self, the Absolute Spirit, or the Proleteriat,". (585) He comments that these metanarratives are stories which purport to justify loyalty to, or breaks with, certain contemporary communities, but which are neither historical narratives about what these or other communities have done in the past nor scenarios about what they might do in the future.

In response to people like Rorty who arrive at an ultimate rejection of theory from the start point to reject grand narratives, Eagleton writes *After Theory* to underline the fact that there is not possibly an "after" to theory, since theory will always be there. To justify theory, Eagleton first aims at justifying truth and objectivity. And the point is, we need to justify theory not for sentimental but political reasons. To elaborate on those political reasons, Eagleton looks at morality from his cultural theorist position by drawing upon Alasdair McIntyre's reading of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics,* and that is what is striking about his study.

The question why cultural theory should strech its boundaries to the domain of the political philosophy is best answered by what has been criticized here up to now, namely by postmodernism by which it is realized that culture has a political nature and politics has a cultural aspect. This was an innovative approach to a considerable level.

However, the moment these notions began to replace each other's central position within each other's domains, the revolutionary aspect of the project is erased off. Because, not all the aspects of culture are necassarily political. There is not much political significance in the fact that one person traditonally prefers to eat beef in breakfast, whereas the other prefers fish. In that sense, culture is dependent on natural resources, and that is why the fact that Eskimos do not eat beef is not a political issue. What is political is when it turns out that some Eskimos cannot eat enough of fish to survive, while some others are struggling against obesity. Similarly, not all the political issues are necassarily cultural, and that is a fallacy of our times to interpret every political issue into a cultural diversity discourse. Thankfully, there is not such a culture around that preaches the rich should eat and the poor should starve to death.

To claim that culture is all political and politics is necassarily a cultural matter is exaggerated. It is also exaggerated to translate everything into "cultural diversity" terminology. It is mostly as a result of conflict of interests rather than being a matter of different cultural habits that most earth-shaking political conflicts break out. Nevertheless, submitting this runs the risk of underestimating the significance of cultural diversity discourse to which the political discourse of today owes so much in its efforts to justify its deeds, foul or fair. We have to counterbalance this matter. To do so, we have to think back to the notion of *difference*, before we get entangled with handling what the catch-phrase "cultural diversity" is about.

It seems that a political theory of cultural diversity is what we have to be engaged in with all our might, given the political agenda. In a similar pursuit of an opening move to this end, Eagleton in *After Theory* dives into cultural theory to rise to

the shore of political philosophy. He brings back the notion of morality which he states is disdainfully ignored by cultural and political theory alike. Relying on Aristotelian ethics, Eagleton proposes a welfare state model that is not totally different from what we know as the socialist state. Richard Rorty, on the other hand, to whom Eagleton refers to in his book in his efforts to justify theory, also focuses on a political theory of cultural diversity with the pragmatist model he proposes under the name of sentimental education which excludes theoretical justifications for human rights culture.

By comparing and contrasting these two opposing philosophers, in terms of their deliberations on theory, objectivity, human nature and foundationalism, we reach at an account of difference derived from an idea of biological human nature, which, when put in the context of political theory of cultural diversity, shows that the reason behind our severest conflicts lies in our affinity or similarities rather than in our different and diversified ways.

2. ANTI-FOUNDATIONALISM

A- HUMAN NATURE

Any idea of a universal human nature is rejected by anti-foundationalists. The point is the unreliability of any fixed foundations to human existence, on which a moral philosophy is desired to be built, mostly because, these foundations once were imagined to be necessarily metaphysical. Early Romantics believed in a human nature that is innately *good*, but corrupted by social forces, as soon as the newly-born is exposed to the social order. Late Romantics, on the other hand, held the view that human being was evil by nature, and they needed to be taught the moral and rational thinking to repress that evil side to bring out the civilized, rational, moral Man. For some of them, Man was still in progress in his evolution that is not yet completed and he was like a bridge from the human animal to a supreme form of Man that has the potential to be *better* in some ways, in some future day.

Because the talk about human nature has somehow been always around the good and bad dichotomy, it is quite normal that the Starving Man has quite been neglected. Hunger -though barely metaphysical- *is* a part of human nature, just like it is a part of tiger's nature (if we credit the science biology speaking about this possible world). It is not that all talk about human nature should be based on metaphysical assumptions. But the effort has never been the effort to reject the existence of *a* human nature, but rather rejecting it as a foundation to human existence and thus rejecting to form a moral philosophy that is based on this foundation.

If there was earth, water and air given to Man by the nurturing mother nature, there also was fire that he himself had come up with in his struggle against the destructive side of the very same mother, like it says in the Myth of Prometheus. Right

here stands human culture, and culture in that sense is what Neoclassists called Order, or shortly civilization. Nature was the one and only, cultures were plentiful. Nature was fixed, cultures were relative. Nature was our animalistic side –or Id in Freudean terminology- culture was our civilized side –that makes it some version of Superego accordingly. Nature was what we evolved to amend and as a result what we came up with was culture. Talking about a universal human nature was totalitarian and oppressive, but it was fashionable to talk about the cultural relativity of men

The idea that human beings are shaped by the culture that they are born into has its merits. In that sense, it is not our biological nature by which we decide our political view, we appreciate art, or prefer to have a herbal diet. We cannot underrate the importance of culture in making us what we are, just as it is not wise to reject the existence of a human nature, only because it traditionally and mistakenly sounds metaphysical. In other words, because we previously had inflated it with metaphysical assumptions to such an extent that we now try to make up for the mistake by claiming that what we hold onto as an ahistorical, non-cultural and universal human nature cannot exist.

The reason why nature lost its reputation was, as Eagleton states in *After Theory*, was the assumption that nature was fixed and its binary opposite, culture, stood for everything it was not, by definition. What Eagleton says about postmodernist's overrating this "culture vs. nature" matter is significant in this context:

> (…) culture is endlessly malleable while nature is always fixed. This is another dogma of postmodernists, who are perpetually on the watch for those who 'naturalize' social or cultural facts, and so make what is changeable appear permanent and inevitable. They

> seem not to have noticed that this view of nature as unchangable has itself changed a lot since the days of Wordsworth. Living as they apparently do in a pre-Darwinist, pre-technological world, they fail to see that Nature in some ways is much more pliable stuff than culture. It has proved a lot easier to level mountains than to change patriarchal values. Cloning sheep is child's play compared to persuading chauvinists out of their prejudices. Cultural beliefs, not least the fundamentalist variety which are bound up with fears for one's identity, are far harder to uproot than forests. (50)

Eagleton's point pertains to a specific strain of postmodernism that is called Relativism. As the cultural theory evolved to rejection of theory from rejection of grand narratives, parallely it evolved to human rights anti-foundationalism from disfavouring any idea of human nature. A significant example for this process is Richard Rorty's pragmatism. In "Human Rights, Rationality, Sentimentality" chapter of his book *On Human Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lecture*, Rorty labels human rights foundationalism as outmoded. Believing that talks of human nature and our common biological features that allows us to discern the other members of our species are barely effectual in preventing dehumanizing mechanism the mankind is capable of conducting to justify his means and ends, Rorty finds human rights foundationalism on human nature in the sense that "what is essential to being human" a futile effort.

In that sense, the case with Rorty is not exactly as it is with postmodernist relativists that talking about nature is unfavourably essentializing, whereas talking about culturality is politically correct. However, Rorty also faces charges of relativism for his pragmatism, against which he strongly has to defend himself. Truth is, Rorty inevitably seems like a relativist in the process as he moves from anti-foundationalism to what Eagleton calls anti-theory. Nevertheless, his position is noteworthy in contrast to the

rest of the postmodernists and above all very much comparable to Eagleton's anti-postmodernist position. In that sense, it is useful that these theorists are handled side by side with a comparison of their contrasting arguments on human nature, theory, objectivity and politics.

Rorty begins his arguments about the ineffectuality of human nature as a criteria by referring to the act of dehumanizing the Other and by giving examples from Serbian genocide in Bosnia. He underlines the fact that most of the time the human rights violators do not think of themselves as doing so, since they believe they are doing what they are doing not to fellow human beings but to the Others which they believe are kind of pseudohumans. Rorty says:

> They think the line between humans and animals is not simply the line between *featherless bipeds* and all others. They think the line divides some featherless bipeds from the others: There are animals walking about in humanoid form. We and those like us are the paradigm cases of humanity, but those too different from us in behaviour or custom are, at best, borderline cases. (Rorty, 112, my emphasis)

The point he underlines is there, ofcourse, is an undeniable biological human nature in the of a set of biological characterstics that makes for human species. However, this is barely effectual in forming a moral community that comprises all the members of the species, because certain members of this species think of a certain part of the rest as animals walking in humanoid form. Rorty claims there are three methods of those to distinguish true humans from pseudohumans. Animal-human seperation being the first, child-adult seperation comes after, which very well applies to the cases

of women and Afro-Americans. And the third way of being nonhuman, Rorty states, is being *nonmale* and there are several ways of being so. You may born without a penis, and that would make you nonmale, thus nonhuman. You may be cut off or bitten off your penis, and that would make you male no more, thus nonhuman from then on. Or you may be penetrated by a penis, and may feel, like most of the men raped in war camps under the guise of *interrogation* do, that your manhood and thus your humanity is taken away from you. Rorty finalizes his line of thinking by sarcastically stating that "philosophers tried to clean this mess up by spelling out what all and only the featherless bipeds have in common, thereby explaining what is *essential* to being human." (114, my emphasis). That, Rorty states, is how "theories of human nature" were born and diversified in wide range from Plato's 'special added ingredient' to Nietzsche's counter-romantic account of an innately evil human nature. Rorty says one of the shapes that we have recently assumed instead is 'human rights culture', the term being borrowed from Eduardo Rabossi. He explains:

> In an article called "Human Rights Naturalized", Rabossi argues that philosophers should think of this culture as a new, welcome fact of the post-Holocaust world. They should stop trying to get behind or beneath this fact, stop trying to detect and defend its so-called "philosophical presuppositions". On Rabossi's view, philosophers like Alain Gewirth are wrong to argue that human rights cannot depend on historical facts. "My basic point," Rabossi says, is that "the world has changed, that the human rights phenomenon renders human right foundationalism irrelevant and outmoded." (Rorty, 115)

Rorty adds that the claim of human rights foundationalism's being outmoded seems to him both true and important. That being the case, he says that this will be his principal topic in this article and he begins to deal with human rights foundationalism.

B- HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATIONALISM AND RICHARD RORTY

Rorty clearly states in his mentioned article that he shall be defending Rabossi's claim that the question whether human beings really have the rights enumerated in the Helsinki Declaration is not worth raising and he says that he in particular will defend the claim that nothing relevant to moral choice separates human beings from animals, except historically contingent facts of the world, namely cultural facts. Right after he says that this sort of a line of thinking is called "cultural relativism" by those who tend to reject it. He states one of the reasons why cultural relativism is rejected by those is because this kind of relativism seems incompatible to them with the fact that their human rights culture, the culture with which they in their democracy identify themselves, is morally superior to others. Admitting that he also agrees that theirs is the morally superior one, Rorty adds he still does not think that this superiority counts in favour of the existence of a universal human nature.

If we further explain what the point is with those who reject cultural relativism, the problem they point out to is if democratic institutions and the whole tradition of inalienable human rights is kind of accidental, as contingent comes to suggests, to one particular culture, it is well-nigh justifiable for a person to say that executing capital punishment to men and women having extra-marital sexual relationships is just their culture and it is just whay they do culturally and has nothing to do with any kind of moral choice with no theoretical back up to detect or defend its philosophical presuppositions. They might easily get off the hook by saying democracy and human rights is simply not in their culture. And according to the relativist account we have to say 'That is OK!' to them. On the other hand, this sort of relativism has it uses. If you

follow their ideas, you most probably will not wage wars just to fetch some democracy to other cultures. In that sense, obviously, more than 50 % of the United States, the homeland of human rights culture, beginning with the previous president and his supporters are not cultural relativists.

This being a very early writing with a publishing date of 1993, and most obviously written under the influence of a liberal zeal just after seeing the Berlin Wall and Soviet Rusia come down, Rorty presupposes that he is writing from within a culture in which democracy and notion of inalienable human rights are well adopted. And he most probably feels secure in his homeland to say that this is our culture and those are theirs and we need not to justify ours to them.

Rorty's intentions are good. His account of cultural relativism is in order to serve to prevent what America has lately done to Iraq, or Serbs have done to Bosnians, etcetera. The problem is this idea has severe shortcomings. It is only applicable to cultures where notion of inalienable human rights is already adopted. Moreover, the idea of respect for cultural relativity is barely a solution in geographies where cultural differences are blurred and what has long been tried to be brought into being as *national culture* is not individual enough, and culturally entangled with those of other nations which are mostly rivals.

Religions and geographical immediacy serve to homogenize cultures. When an Iraqi and a Turk is discussing or exchanging ideas about where their separate cultures really differ from one another, they will come up with one overwhelming difference in response. And that is, whereas a democratic tradition seems to influence some changes in one of the cultures under comparison, the other culture has only lately been pushed

into the recognition of a crippled kind of democracy. On the other hand, when a Turk and a Kurd is discussing over the same issue, that overwhelming answer barely seems to be the answer. Interestingly, respect for inalienable human rights never caused the outbreak of a severe political conflict between Turkey and Iraq; whereas, it very frequently does between Turks and Kurds. Seemingly no idea backed up by respect for cultural relativity helps to solve the political issues between Turks and Kurds. Let it alone, it obviously does not help to those between USA and Iraq.

Rorty's cultural relativism comes from his anti-foundationalism. He comes to say that we no more need to draw upon universals about human beings, namely attributes to human nature, to justify democracy and human rights to those out of whose culture this tradition did just not come into being. Rorty says this universaly shared human attribute that supposedly grounds morality is traditionally named as rationality. And he adds that he thinks rationality is simply the attempt to make one's web of belief as coherent and as perspicuously structured as possible. Therefore, he agrees with Rabossi that foundationalist projects are outmoded and he, thus, rejects the use of theory. The idea is, the world has changed, and we no longer need justifications, foundations, theory and what not. But since 1993, the world has also changed. And it seems that we need to justify democracy and human rights even to those out of whose culture this tradition happened to spring.

Rorty's anti-theory comes out of his anti-foundationalism. Stating that our task should be "making our culture- the human rights culture- more self-conscious more powerful, rather than of demonstrating its superiority to other cultures by an appeal to something transcultural" (Rorty, 117), Rorty lays out his pragmatism in opposition to

dealings with theory that he rules out within what he calls foundationalist projects. For Rorty, the best the theory can hope to do is to summarize our culturally influenced intuitions about the right thing to do in various situations. And this summary is effected by formulating a generalization from which these intuitions can be deduced with the help of non-contraversial lemmas. He emphasizes the fact that this generalization is not supposed to *ground* our intuitions, instead it is to *summarize* them. These summarizing generalizations serve to increase the predictability, thus the power and efficiency of our intuitions. And they thereby heighten the sense of shared moral identity which brings people together in a moral community.

First question we should ask is whether our moral intuitions are only culturally influenced. Is it really obligatory to be bred in some specific culture to acknowledge the fact that people should be treated nicely? If so, how can you accuse me of domestic violence, if it is in my culture to beat my wife when she wakes up after me? What if it is the prophet of my religion that allows me by his word to beat up my wife when she disobeys? What if I was brought up by this summarizing generalization imposed upon me to make me completely internalize the fact that the right thing to do when I am mad at my oversleept wife is to discipline her to my convenience with a fist on the face?

I, in opposition to Rorty and following Eagleton's line of thinking, shall say that our sense of right thing to do in various situations, our moral intutions, are not culturally influenced in the first place but instead determined by our realization of our bodies. Just as it is the case with the urge that forces us to behave, how it is called, immorally. Morality is derived from human needs and redirected as dictations to human body to curb that needs so as to turn human-animal into civilized human beings. Culture is a

determinant only in this final sense. Out of what is called human culture comes the need to produce moral law. In other words, it is in cultures' nature that morality is invented and used for sustaining their integrity and security. This is an intricate system and its pieces; culture, morality, history and human body are in interaction. History changes cultures, changing cultures are changed because their sets of values are changed. A major part of the cultures are comprised of these sets of values and these values are indeed moral values. In that sense, moral codes ground cultures. When cultural values are changed that is the change of moral values. This moral law modified is reflected upon human bodies as restrictions or restorations of human needs whose anarchic nature is the reason behind societies need of moral law in the first place. In that sense, morality is derived from human body, not from cultures. It is produced by cultures for themselves and it turns out that moral codes become cultural codes.

In "Thou shall not steal" is hidden the law of private property, which will require almost eighteen hundred years to be formulated as a law after this announcement was given. But before "Thou shall not steal" was announced was there not its secular counterpart in ethics as "getting hold of something unrightfully is morally wrong" ? Moreover, by the time this annoncement was given, has it not already turned into a law by the law executers as "stealing is prohibited". Interestingly, without any knowledge of moral thought most domestic animals and toddlers try sneaky attempts to get hold of food or things which they desire and feel prevented from access. They do it sneakily because somehow they do know that what they are doing is wrong, so need to do it secretly. In other words, they seem not to do what they do out of their lack of consciousness about the law set by some authority about doing the right thing, but rather

as a result of their egoist resistance to that law. However, only in the case with human animal, the right thing to do refers to morality, and only in human-animal's case the fear against authority that determines morally right and wrong changes into a moral intution, which mostly occures when the toddler is grown up enough to acknowledge that right-things-to-do are really right-things-to-do also for his own personal convenience, for example, when he acknowledges that being robbed of something in his possesion would feel bad, and thus sympathizes with those who he tend to treat that way.

Cultures are influenced more by moral law as they come to influence them. It is true that cultural or ideological influences have amazing force on reshaping our intuitions and even sentiments. It is physical body's biological reponses to outside forces or inward stimula that no culture, no ideology can dominate. Those under torture for their political ideas could be unbelievably resistant to yield into pain they suffer. Some moral priciple tells them that they, for example, shouldn't turn their comrades in, come what may. However, despite the tortured man can display an amazing fortitude against the will of their torturer, he cannot help his body feel the pain, and respond to it with bruises and leaking blood. He might be repeating to himself during the horrible process that there is no pain and even succeed in resisting torture in the sense that not letting his torturers get what they want out of him; however, in the body parts he has been hit and wounded the nerve cells will keep on doing their work to trasmit the stimulus to brain where the message will be interpreted and acknowledged as pain. In that sense, our bodies are immune to beliefs, thoughts and principles.

We realize the needs, limits and capabilities of our bodies and this biological recognition of our selves is the key to recognize other members of the species when we

are in intereaction with them. And our interaction with the other members of the species requires moral law to be set. Moral code requires at least two persons in the world, because a human being feels morally responsible only to another human being and in that sense morality is not much different than politics. In one example we can clarify how it works for human beings that biologically recognizing themselves is the key to acknowledge the right way to treat the other members of the species: If I am not going to hit my wife with a fist on the face, it is because I know from my own body that when it is hit, it hurts, and hurt feels bad. I, my body, would not like feeling bad, so must be those of other members of my species.

It is our bodies by means of which we identify with other living things in the way examplified, not only with human beings. The culture I was brought up in might justify me in beating my wife. The humanist, on the other hand, might tell me that respect for human dignity forbides me to do so, and what I do is morally wrong. The feminist and the Marxist may preach to me against hitting my wife with a curious flow of theory and I most possibly make sense of no words out of it. The Kantian or the sentmentalist might tell me to put my self in her shoes and decide whether I would like to be treated the same way. The therapist would have absolute success in overwhelming my cruelty by uncovering my insecurity as he is scratching the crust of some deeply hidden wound. The judge would tell me what I do is against law. If he works for ECHR, he will tell me that it is against human rights.

The problem is if I deny the fact that hitting someone is bad, despite I know it "damn-well" from my own body, none of these explanations can talk me out of what I adopted as a morally justifiable behaviour. So-called cultural influence has completely

been capable of overwhelming my bodily intuition. And despite I very well know that being hurt, therefore hurting someone, is bad, I might easily say this is what we do in our moral community, or say it is in our religion and/or culture to do so. This, in other words, is to say that this is what me and people like me do. And that in most simplified terms would mean "There are other people doing exactly the same thing and I feel I belong to them. Love it or leave it!"

Thankfully, there are not so many faschist around who would assert themselves this way with no further use of logical justifications which would sound like a well-ordered set of pretexts anyway. However, there is a more frequently used strategy of those to justify their righfulness by means of comparison to others, and that is a counter-attack that goes: "I beat my wife so what? We have given our women suffrage even before the so-called civilized Europeans did to theirs. What is more, they supported slavery for centuries. They cannot tell me how to be just out of their infidel mouths." And that would be no different than counter-claiming to Armenian genocide with arguments like "Armenians killed our people, too." . Or -the best saved for last- "Germans massacred Jews, the French slaughtered Algerians, the English has been violating human rights in Northern Ireland for centuries. Who else to judge me?". When it comes to cultural influence, it seems what I do is justified less with what *my people* are doing than it is with what *my judges* are doing.

If we tend to justify our moral behaviours in comparison to some others positively or negatively, like "people like me" or "people different from me", we need universal premises to cover "all human beings" when we have to claim against these justifications. Otherwise we cannot counter-claim to "This is what we do!" or "You did

the same thing too, so why shouldn't I?" What Rorty and his allies seem to skip is the fact that culture is more of a justification mechanism than it is of an influencing one. And how come it is not a justification in the first place to say that moral intuitions differ as they are culture dependent and their dependence on that particular culture is just contingent? What this argument comes to suggest is we need no further premises to justify our moral intutions than the fact that their being influenced by cultures. And that is what Iranian governmental authorities would frantically applaud to hear with the broadest grin on their face.

Unlike how Rorty believes, human beings feel the need to justify themselves in comparison to others in one way or another. Our need for universal premises stems from our need to be equipped to answer "Everybody else is doing it. So why shouldn't I?". And what we argue in response should be better than asking them back that "Would you follow them, if everybody else in the world were jumping off the tenth floor?"

To that end, we have to find universal premises that are beyond cultures and ideologies but within the biological limits of the species called human beings. We have to search for these premises. Not because they naturally are there for our eyes to see, but because we have to find them out for display. These have to be as much stable, non-contraversial, and solid, as possible, unlike their antecedents; namely God, reason, or any kind of metaphysically essentializing attributes to human nature. What fits in this desrciption and, thus, seems to be the best appliance at hand is human body. Since, it really is universal as it is common to all members of the species.

For Rorty what is offered above is doomed to be inefficient to change moral intuitions. What he offers instead is derived from his pragmatism. After Rorty states that

philosophy is there only to come up with generalizations that are to summarize our culturally influenced moral intuitions, not to ground them, he refers to foundationalist philosophers mistake in taking it for granted that philosophy is capable of providing further support for these generalizations. Rorty says:

> Foundationalist philosophers, such as Plato, Aquinas, and Kant, have hoped to provide independent support for these summarizing generalizations. They would like to infer these generalizations from further premises, premises capable of being known to be true independently of the truth of the moral intuitions, which have been summarized. Such premises are supposed to justify our moral intuitions, by providing premises from which the content of those intuitions can be deduced. I shall lumps all such premises together under the label claims to knowledge about the nature of human beings. (Rorty, 117)

Rorty states that to claim such knowledge is to to claim to know something which though not itself a moral intuitions can correct moral intuitions. And Rorty, in efforts to lay out his pragmatism in rejection of these foundationalist efforts, first asks whether there is such knowledge. Then, he states that despite the traditional view which regards this question as a philosophical one belonging to the branch of epistemology called metaethics, on the pragmatist view he favours, this question is a question of efficiency. And efficiency here stands for, he states, efforts to grab hold of history at best and efforts to bring about the utopia sketched by the Enlightenment. Rorty claims that if the activities of those who attempt to achieve this sort of knowledge seem of little use in actualizng this utopia, that is a reason to think that there is no such knowledge. He further claims that if most of the work of changing moral intuitions seem to be done

by manipulating our *feelings* rather than increasing our knowledge, that will be a reason to think that there is no such knowledge as foundationalist philosophers hoped to acquire.

To concretize his pragmatism Rorty examplifies his arguments with that for cutting off payment to the priests who are performing purportedly war-winning sacrifices, despite all the real work of winning the war is done by soldiers. The argument to cut off the payment for priests does not say 'since there seem to be no gods, there is probably no reason to support the priests'. It rather says, 'since all the real work of winning wars seem to be done by soldiers, there is apparently no need to support the priests' and 'since there is no need to support the priests, there probably are no gods'(Rorty, 118).

As a pragmatist, Rorty says that he argues from the fact that the emergence of the human rights culture seems to owe nothing to increased moral knowledge and everything to hearing sad and sentimental stories. And the conclusion is then, there is probably no knowledge of the sort that Plato envisaged. In other words, Rorty arrives at the conclusion that since no useful work seems to be done by insisting on a so-called ahistorical human nature, there probably is no such nature, or at least nothing in that nature that is relevant to our moral choices. Rorty emphasizes that his doubts about the effectiveness of appeals to moral knowledge are doubts about casual efficacy, not about epistemic status. His case is:

> As long as our ability to know, and in particular to discuss the question "What is man?" seemed the most important thing about us human beings, people like Plato and Kant accompanied utopian prophecies with claims to know something deep and important –

> something about the parts of the soul, or the transcendental status of the common moral consciousness. But this ability, and those questions, have, in the course of the last two hundred years, come to seem much less important. Rabossi summarizes this cultural sea change in his claim that human rights foundationalism is outmoded. (Rorty, 120)

Rorty claims that the question "What is man?" in the sense of "What is the deep ahistorical nature of human beings?" owed its popularity to the standard answer to that question. The answer is: We are the rational animal and we can know as well as merely feel. Rorty states that the residual popularity of this answer accounts for the residual popularity of Kant's astonishing claim that sentimentality has nothing to do with morality, that there is something distinctively and transculturally human called "the sense of moral obligation" which has nothing to do with love, friendship, trust or social solidarity. And Rorty comments that as long as we believe this, it is impossible for those to make us believe that human rights foundationalism is an outmoded project.

To overcome this idea of moral obligation Rorty offers that we have to stop answering questions like "What is man?" or "What makes us different from the other animals?" by saying "We can know and they can merely feel.". We should answer instead as "We can feel for each other to a much greater extent than they can." And he adds that as long as we think that there is an ahistorical power that makes for righteousness –a power like truth, or rationality-we shall not be able to put foundationalism behind us.

Rorty claims that the best and probably the only argument for putting foundationalism behind us is the one he has already suggested. That is, the fact that it is

more efficient to do so. Instead, Rorty says that we would rather concentrate our energies on manipulating sentiments and that is what he calls *sentimental education*. He explains what he means by sentimental education and that is the sort of education that acquaints people of different kinds with one another so that they will be less inclined to think people different from themselves as quasi-human. The goal of this sort of manipulation of sentiments is to expand the reference of the terms 'our kind of people' and 'people like us'.

Sentimental education is the only way Rorty believes for us to succeed in making people nicer to one another. To prove himself he compares and contrasts his method to those of two foundationalist philosophers: Plato and Kant. Rorty summarizes Plato's method by stating that he aimed at pointing out what human beings had all in common, and that was rationality. But, Rorty adds, it does little good to point that out, because sometimes the fact that your opponent is as rational and even more educated and clever than you only adds to the pleasure you take in torturing them to death. Similarly, Rorty says, it neither does much good to get such people to read Kant, and agree that one should not treat rational agents as simply means. Because, for most people those who do not belong their moral community do not count as rational agents. As it was the case of Blacks according to Whites, of heathens according to Christians, or of Jews according to Nazis.

Rorty comments that Kant's account of the respect due to rational agents tells you that you should extend the respect you fell for people like yourself to all featherless bipeds. He admits that it is an excellent suggestion and a good formula to secularize the christian doctrine of the brotherhood of man. But he states that this has never been

backed up by an argument based on neutral premises and it never will be. Moreover, he adds, outside the circle of post-enlightenment European culture, the circle of relatively safe and secure people who have been manipulating each others sentiments for two hundred years, most people are simply unable to understand why membership in a biological species is supposed to suffice for membership in a moral community. Rorty states this is not because they are insufficiently rational. It, he says, is rather because they live in a world in which it would be too risky to let one's sense of moral community stretch beyond ones family, clan or tribe.

Rorty refers to the fact that the people we are trying to convince about human rights are offended by the suggestion that they should treat people whom they do not think of as human as if they were human. He says when utilitarians tell these people that all pleasure and pain felt by the members of our biological species are equally relevant to moral deliberation, or when Kantians tell them that the ability to engage in such deliberation is sufficient for membership in the moral community they are incredulous. Therefore, when these people ask "Why should I care about a stranger, a person who is no kin to me, a person whose habits I find disgusting?", the traditional answer which goes "because kinship and custom are morally irrelevant to the obligations imposed by the recognition of membership in the same species" is inefficient.

Rorty comments that this has never been a very convincing answer, since it begs the question that whether membership in the same species only is a sufficient surrogate for closer kinship. The better sort of answer for Rorty is the sort of long, sad, sentimental story which begins "because this is what it likes to be in her situation, to be far from home among strangers, " or "because she might become your daughter-in-law."

Or “because her mother would grieve for her”. Such stories, Rorty states, repeated and varied over centuries, have moved the rich, safe, powerful people, to tolerate and even to cherish those people whose appearence, habits or beliefs at first seemed an insult to the former’s sense of the limits of permissible human variation and to their own moral identity. This method is what Rorty calls sentimental education.

Rorty has further hopes about sentimental education. He says, if we have students who have been brought up in the shadow of the Holocaust, brought up believing that prejudice against racial or religious groups is a terrible thing, it is not very hard to convert these to standard liberal views about abortion, gay rights and the like. He says that we may even get them to stop eating animals. All we have to do is convince them that all the arguments on the other side appeal to “morally irrelevant” considerations. We are supposed to do this by manipulating their sentiments in such a way that they imagine themselves in the shoes of the despised and the oppressed.

However we should also teach our students that those people, bad people, who just cannot make themselves acknowledge that race, religion, gender and sexual preference are all morally irrelevant and are all trumped by membership in the same biological species, are not irrational. Rorty states that irrational behaviour means no more than “behaviour of which we disapprove so strongly that our spade is turned when asked why we disapprove of it. Instead labelling these people with irrationality, it would be better to teach our students that these people’s problem is that they were not so lucky in the circumstances of their upbringing as we were. Instead of treating them as irrational, we should treat them as deprived.

3. ANTI-THEORY

In the contemporary mode of thinking called postmodernism, culture invades politics. As cultural theory evolved, it also invaded moral philosphy's realm by rejection of Enlightenment's foundationalist projects and the moral philosophical terms associated with them, which are thought to imply totalitarianism; like transcendentality, universality, rationality, human nature etc. And in cultural theory's framework these were replaced with the celebration of relativity, variability, diversity, culturality and what not. In that sense, the cultural theory of the 20th century proceeded in one line as a response to modernity's moral philosophy and the final blow to modernity was given by what we call postmodernism.

Postmodernist cultural theory was thought to include what traditional politics seemed to lack, under the title of theories concerning culturality it encoded theories of relativity, variability and diversity. Therefore, it is easily transfered to the domain of the political theory. As the politics is culturalized, the cultural is politicized; and, as a consequence, postmodernist identity politics turned into "cultural politics". Terry Eagleton, in his anti-postmodernists scheme claims that this phrase is ambiguous, since it is reminiscent of Gramcsi's hegemony:

> There had long been a recognition in radical circles that political change had to be 'cultural' to be effective. Any political change which does not embed itself in people's feelings and perceptions – which does not secure their consent, engage their desires, weave its way into their sense of identity- is unlikely to endure very long. This, roughly speaking, is what the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci meant by 'hegemony'. (Eagleton, 46)

However, from one aspect, it is postmodernist cultural politics' use that we came up with the infusion of the cultural and the political, as a consequence of which the

cultural theory of 20th century has immensely been political, and political theory of the same era has turned its gaze to the cultural. The first thing to mention about this infusion of the cultural and the political is this idea has its innovative outcomes in theoretical and practical bases, but it, as well, has shortcomings. In other words, this endeavour has both uses and harms. It is so overtly radical and but also sneakily dangerous. It is dangerous because this account of cultural politics underestimate the association of morality and politics.

The hegemonic undertone of the idea that any political change which does not embed itself in people's feelings and perceptions is unlikely to endure very long is also detectable in Rorty's sentimental education. Every hegemonic ideology weaves its way into people's mind by manipulating sentiments. You can manipulate sentiments so as to make people believe that there is nothing eye-watering about the condition of beaten wives or starving Africans. To be able to manipulate sentiments to acknowledge the justness or unjustness, sadness or well-deservedness of certain conditions of people, you need to define what these attributes mean before you attain them to the conditions about which you are going to manipulate sentiments then, and any effort of the kind refers to morality. Unlike Rorty's idea that the emergence of the human rights culture seems to owe nothing to increased moral knowledge and everything to hearing sad and sentimental stories, to be sentimentally moved by stories pertaining to the sadness of the condition of those who are victimized by acts and conducts included in the list of human rights violations, one has to have a fair degree of moral insight, in the sense -at least- to acknowledge the fact that there are right and wrong things to do in certain circumstances. This sort of insight works in differentiating, for example, between the

nature of the state of being sentimentally moved by the condition of a murdered person and by that of the murderer who has turned out an abused child.

Therefore, Richard Rorty's pragmatism by which he doubts the effectiveness of appeals to moral knowledge as doubts about casual efficacy not about epistemic status, need further examination. His account is refered by Eagleton as anti-theory not in the sense that "wanting nothing to do with theory" but instead, "a kind of scepticism of theory" which Eagleton finds "theoretically interesting"(54). The sceptisim of theory refers to doubts of casual efficacy, in the sense that theoretical justifications to human rights principles and culture is ineffective to prevent human rights violations. This is correct to a certain level; however, it is curious how it follows that "therefore, there are no theoretically justifiable foundations to human rights culture". The idea is a distrust to theory's efficiency, and the mistake is assuming that theory is there to convince, whereas it is only there to prove. Justification is proving the *coherence* of a certain theoretical back up in its framework and in its application to cases. Human rights are theoretically very well justifiable in this sense. Convincing people by theory is ofcourse not possible, but it is also not possible by moving their feelings, because you cannot make certain type of people be convinced in anything which is not in their convenience or suitable to their interests. This type of people are mostly characterized with faschism or egoism or else. In that sense, although distrust to theory is the late-postmodern heir of distrust to grand narratives, it barely can look beyond the horizon pointed out by thought systems that are refered by the term.

A- RICHARD RORTY'S PRAGMATISM

i- Anti-realism:

Rorty's pragmatism is best explained by himself in "Solidarity or Objectivity" chapter of his *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*. Rorty opens the chapter by giving a definition of each notions. He states that there are two principal ways in which reflective human beings try to give sense to their lives by placing those lives in a larger context. 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 that is distant in time or place, or quite an imaginary one populated by a dozen of heroes and heroines selected from history or fiction or both. Rorty states that stories of this kind exemplify the desire for *solidarity*. The second way reflective human beings try to give sense to their lives, on the other hand, is to desrcibe themselves as standing to immediate relation to a nonhuman reality. This relation is immediate in the sense that it does not *derive from* a relation between such a reality and their tribe, or their nation, or their imagined band of comrades. This sort of stories, Rorty says, exemplify the desire for *objectivity*. As long as a person is seeking solidarity, Rorty adds, they do not ask about the relation between the practices of the chosen community and something outside that community. However, so long as they seek objectivity, he says, they distance themselves form the actual persons around them not by thinking of themselves as a member of some other real or imaginary group, but rather by attaching themlseves to something which can be described without reference to any particular human beings.

Rorty adds that the tradition in Western culture which centres around the notion of the search for truth is the clearest example of the attempt to find a sense in one's

existence by turning away from solidarity to objectivity. Stating that the idea of truth pursued for its own sake, not for the good of one's own or of one's real or imaginary community is the central theme of this traditon that runs from Greek philosphers through the Enlightenment. Rorty comments that this ideal is possibly emerged out of the growing awareness by the Greeks about the sheer diversity of human communities and he adds that the fear of being confined within the horizons of the group into which one happens to be born motivates the desire to see it with a stranger's eye and this helps to produce the skeptical and ironic tone characteristic of Euripides and Socrates. Rorty ironically comments that Herodotus's willingness to take the barbarians seriously enough to desrcibe their customs in detail might have been a necassary prelude to Plato's claim that the way to transcend skepticism is to envisage a common goal of humanity -a goal set by nature rather than by Greek culture. Summarizing that the objectivist tradition is thus initiated, Rorty states:

> We are the heirs of this objectivist tradition, which centres around the assumption that we must step outside our community long enough to examine it in the light of something which transcends it, namely, which it has in common with every other actual or possible human community. This tradition dreams of an ultimate community which will have transcended the distinction between the natural and the social, which will exhibit a solidarity which is not parochial because it is the expression of an ahistorical human nature. (Rorty, 22)

He critically adds that much of the rhetoric of contemporary intelectual life takes for granted that the goal of scientific inquiry into man is to understand 'underlying structures', or 'culturally invariant factors', or 'biologically determined patterns'. Then,

he begins to compare and contrast two bipolar positions concerning the relation between solidarity and objectivity, namely that of what Rorty calls *realists* with that of *pragmatists* in which he includes himself.

Rorty states that those who wish to *ground solidarity in objectivity* are realists. These, Rorty says, have to construe truth as correspondence to reality; therefore, they must construct a metaphysics which has room for a special relation between beliefs and objects which will differentiate true beliefs from false ones. To justify the trueness of one belief then, they must argue, there are procedures which are natural not merely local. Thus, they must construct a metaphysics which has room for a kind of justification which is not merely social but natural, springing from human nature itself and made possible by a link between that part of nature and the rest of nature. On this view, Rorty comments, the various procedures which are thought of as providing rational justification by one or another culture may or may not really *be* rational. Because, to be truly rational these procedures must lead to what is called *truth*, or to the correspondence to reality, or to the intrinsic nature of things.

By contrast, there, Rorty calls, are pragmatists, who wish to *reduce objectivity to soldiarity*. These do not require either a metaphysics or an epistemology. They, Rorty says, view truth as what is good for us to believe. Therefore, they do not need a relation between beliefs and objects called correspondence, nor they need an account of human cognitive abilities which ensures that our species is capable of entering into that relation. They see the gap between truth and justification simply as the gap between the actual good and the possible better, not as something to be bridged by isolating a natural

and transcultural sort of rationality which can be used to criticize certain cultures and praise others.

Right after this comparison, Rorty makes three final statements about the nature of pragmatism. First, he states that when a pragmatist say "what is rational for us now to believe may not ne true", it simple is to remind of the fact that there always is room for improved belief, since new evidence or new hypotheses, or a completely new vocabulary may come along. Second, he says that unlike the realist, the desire for objectivity for a pragmatist is not the desire to escape the limitations of one's own community. It rather is the desire for as much intersubjective agreement as possible and is the desire to extend the reference of "us" as far as possible. Third, Rorty yields that the pragmatist also makes a distinction between *knowledge* and and *opinion*, but not in the way that the realist does between true and false beliefs. He rather does what he does in the manner of perceiving the distinction in between as the distinction between topics on which intersubjective agreement is relatively easy and ones on which such agreement is relatively hard.

Right after, Rorty states that because of these three principles listed above, realists tend to label this approach as relativistic. Then, he begins to defend pragmatism against the charges of relativism. To begin with, he states that there are three views which are commonly referred to by this name. First is the view that every belief is as good as every other. Second is, the view that true is an equivocal term, having as many meanings as there are procedures of justification. And the third is, the view that there is nothing to be said about either truth or rationality apart from the descriptions of the

familiar procedures of justification which any given society uses in one or another area of inquiry.

Rorty says the pragmatist holds the ethnocentric third view among these, but not the self-refuting first and the eccentric second view. Therefore, the pragmatist feels free to say that his views are better than those of the realist's, but he does not think that his views correspond to nature of things. He thinks that the very flexibility of the term true and its being merely an expression of commendation ensures its univocity. The term true on this account, Rorty states, means the same in all cultures, just like terms like *here, there, me, you, bad* and good are. However, Rorty submits, the identity of meaning is compatible with diversity of reference and with diversity of procedures for assigning the terms. Therefore, he concludes, the pragmatist feels free to use the term true as a general term of commendation in the same way as his realist opponent does, and in particular to use it to commend his own view. According to this account, Rorty seems to take the term true for granted.

Rorty further claims that it is not clear why this third view is a relativist one, because the pragmatist is not holding the positive theory that says something is relative to something else. Rather, Rorty says, the pragmatist makes the purely negative point that we should drop the traditional distinction between knowledge and opinion, construed as the distinction between truth as correspondence to reality and truth as a commendatory term for well-justified beliefs. And he claims that the reason why the realist calls this so-called negative claim as relativistic is nothing but the fact that he just cannot bring himself to belive that anybody would seriously deny truth having an intrinsic nature. Therefore, Rorty claims, the realist interpretes this claim as one positive

theory about the nature of truth which comes to say truth is simply the contemporary opinion of a chosen individual or group, when the pragmatist has only said that there is nothing to be said about truth save that each of us will commend the beliefs we find good to believe as true. He concludes that as a partisan of solidarity, the pragmatist's account of the value of the human inquiry has only an ethical base not an epistemological or metaphysical one, and not having an epistemology or a theory of truth, he does not have a relativistic one of either. But it is dubious how much this account is different than the second relativist position he has listed.

Rorty comments that the question whether truth or rationality has an intrinsic nature, of whether we ought to have a positive theory about either topic is just the question of whether our self-description ought to be constructed around a relation to human nature, or around a relation to a particular collection of human beings. Namely, the question is whether we should desire objecitivity or solidarity. For Rorty it is hard to see how one could choose between these alternatives by looking more deeply into the nature of knowledge, or of man, or of nature. Moreover, he says, this proposal begs the question from the realist whether knowledge, man, or nature have real essences relevant to the problem at hand.

Contrasting the pragmatist to the realist in this context, Rorty says that the pragmatist holds the view that knowledge and truth are simply compliments we paid to the beliefs which we think so well justified that for the moment further justification is not needed. On this view, Rorty concludes, an inquiry into the nature of knowledge can only be a sociohistorical account of how various people tried to reach agreement on what to believe.

ii- Relativism:

Beneath anti-theory or pragmatism lies avoidance from charges of relativism. And it is best laid bare while Richard Rorty defends his account of anti-reliasm against Hilary Putnam's charges of relativism to his person. Towards the ends of the article "Solidarity or Objectivity" Rorty states that the view he call pragmatism is no different than what Putnam in his *Reason, Truth, and History* calls 'the internalist conception of philosophy'. He states that Putnam defines this conception as the one that gives up the attempt at a God-eye-view of things, and adds that this attempt is no different from what he himself meant by the desire for objectivity which he criticizes as the attempt at contacting with the nonhuman. Therefore, Rorty objects to Putnam's referring to his person among those he calls relativists, when he sets up his defence for his anti-realist view. Rorty summarizes Putnam's point as:

> Putnam accepts the Davidsonian point that, as he puts it, 'the whole justification of an interpretive scheme… is that it renders the behaviour of others at least minimally reasonable by *our* lights.' It would seem natural to go on from this to say that we cannot get outside the range of those lights, that we cannot stand on neutral ground illuminated only by the natural light of reason. But Putnam draws back from this conclusion. (Rorty, 25)

What Putnam claims instead, Rorty adds, is we cannot do so because the range of our thought is restricted by 'institutionalized norms', which are the publicly available criteria we use for settling all arguments, including philosophical arguments. Putnam argues that the suggestion that there is such criteria would be self-refuting. Indeed, it would be no different that claiming that we cannot get outside the range of our lights.

Putnam adds that the notion that philosophy should become such an application of explicit criteria contradicts the very idea of philosophy and with that Rorty agrees. Rorty explains 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."

Putnam's anti-realist point culminates into arguing that the range of our thoughts is limited by the cultural norms and these norms serve as the explicit criteria when settling philosophical arguments. And this process is contradictory to the nature of philosophy which is *not* an application of explicit criteria to cases, but an inarticulate know-how concerning the cases. With all these Rorty agrees and says this is exactly how pragmatists argue against realists. Rorty adds if arguing thus is being relativist, then Putnam is as much a relativist as he claims Rorty for being.

To prove himself Rorty draws upon Putnam's claim that it is relativistic to say that we cannot refer every question to explicit criteria institutionalized by our society. What Putnam means by that claim is it is relativistic to claim that explicit critieria is institutionalized by cultures and different cultures have different norms; therefore not all the questions can be refered to the explicit criteria determined by *our* society, reason being one of those. This claim is definitely what is called relativism. Putnam by charging Rorty and some other philosophers with relativism, he claims that they in fact support this idea. And Rorty, in response, tries to make it clear that he is not defending

this idea, but rather he and Putnam defends the same arguments against rationality's being an explicit criteria.

To clarify himself Rorty states that the people Putnam labels with relativism only share Putnam's distrust of the positivistic idea that rationality is a matter of applying criteria. Because, Rorty explains, so long as one believes that rationality *is* an explicit criteria institutionalized by any given society, then, they will further claim accordingly that true means something different in different societies. Rorty adds:

> For only *such* a person could imagine there was anything to pick out to which one might make 'true' relative. Only if one shares the logical positivists' idea that we all carry around things call 'rules of language' which regulate what we say when, will one suggest that there is no way to break out one's culture. (Rorty, 25-26 my emphasis)

What Rorty argues above is significant in the sense that it points out to a sneaky manoeuver both he and Putnam employs. Both philosophers in their anti-realist attempts approve the statement that our range of thought is limited by 'institutionalized norms', namely the explicit criteria that are culturally variant. However, stating that philosophy is an application of such explicit criteria to cases would be self-refuting for them in their rejection of relativism. Because it would come to say that rationality *is* an explicit criteria institutionalized by any given society and thus differs from one society to another. Moreover, stating that one person is limited in their philosophical insight with institutionalized norms of their society will suggest that one cannot break out their cultural bonds in their judgements. To prevent charges of relativism, both philosophers say that philosophy is not a matter of application of explicit criteria to cases, but an

inarticulate know-how concerning the cases. In other words, in order not to claim that we cannot get outside the range of our lights, Rorty, Putnam and the like claim that let's give upon the idea of application of criteria to cases in defining theory. That is how theory gets anti-theoretical.

What Putnam argues in what Rorty approves by saying the most original and powerful part of his book is significant in that sense. According to Putnam the idea that rationality is defined by the local cultural norms is merely the demonic counterpart of positivism, because, this is as scientistic a theory as positivim. The difference is whereas this theory is inspired by anthoropology, positivism is inspired by exact sciences. Rorty clarifies that by scientism Putnam refers to the idea that rationality consists in application criteria. Afterwards, he proposes to drop this notion of application of criteria to cases and accept Putnam's picture of inquiry as the continual reweaving of one's beliefs. Because, Rorty states, only then the notion of cultural norms will be freed from their offensively parochial overtones. He adds that only then it would mean to say that we must be ethnocentric and we must test the beliefs suggested by another culture by trying to weave them together with beliefs we already have, when one has said that we must work by our lights. Rorty states:

> It is a consequence of this holistic view of knowledge, a view *shared* by Putnam and those he criticizes as 'relativists', that alternative cultures are not to be thought of on the model of alternative geometries. Alternative geometries are irreconcilable because they have axiomatic structures, and contradictory axioms. They are *designed* to be irreconcilable. Cultures are not so designed, and do not have axiomatic structures. (Rorty, 26)

Rorty comments that to think otherwise is the Cartesian fallacy of seeing axioms where there are only shared habits, and of viewing statements which summarize these habits as if they reported constraints enforcing such practices. He adds that the distinction between cultures does not differ in kind from the distinction between different theories held by members of a single culture. Rorty gives here the example that the Tasmanian aborigines and the British colonists had trouble in communication, but it was no different a trouble than Gladstone and Disraeli experienced in communicating one another. Rorty concludes that the reason behind the trouble in all such cases of disagreement is just the difficulty of explaining why other people disagree with us, in other words, reweaving our beliefs so as to fit the fact of disagreement together with the other beliefs we hold**.**

B- EAGLETON VS. RORTY ON THEORY

When Eagleton defines anti-theorist stance one of the names he refers to is Richard Rorty. Eagleton states:

> For anti-theorists like Richard Rorty and Stanley Fish, theory is how you try to justify your way of life. It gives you some fundamental reasons for what you do. But this, for anti-theorists, is neither possible nor necessary. You cannot justify your way of life by theory because theory is part of that way of life, not something set apart from it. What counts as a legitimate reason or a valid idea will be determined for you by your way of life itself. So cultures have no foundation in reason. They just do what they do. You can justify this and that bit of your behaviour, but you cannot give reasons for your way of life or set of beliefs as a whole. (54-55)

He comments that this sort of a theoretical perspective is reminiscent of heresy of fideism of the middle ages -of the idea that one's life is based on certain beliefs which are immune to rational scrutiny and the person does not choose these beliefs on rational grounds but instead, *they* choose the person. Eagleton states that the complication with this sort of an account where culture turns out something that needs justifications no more than one person needs to back up their clipping their toe-nails with a string of intricately metaphysical justifications is that would also come to mean there are no rational grounds to judge between the cultures. Because, according to this idea, the person to judge is already embedded by their own culture in their judgements and to be qualified to judge between one's own culture and another culture one needs to stand in some disinterested point. Eagleton states, this means that "we are either inside or complicit, or outside and irrelevant" (55).

However, unlike what Eagleton deduces, Richard Rorty claims that rationality is not an applying criteria, in order not to claim that there are no rational grounds to judge between cultures. And in order not to have to claim that the person to judge is complicit within their own culture, after he claims one person's range of thought is limited by the institutionalized norms of their culture, Rorty claims that there is no need to judge between cultures.

Eagleton goes on to his assessments by saying that the idea that one person is shaped by their culture and thus cannot look beyond it implies that a person should take off their cultural outfit to fit into some imaginary place of objectivity. This, he adds, is impossible, since culture is not an outfit but the ingredient, the substance within. According to this account, Eagleton concludes, a fundamental criticism of what we are would be bound to pass us by. He adds since we only work as human beings within the terms of our particular culture, such a total criticism would have to spring from somewhere utterly beyond the categories of our experience, "as though from some unusually literate zebra who had been assidouosly taking notes on our cultural habits" (56). And in that case, that would be utterly unintelligable for us.

Although not a direct reference, this "literate zebra" kind of objective position is the caricaturized version of Rorty's description of objectivity as the attemp to relate to a nonhuman reality. And although Eagleton is right in his assessment, what Rorty does is invalidating objectivity altogether, in order not to have to be claiming what is satirized above in Eagleton's deduction.

For Eagleton, the idea that cultures need no justification is both alarming and consoling. It is consoling, only because it saves us from the hard mental labour to justify

many items of our culture which are barely justifiable. It is alarming because this idea suggests that cultures have no solid basis. And the idea behind this thought is the belief that we just happen to be the way that we are, and things might have easily been the other way round, as it is the case in other sides of the world, therefore our cultural values are purely contingent. Eagleton refers to this accont of contingency by saying that:

> Whether grief, compassion, right-angled triangles or the concept of something being the case are equally culturally contingent is perhaps harder to establish. When we get down to such things as not toasting each other's health in sulphuric acid, the picture begins to blur a little. There are alot of things we do because we are the kind of animals we are, not because we are nuns or Macedonians. The idea, anyway, is that nothing needs to be justified in the deepest level. (….) It is not clear whether on this viewpoint torture is something we happen to do, rather like playing tennis. Even if it is something we shouldn't do, as the anti-theorists would surely agree, the reasons why we shouldn't do it are themselves contingent ones. They have nothing to do with the way human beings are, since human beings are no way particular.(56)

According to this account, the motivation behind anti-theory proves to be anti-foundationalism. It seems that while foundations, such as Reason or Nature, to human existence are rejected, the theoretical/philosophical accounts to understand human behaviour parallely lost reputation. Because these theoretical efforts sound like theoretically *grounding* what they are there to understand and explain. And terms like *foundations* and *grounding* begin to sound like *fixation*, which was a terrible thing to do. And this avoidance finds its perfect form in Rorty's statement that philosophy can at

best come up with summarizing generalizations concerning our culturally influenced moral intuitions, which are not to ground those intuitions but only to summarize them.

However, the idea is mistaken while concretizing the rather abstract notion of *justification* with *grounding*. Thus, justification seems to be like fixing the roots into the ground, like we do to plants and buildings. But only plants and buildings are indeed fixed into the soil. We, as human beings, are comparatively mobile, so long as we are grounded *on* the ground not *deep down under*. It is the dead who are eternally fixed under the ground. Thankfully, nobody is fanatical enough to demand for the sake of some anti-foundationalist activist project to unleash zombies and uproot graveyards or to produce earthquakes with transmitting artificial magnetic signals. The fact that the living is bound to be grounded, call it law of nature if you want or physics by relying on the laws of gravity and free-fall, does not necessarily suggest restriction of mobility. The fact that we are grounded on the world does not make us plants. Similarly, not everything that is firmly grounded is negatively restricted, especially when we consider buildings on re-activated fault lines. Grounding may sound stability and security, not necessarily fixation and immobility. Similarly, it is barely restrictive for freedom of people when it comes to human rights foundationalism, namely, justifying human rights principles to stabilize the democratic tradition built upon these. Completely aware of the fact that this is the case, Rorty does not claim that human rights foundationalism is totalitarianism. He rather finds the effort *outmoded*.

Following Rorty's argument that philosophy is summarizing generalizations for moral intuitions is subscribing the argument that philosophy is to determine 'this is what we do', not 'this is what we should do'. This refers to Putnam's 'inarticulate know-how'

which Rorty admires. When philosophy moves on to claim 'this is what we should do', then, it has to further explain itself to those who asks back *why* in objection. Any answer to that question would be an effort of self-justification. This is what Rorty regards as the mistake of foundationalist philosphers who -he was quoted to say- try to provide further support for summarizing generalizations from which the moral intuitions they are supposed to summarize can be deduced. For Rorty we do not need to justify our culturally influenced moral intuitions, because we cannot. Because, cultures have no foundation in reason.

The idea that cultures do not need theoretical justifications, because they have no foundations in reason is what Eagleton finds alarming about anti-theory. And he questions this argument by refering to the same process of concretization of the notion of justification:

> There is no need to be alarmed about this, however, since human culture is not *really* free-floating. Which is not to say that it is firmly anchored either. That would be just the flipside of the same misleading metaphor. *Only something which was capable of being anchored could be described as having floated loose.* We would not call a cup 'floating loose' just because it wasn't clamped to the table with bands of steel. Culture only seems free-floating because we once thought we were riveted in something solid, like God or Nature or Reason. But that was an illusion. *It is not that it was once true but now is not, but that it was false all along*. (57, second and third emphases mine)

Eagleton finds the reason behind this change of mood in the differece between modernism and postmodernism. For modernism there still was, though unpleasant, a remembrance of the times when it was acknowledged that there are firm foundations to

human existence and theirs was the collective agony felt against their lost. By postmodernism, in contrast, is portrayed a world in which there is indeed no salvation, but on the other hand nothing to be saved. This, he says, is the post-tragic realm of postmodernism. Postmodernism is amnesic about a time of firm foundations but having slight and vague memories about a time when these were lamented to have been lost. In that sense, unlike modernism, postmodernism was born into abyss. There was nothing that is lost, so nothing to lament about, but only sheer void.

Rorty's belief that human rights foundationalism is outmoded just points out to this change of mood. The statement entails that it was once a matter of concern that human rights principles were justified with reference to some universal premises concerning human beings and this 'once' refers to modernism. Postmodernism seems to *ground* itself on lack of these foundations. Whole idea was mistaken from the very beginning. Eagleton refers to that by saying " We are simply the prisoners of a deceptive metaphor here, imagining as we do that the world has to stand on something in the way that we stand of the world." (58) Within this frame, the mistake for the part of modernism is that there was nothing to lament to have been lost, since it has never been there. Those so-called firm foundations to human existence have never existed. However, Eagleton points out that postmodern pragmatism in its rejection of theoretical justifications unwittingly turns culture into a foundation and that is also self-refuting. He says:

> It seems, however, that anti-theorists like Fish and Rorty may simply have replaced one kind of anchoring with another. It is now culture, not God or Nature, which is the foundation of the world. It is not, to be sure, all the stable a foundation, since cultures change,

> and there are many varieties of them. *But while we are actually inside a culture we cannot peer outside it, so that it feels like as much of a foundation as Reason did to Hegel*. Indeed, what we would see if we could peer beyond it would itself be determined by the culture. Culture, then, is a bumpy kind of bottom line, but it is a bottom line all the same. It goes all the way down. Instead of doing what comes naturally, we do what comes culturally. Instead of following Nature, we follow culture. Culture is a set of spontaneous set of habits so deep that we can't even examine them. And this, among other things, is what insulates them from criticism. (58-59 my emphasis)

As Rorty points out in his critique of Hilary Putnam, the pragmatist argument against the criticizability of cultures stems from the Davidsonian argument that the whole justification of an interpretive scheme is that it renders the behaviour of others at least minimally reasonable by our lights. Those who are critical about this approach, like Terry Eagleton, infers from this argument that it comes to say one cannot move beyond the culture in which they are grown and thus, cannot be critical about it because they are not standing in a distant, independent, objective position. As Rorty also points out with reference to Putnam, such claim would be self-refuting; therefore, in order to draw back from this conclusion what is claimed instead is to skip with criticism of cultures. Because, as he diminuates it, philosophy is only summarizing generalizations about a set of culturally influenced habits which neither needs justification, nor can be criticized, as these habits are merely what we happen to do. To further prove his stance, Rorty -as well as Putnam- invalidates objectivity by defining it as the attempt at associating with the nonhuman.

After a thorough criticism of all these arguments, Eagleton finally points put to this misinterpretive definition of objectivity on whose redefinition he builts up all his theoretical openings that will follow hereafter. Eagleton states that reflecting critically on ourselves does not require to jump out of our own skins and to associate with the nonhuman, because reflecting critically on our situation is *a part of* our situation and *is* a feature of the peculiar way we -human beings- belong to the world. He adds "without such self-monitoring, we would not have survived as a species." (60). And this is –let's say- one of the most original and powerful claims of his book.

To further explain this claim Eagleton says that like all animals, human beings, as a species, are capable of interpreting the world, since all our sensous response to reality is an interpretation of it and our physical senses themselves are organs of interpretation. But human beings are distinguished from the other animals with their capability of interpreting these interpretations in turn. Eagleton concludes that all human languages are meta-languages in that sense, since these are all a second-order reflection on the 'language' of our bodies –of our sensory apparatus. Right after that he talks about the inflation of the role of language in cultural theory, and warns us that this tendency leads towards the case that language and experience are indissociable, as though no baby ever cried because it was hungry. Holding onto the condition of the non-linguistic baby, Eagleton continues:

> What the baby lacks is not the *experience of hunger* but the ability to identify this experience for what it is through an act of symbolization, placing it within a wider context. And this can come to it only from culture. It is this culture which language brings with it. Even when I have language, however, my sensory experience still represents a kind of surplass over it. The body is

> not reducible to signification, as linguistic reductionists tend to imagine. (60-61)

In his explanation of the limited function of language in human experience, Eagleton draws upon Alasdair MacIntyre's arguments in his book *Dependent Rational Animals*. Actually, Eagleton borrows so much from MacIntyre's moral philosophy while devising his own. After Eagleton points out to the inflation of the role of language within cultural theory by giving the baby example and says that experience has a kind of surplass over our capability to express it, he refers to MacIntyre's argument that it is reasonable to claim that pre-linguistic infants can have beliefs and act on basis of reasons. Because, he adds, prelinguistic infants act in such a way that it seems as if they had beliefs and as if their acts were on basis of reason.

To explain that Eagleton states infants *can* desire what they think is good. Prelinguistic infants and animals *do* desire what they think is good; warmth, being fed and to be caressed in certain ways being a few of these. Food in the belly feels good. The infant desires to get rid of the unpleasant feeling right in the centre of its body, which we call hunger, therefore cries outloud whenever that feeling appears. This case pertains to Eagleton's claim that all our sensory response is indeed an interpretation of reality. The baby needs language neither to feel the unpleasant feeling, nor to respond to or express it, and even not to want to stop it.

However, what pre-linguistic infants can never do, Eagleton states, is want to desire what they thinks is good, although infants appear to recognize, discriminate, investigate, re-identify, classify, and what not without the aid of language. In other words, while prelinguistic infants and animals seem to have beliefs and act on basis of

reason, what they most definitely cannot do is ask themselves moral questions such as whether their beliefs are sound or whether their reasons are good ones. That, for Eagleton, is why only a linguistic animal can be a moral one. Because, although sensory experience needs it not, the self-reflection we are able to employ over our sensory interpretations comes by language.

The problem with anti-theorists, Eagleton comments, is while they in one way inflate the role of the language, in other way they underestimate it. Especially when they claim that we have to be outside the boundries of our culture to be able to critical about it. About this Eagleton says,

> Self-reflection, then –interpreting our sensory interpretations- is part of what we are. And this may be conducted in full-blooded critical spirit. There is no need to struggle out of your skin in order to make fundamental criticisms of your situation. You do not have to be standing in metaphysical outer space to recognize the injustice of racial discrimination. This is exactly where you would not recognize it. On the contrary, there is a good deal *within* our culture which we can draw on to do so. (61-62)

Eagleton comments that anti-theorists are mistaken that they imagine cultures as more or less coherent and say criticism coming from within could never be radical. He states that such criticism is not necassarily imbedded, because there are many different and contradictory strands to a culture, some of which allows us to be critical of others. In this context, it is good news for Eagleton that we cannot escape from our culture, because this diversity within a culture comprises a comparative structure, and makes it possible that a compare and contrast analysis is applicable. He adds comparing two cultures not necessarily requires a critic with no cultural vantage point of their own.

Because, Eagleton states, cultures can look beyond themselves and that is a part of what they are**.** Cultures have no boundaries like that of prison houses, but these are rather porous, fluid and flexible like cell wall. Thus, Eagleton draws an analogy that being inside a culture is more like being inside a language, and languages open on to the world from the inside. Therefore, to be inside a culture or language is to be pitched into the world, not to be quarantined from it. Claiming that once a person is influenced by their home culture in their judgements, they neither can fully grasp another culture, nor be critical about these comes to mean that no person can know enough about a foreign language, once they acquired their mother tongue. And this most obviously is wrong.

How Eagleton comments above may well be the case for many anti-theorist; however, Rorty is, though slightly, different. He does not claim that cultures are coherent. Neither his point is that criticism coming from within could never be radical. As we have seen in the Gladstone and Disraeli example, Rorty, just like Eagleton, believes that difference between cultures are similar to the distinction between the different strands to a culture. And he also says in his defense against charges of relativism that what he means is not a person is imprisoned in their culture. Because, he adds, only if one believes that rationality is culture dependent, will they suggest that there is no way to break out one's culture. He rather claims that rationality is not an applying criteria, meaning cultures have no foundation in reason. Neither is Rorty's point that we cannot criticize our culture since we are imbedded and the critic should be some Martian kind of outsider. Because he knows that would be self-subverting. What he says instead is let's give up on criticism altogether, but try to understand one another;

or, in other words, let's "substitute phronesis for codification and conversation with foreigners for conquest of them".

Apparently, anti-theorists do not claim what they claim because they are against theory. On the contrary, in order not to have to claim what Eagleton charges them with claiming, they had to say let's give up on theory and focus on practice. What Eagleton refers by *after theory* is this pragmatist position he names as anti-theory. And it is to say that we no longer need theoretical justifications, these having served their duties. What can be justified is already justified. But about those that cannot be theoretically justified, let's just bother ourselves no more. Eagleton summarizes the anti-theorist point by saying that it is to say just get on with what we do, without all this distracting fuss about theory. And it is to say that:

> We should forget about 'deep' legitimations: *depth* is just what we put there ourselves, and then find ourselves predictably awestruck by. It is true that we can no longer justify our practices in some full-blooded *metaphysical* way, but this does not leave them *vulnerable*, since neither can those who take as to task. So far as such deep talk goes, we might as well call a truce. Philosophy becomes anti-philosophy. (62-63, my emphases)

What Eagleton says above, speaking from the anti-theorist mouth, refers to Rorty's argument in "Solidarity or Objectivity" that the realist's desire for objectivity is in part a disguised form of the fear of death of their community and the best argument the partisans of solidarity might have against the realistic partisans of objectivity is "Nietzsche's argument that the traditional Western *metaphysico-epistemological way of firming up our habits* simply isn't working anymore," (Rorty, 33). He adds that it is not

doing its job, and this argument is reminiscent of the cutting off payment to priests example. This stance is exactly what Eagleton refers to by 'after theory'.

As it seems so far, while most of them are not precisely compatible with Rorty's arguments, what Eagleton points out in anti-theorist stance and how he responds to these arguments are very important. Moreover, this debate comprises the back bone of his whole study case in *After Theory*, and about this state of being after theory he says: "We can never be 'after theory', in the sense that there can be no reflective human life without it. We can simply run out of particular styles of thinking, as our situation changes." (Eagleton, 221). Stating that, Eagleton engages himself with justification of theory which he sees as an indispensible human endeavour**.**

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4. REDEEMING THE TRUTH

For Richard Rorty, the realist is the one who thinks that the whole point of philosophical thought is to detach oneself from any particular community and to look down on it from a more universal standpoint. This position is what he previously explained under the title of objectivity. Rorty states, because of his desire for objectivity, the realist charges the pragmatist with relativism, when he hears him repudiating the desire for such a standpoint. And in that sense, the realist projects his own habits of thought upon the pragmatist, namely, he attributes to the pragmatist a perverse form of his own attempted detachment. In other words, Rorty claims, when the realist calls the pragmatist a relativist he does so only because he sees him as a perverted realist who detaches himself from any particular community by refusing to take the choice between communities too seriously. By contrast, Rorty states, that the pragmatist is motivated by the desire for solidarity and can only be criticized for ethnocentrism, not for relativism. And to be ethnocentric, on Rorty's account, is to divide the human race into people to whom one must *justify* one's beliefs and the others. The first group, one's ethnos, is comprised of those who share enough of one's beliefs to make fruitful conversation possible and this is the only group of people whom, Rorty believes, that person can justify himself. And this process of justification is what Rorty previously referred to by saying "reweaving our beliefs so as to fit the fact of disagreement together with the other beliefs we hold" (Rorty, 26).

In the 13th footnote, Rorty makes a further explanation which is of utmost importance in evaluating his whole scheme of though. Rorty says:

> On my (Davidsonian) view, there is no point in distinguishing between true sentences which are 'made true by reality' and true sentences which are 'made by us', because the whole idea of

> 'truth-makers' needs to be dropped. So I would hold that there is *no* truth in relativism, but this much truth in ethnocentrism: *we cannot justify our beliefs* (…) *to everybody, but only to those whose beliefs overlap ours to some appropriate extent*. (Rorty, 31 my emphasis)

That means, we should drop dreams of objectivity, since objectivity is of no use. What we should do instead, Rorty prescribes, is to be moved solely by the desire for solidarity and to think of human progress as making it possible for human beings to do more interesting things and be more interesting people, but not as heading towards a place which has somehow been prepared for humanity in advance. We should put the issue in moral and political terms, rather than in epistemological and metaphilosophical terms and see that the question is not about how to define words like truth, knowledge, rationality or philososphy, but about what self-image our society should have of itself. And for Rorty, this self-image of ours should employ images of *making* rather *finding*. That way, he replaces theory with practice, or codification with phronesis.

At the end of the "Solidarity or Objectivity" chapter, Rorty states that his pragmatist suggestion is that we should substitute a 'merely' ethical foundation for our sense of community, or we had better think of our sense of community as having no foundation except shared hope and the trust created by such sharing. Adding that this suggestion is given on *practical* grounds, Rorty emphasizes that this suggestion is not put forward as a corrolary of a metapysical claim that the objects in the world contain no intrinsically action-guiding properties, nor of an epistemological claim that we lack a faculty of moral sense, nor of a semantical claim that truth is reducible to justification. He states that this is a suggestion about how we might think of ourselves in order to

avoid the kind of resentful belatedness, which was characteristic of the bad side of Nietzsche and which now characterizes most of high culture. He comments that this resentment stems from the realization that the Enlightenment's search for objectivity has often gone sour. And in the "Truth, Virtue, Objectivity" chapter of his book, Eagleton defends truth and objectivity against this kind of pragmatist arguments.

Eagleton begins this fifth chapter of his book by saying, no idea is more unpopular with contemporary cultural theory than that of absolute truth, because the expression is reminiscent of dogmatism, authoritarianism and a belief in the timeless and universal. Then, he says he first will deal with the rejected notions of cultural theory by seeking a way to defend truth which he finds remarkably modest and eminently reasonable a notion:

> It is a mistake to think of absolute truth as a special kind of truth. On this view, there are truths which are changing and relative, and there is a higher kind of truth which is neither. Instead, it is fixed for all eternity. The idea is that some people, usually those of a dogmatic or authoritarian turn of mind, believe in this higher kind of truth, while others, such as historicists and postmodernists, do not. In fact some postmodernists claim not to believe in truth at all –but this is just because they have identified truth with dogmatism, and in rejecting dogmatism have thrown out truth along with it. (103)

For postmodernists who reject truth because they find it dogmatic, Eagleton says that these people also call themselves immoralists and he adds that these seemingly anti-dogmatist and immoralist people are indeed, inverted puritans and inverted dogmatists.

These people are immoralists because they equate morality with repression and they believe that living a moral life is to have a terrible time. This is totally puritanical but for the exception that whereas this situation is excellent for a puritan, it is untolerable for the immoralist, and in that sense the latter is an inverted verison of the former. Similarly, these people in anti-dogmatist position are inverted dogmatists, because what they think to be truth and reject is the truth as it is defined in a dogmatist way, and such truth, Eagleton claims is not the truth that is generally meant when responded with anti-dogmatists fusilade. What is more significant here, obviously, is Eagleton's style rather than the content of his arguments, as it bares striking resemblance to Rorty's way of arguing against realists whom he claims to attribute to pragmatist a perverse form of his own attempted detachment when they charge the pragmatist with relativism**.**

Right after he charges anti-dogmatists with being inverted dogmatists, Eagleton defines absolute truth. He states that it is not the case that there are two sorts of contrasting truths as a class of mundane, historically changeable truths and a superior class of absolute truths which you may believe in or not, as it is the case with, for example, angels. Rather it is the case that there are certain truths which are true *only* from certain perspectives, and for these he gives the example of 'France is hexagonal'. This statement is "true only for those who look at the world from within a specific geometric framework"(104). It is, in that sense, not the same thing to say that 'Italy is a peninsula', but quite like saying 'Italy is like a boot'. And there are lots of other truths, Eagleton states, which are absolute but has nothing to do with being superior or lofty, the example about Italy's geographic shape being one of them.

Since this *absolute true* would in Eagleton's framework mean only *true*, "it simply means that if a statement is true, then the opposite of it cannot be true at the same time or from some other point of view." (105). How this applies to Italy is that Italy cannot be both an island and a peninsula at the same time, neither can it be a peninsula for *me* but an island for some body else. The truth has nothing to do with contingency, what is contingent is the *means* in which the knowledge of the factual world is formulated and what is changeable is the factual world. So long as a we call the "portion of land nearly surrounded by water and connected with a larger body by an isthmus"[5] a *peninsula*, and so long as Italy maintains its geographical shape and national boundaries and even its name, Italy remains a peninsula, independent of diversity of perspectives concerning its shape and even those concerning truth.

That is why, for Eagleton, we could easily drop the 'absolute' altogether and go only with true, were it not for the need to argue against those who claim themselves *relativists* and accordingly claim that truth is relative. What the relativist comes to suggest is:

> (…) the same proposition could be true for you but not for me, or true on Monday but not on Friday, or true for the Flemish but not for the Azande. As far as many truths go, however, not much of this is very convincing. What is true of you is also true for me. It is true that you feel dispirited while I am feeling ecstatic, then it is true for me that you are feeling disprited. If you were feeling liverish on Monday but feel fine by Friday, it is still true on Friday that you were feeling liverish on Monday. (105)

Let's take up a more complicated statement and apply it to Eagleton's arguments. I say 'democracy is good'. This statement is more complicated only because

it contains value judgement. When I state ‘democracy is good’ as a truth claim, that most probably will not sound absolutely true for an Iraqi boy who witnessed his father to have been murdered in his sleep under fusilade. He most likely would claim that ‘democracy is evil’. As I am a person who lives in an almost democratic country, and likes the fact that those who are willing to govern me on my behalf need somehow my consent to do so, I might easily say that democracy is good. And in my case this is absolutely true, since democracy fulfills my demands. However, for the Iraqi boy democracy is the evil thing under whose name foreigners invaded his country and killed his father. And in his case it is absolutely true that democracy must be some source of evil, because it brings evil acts along with its name.

As the definition made by Eagleton goes (if a statement is true, then its opposite cannot be true at the same time or from some other point of view) which statement is true? The relativists would say that the Iraqi boy and I have relative truths based on our specific conditions, thus both of our truths are relatively true and this is a proof against the existence of *an* absolute truth. Then, it comes to say that democracy is good for some people and bad for some others. Such a statement would only serve to redeem Hitler. Or at best, relativists like Rorty who fear to arrive at this conclusion, would argue that truth and good are simply terms we use to refer to the situations we approve. In contrast, I would say both truths are absolutely true.

This seems to be contradictory even to Eagleton’s definition, but it is not. Changing places, the Iraqi boy would prefer to vote for his governors rather than Saddam’s tyranny, and I would most definately hate democracy if it came in expence of the death of my sleeping father. What is relative here is not truths, but *democracy* itself.

Nobody would claim that democracy is bad if it serves their vitality, and no one should be expected to regard anything good, if it comes with death. Good and bad in this sense do refer to approval and disapproval. However, truth cannot be reduced to this state. When I say democracy is good, what I say is it is good to choose your governors. And this is absolutely true, not only for me but for the Iraqi boy as well. When he says democracy is evil, what he says is it is evil to kill irrelevant people in their sleep under fusilade for whatever reason. These two statements are absolutely true both for me and the Iraqi boy. What is relative here is not truths, but what meanings the notion of democracy is attained. And the fact that we seemingly disagree on what sort of a thing democracy is does not necassarily entail that I and the Iraqi boy are going to be in fierce conflict for the sake of our truths. We can always ask each other 'why?'. Therefore, "why" is the exact location where truth resides under cover, and any attempt at answering a "why" is an attempt to justify its location.

Apparently, as is shown in the democracy example, truth has a surplus over good which, indeed, is a term of approval. It is fairly easy to say good about something you like or you approve. But attributing something with truth is harder. Since, whereas "because, I like" is a sufficient justification for the former, for the latter *I only* is not sufficient criterion. You cannot claim that something you approve is true. That would be taking true for granted, as Rorty wittingly does and that also would be claiming that truth is relative according to different tastes, as Rorty unwittingly does. Moreover, if we could claim that something you approve is true, we would not need two separate words –good and true- for the same expression of approval in the first place.

Eagleton submits that this line of thinking, however, does not rule out the possibility of doubt. For example, I, seeing the Iraqi boy's tears near his fathers gravestone, might have second thoughts about democracy. But then, it, within Eagleton's framework, would be absolutely true that I no longer am sure. I cannot be 'sure and not sure' at the same time and it cannot be that I am sure from my viewpoint, but not from yours. If I am not sure from your viewpoint, then, this entails that I will have doubts with my own viewpoint as well.

Maybe a couple of decades later, Iraq would be the best example of pluralist democracy and the Iraqi boy -as he grew up- would be a devout supporter of democracy and say to me 'democracy is splendid'. Then, what used to be absolutely true some time ago for him, would *no longer* be true. And what has changed would not be his perspective to democracy, but the democracy itself with his bringabouts. He would most probably continue to say that democracy was evil when it first came. But that would mean that it is absolutely true that democracy was evil when it came, but it has changed by time and now is not evil. And the truth of the statement about its being not evil now would be just as absolute.

What Eagleton argues all along, and what I tried to explain with the democracy example is "that truth is absolute simply means that if something *is* established as true, (…) then there are no two ways about it" (106). It cannot be that it is true from one perspective and not from the other. Truths are not to be discovered from disinterested viewpoints, rather, all truths are somehow discovered from specific viewpoints. Claims might be partially true, as in the case of "democracy is good". But it, then, is absolutely partially true, as opposed to being completely true like 'Italy is a peninsula'. What is

emphasized is if it is discovered that something is true, then it *is* absolutely true; if something is partially true, then it is absolutely partially true. If it is submitted as true that to be given the right to vote for one's governors is democratic, it is absolutely true; both for me and the Iraqi boy.

Eagleton points out that it is not to claim that absolute truth means truth is independent of context, context being the framework we judge from within. In that sense, the democracy example refers to this contextuality. Democracy is good is true in my context, and it is absloutely true. Democracy is evil is true in Iraqi boy's context, and it is absolutely true. But if democracy is evil is true for the Iraqi boy, democracy is good cannot be claimed to be true by Iraqi boy's mother with a self-justification that viewpoints are relative and so are truths. If she claimed 'democracy is good', after her dead husband, it may well-nigh be possible that it had not been democracy at all, which terminated the life of the sleeping father!

Eagleton also underlines that talking about absolute truth is not to say that truths are independent of time and change. New truths emerge, and what used to be regarded as true ceases to be regarded true, as it frequently is the case with science. And this is not to say that there are absolute truths that are independent of time and there are changeable truths that are subject to time. Two different examples will serve to clarify what is claimed. What we say to be true about water is it boils at 100^{o}C in sea level. If we say that this is true, we have to say that it is absolutely true, in the sense that its opposite cannot be claimed to be true at the same time. Water cannot boil at both at 100 ^{o}C and 200 ^{o}C. This has nothing to do with relativity of perspectives and one of the two claims has to be wrong. Suppose that it has just so lately been found out that there had

been a miscalculation, and now it was fixed that water actually boiled at 200 ^{o}C. Would it mean, as a historicist would claim, that it was then true that water boiled at 100 ^{o}C, but not anymore? Not at all. İt is not that 'it was then true, but not anymore', it is rather 'we were wrong'. The 'then true, not anymore' case would be applicable, when some sort of climatological change occurs, let's say along with global warming, and water begins to boil at 200 ^{o}C. Then, it would be that it was absolutely true that water used to boil at 100 ^{o}C for millions of years, but now it is absolutely true that it boils at 200 ^{o}C.

Either context, time, or factual change dependent, the point is, truth is not dependent on viewpoint. The water cannot boil at 100 ^{o}C in my viewpoint and 200 ^{o}C in yours. Altitude is a determining factor, miscalculation is a possibility, global warming is most likely to cause disastrous imbalance in nature's context; however, relativity of viewpoints is totally irrelevant. One might as well argue that what is so apparent in case of water's boiling heat might be rather oblique in the example of determining the benevolent or malevolent nature of democracy and relativity might be the case for the Iraqi boy and his mother. Against these sorts of arguments this comment of Eagleton's applies:

> As Bernard Williams points out, relativity is really a way of explaining away conflict.[4] If you maintain that democracy means everyone being allowed to vote, while I maintain that only those people may vote who have passed a fiendishly complicated inteligence tests, there will always be a liberal on hand to claim that we are both right from our different points of view. (109)

This example of relativity of viewpoints is the kind that reminds of water boiling at different degree centrigrades according to different points of view. These two

statements on the nature of democracy are in such an opposition that only one of them can be true at one time. It is absolutely true that there are people on earth for whom democracy is everone's right to vote and there are people for whom democracy is some elites' right to determine. And it is absolutely true that the first position is the truth of some people, and it is equally absolutely true that the second is the truth of some other people. What is not, and cannot be absolutely true, and has been under assault, on the other hand, is the truth claim of the relativist that these mutually exclusive truths are both true separately, based on the assumption that truth is relative. Eagleton's point, in response, is whether qualified with the adjective "absolute" or not, it still does not entail that two conflicting and mutually negating statements can be true at the same time. In other words, whether absolute or not, and absolute can indeed be omitted, once something is established as true, any contradictory claim cannot be validated as equally true by rules of relativity of perspectives.

And it is not necassarily a dogmatism as a relativist would claim to talk about absolute truth. Saying 'talking about absolute truth is dogmatism' is just as much a truth claim as saying 'there is no absolute truth' is, and the relativist is in huge self-contradiction by that as being a person who disfavours truth claims, since they believe that any truth claim is necessarily a dogmatist way of stating the truth of a claim, which is not subject to further questioning. For charges of dogmatism against the defenders of truth Eagleton says 'not necessarily':

> Defenders of absolute truth are not necessarily dogmatists. In any case, dogmatism does not just mean thumping the table with one hand and clutching your opponent by the throat with the other. *It means refusing to give grounds for your beliefs, appealing instead*

> *to simply authority.* There are plenty of courteous soft-spoken dogmatists. Holding something to be absolutely true does not mean *affirming it against all conceivable evidence and argument and refusing in any circumstances to concede that you are mistaken*.(107, emphases mine)

Eagleton concludes his arguments by asking why does any of this matter, then in answer, he says: "If true loses its force, then political radicals can stop talking as though it is unequivocally true that women are oppressed or that the planet is being gradually poisoned by corporate greed. They may still want to insist that logic is a ruling-class conspiracy, but they cannot logically expect anyone to believe them." (109). That is why truth should be redeemed, and Egaleton's point in this endeavour is that truth can be discovered irrespective of relative perspectives, and this is not to say that it is *independent* of perspectives, as 'attempt at non-human' or 'disinterestedness' suggest.

As it was previously discussed in the case of anti-theorists declaring truth to be relative would come to say that truths are determined by subjective positions depending on each person's relative viewpoint which is determined by the institutionalized norms. Therefore, it would come to mean that there are many truths. This is exactly how Putnam argues when criticizing relativists among whom he includes Richard Rorty. And Rorty weakly argues against that by declaring rationality as being not an explicit criteria at all. What is under assault in both cases, anti-theory and relativism, clearly, is impossibility of objectivity. And Eagleton refers to this matter with objectivity by saying, if absolute truth is out of favour these days, so is the idea of objectivity. And he proposes that in order to redeem the truth he should begin the rehabilitation of the idea

of objectivity by considering it first in relation to the question of human well-being. In line with that, Eagleton first takes up the notion of virtue.

5. VIRTUE AND WELL-BEING

The way Eagleton links well-being to virtue foreshadows his involvement in Aristotelian ethics which deeply characterizes the rest of his book. Eagleton begins his arguments about well-being by stating that all men and women are in its pursuit, but for him the problem lies in knowing what this notion consists in. He acknowlegdes the fact that well-being might mean different things for different persons, cultures and in different periods; however, what is rather absolute about well-being is its being "far from clear", so that "we need to elaborate discourses like moral and political philosophy to help unravel it." (110). The reason behind this ambiguity concerning the nature of well-being is, in Eagleton's words, our being not transperent to ourselves. So that, unlike animals, we cannot know for sure what it is to live well by simply looking into ourselves or simply by instinct.

Eagleton employs the toad example here to point out the fact that animals by instinct -or by simply following their animal nature- know how to do what is best for them to do and for them to behave this way is for them to directly prosper. For example, being a good toad is simply to live a toad-like existence succesfully so as to survive, and that is the crudest example of fulfilling one's nature. On the other hand, it is not a matter of achievement, so to speak, for them to do that, since it is something they cannot help doing. Toads do not win medals for being toads, Eagleton says. In other words:

> You can have a good toad, but not a *virtuous* one. On one view, however (not the most popular view today, especially among cultural theorists), human beings have to work fairly hard to become human beings, so can indeed be congratulated on being human. *Because we are able to be false to our natures, there is some virtue in our being true to them*. (110, emphases mine)

Eagleton continues by speculating that it might possibly be the case that we, in one sense, are alike to toads and this resemblance might be with respect to having some sort of a nature in the sense of "a way of living which is *peculiar to being a successful human* and which, *if we are true to it, will allow us to prosper.*" (110). And the problem, he points out, is either we are not sure about what it is or it appears to change by time. Or, since, he states, we are linguistic animals, our nature turns out far more tractable and complicated than that of the non-linguistic animals, as by "language and labour, and the cultural possibilities they bring in their wake, we can transform what we are in ways that non-linguistic animals cannot." (111). That is why, for Eagleton, we have to work hard, *think* hard, to discover what we are, to know our own nature. And, indeed, we have it done for ourselves for a long time, and that is what we traditionally know as moral philosophy. Eagleton comments:

> (…) we have come up over the centuries with a bewildering array of versions of what it is to be human. Or, if you like, *what is for a human animal,* as opposed to a slug or a daisy, *to live well and to flourish*. The history of moral philosophy is littered with rusting, abandoned models of the good life. (111, emphases mine)

What is pointed out here is the matter of living a good life is intrinsically linked to theory, as far as human beings are concerned, and that is part of what Eagleton refers to with self-reflection. This capability unique to our species, as it allows us to further interpret our sensory interpretations, involves a further interpretation of how we feel about ourselves, namely our emotions. Being the biological responses of nervous and endocrinal systems to certain stimula (sensory interpretations), emotions are what also even some animals are capable of experiencing. How can we reduce this total set of

what we call emotions to the smallest unit of a basic list? This question has two answers. One is given after the approach of Robert Plutchik and the other after that of Paul Ekman. (Wikipedia, 2009)

Robert Plutchik makes a classification of basic emotions with an approach that is called the psychoevolutionary theory of emotion. His list contains eight primary emotions - anger, fear, sadness, disgust, surprise, curiosity, acceptance and joy. A psychologist in the study of emotions and facial expressions, Paul Ekman also devises a similar list of basic emotions from cross-cultural research on the Fore tribesmen of Papua New Guinea to find that even members of an isolated, stone age culture could reliably identify the expressions of emotion in photographs of people from cultures with which the Fore were not yet familiar, and concluded that the facial expression of some basic emotions are primary, innate, and universal to all human beings. Ekman's list of basic emotions contains anger, fear, sadness, happiness and disgust.

A list of what both lists have in common would, on the other hand, only contain anger, fear, sadness,and disgust, which, one could easily notice, are also felt by their own cats and dogs. Dogs are angry at trespassing cats, afraid of vacuum cleaners or newspaper rustle, disgusted of cosmetics, and got sad when scolded. They are also surprised at unusual sounds, curious of plastic bag contents, show acceptance to even undesired conditions and wag their tails in expression of joy. Moreover, both cats and dogs are pleased when caressed; dogs like it in the tummy, cats in the neck. They feel at ease when its warm, and dry, secure. They might even say to be amused when their playful nature is satisfied. It is possible to say that pets are delighted in front of food in

the dish, at least in commercials, but one would never say that their cat is in high spirits today, since she is fed with her favourite dish.

Emotions come rather as momentary responses in animals, and seem to disapper soon after the stimulus is ceased. That is part of animal spontaneity thst is common to infants and celebrated by Romantics. Or, emotional responses of animals might acquire perpetuality by rules of classical conditioning. They might be terrorized by a splash of water and thus disappear in the blink of an eye, as the master grabs the bottle. Because, animals avoid disturbance. And dogs and cats learn to pretend to ignore one another when forced to live side by side. They simply settle down with modus vivendi. They can beg forever and even fiercely fight with one another for a bite of mutton chop. But what would never occur in them is self-reflection, in the sense, that no dog would come up with the idea of a cat genocide, thankfully, just because he is annoyed by them.

Surely animals are after certain things and that is mostly the gratification of their natural needs. They do not employ a self-reflection mechanism concerning the matter of anti-cat sensitivity, for example. They rather use what comes at hand and do that by simply obeying their nature. Similarly, human beings are after some state of well-being, and to find out the means for achieving it they use their capability of self-reflection over their sensory interpretations of their likes and dislikes, of needs and wants or of lacks and losses. Emotions might well-nigh be a criteria in the process, and that is probably the reason why we have come up with some idea of *happiness* as an end that human beings are supposedly after.

Happiness, as mentioned above, is listed as one of the primary emotions by Ekman. However, it barely applies to animals' situation. As in the example of high

spirits, cats and dogs can barely be regarded to be happy just because they are joyful by the homecoming master, or content by the amount of food given, or playful after a fly. But they are mostly regarded so by their human observers. *Because, since we seem to reduce our diverse set of sensations out of our bodily or mental needs into the notion of happiness*, we tend to attribute the notion to those of all other living things Happiness seems to be able to refer to all our positive states of mind and body, and it seems that by one word of happiness we believe to refer to many different senses of contentment.

Eagleton states that to believe that happiness is the end that human beings are after, and it is the name for their particular mode of living well seems persuasive to some extent. Then, the question changes from 'what we are after?' to "what is happiness, then?". And, right after he asks the question, he begins to search for anwers:

> If it means simple contentment, then human beings can presumably be happy slumped sluggishly in front of the television set for fourteen hours a day, glazedly munching great fistfuls of potentially lethal substances. It is hard to avoid the suspicion that living a good human life might involve a touch more than this. It sounds too much like being happy in the way a rabbit might be happy. Does this mean, then, that the glazed munchers are not really happy? Perhaps so, if happiness involves more than sluggish contentment. People can be grossly self-deceived about themselves, including about whether they are happy. It is possible to be thoroughly miserable and not know it (111)

Eagleton continues that the munchers who say they are happy may well be right, at least in the sense that enjoying one's self and having no desire to ever lever themselves out of their armchairs and not having a care in the world. But the possibility

is that they might not be happy in, what Eagleton says, some deeper sense, since, at a quick glance they do not seem to have plumbed the rich depths of human potential. However, Eagleton submits the fact that, those depths might include miseries as well as ecstacies, therefore, having no bussiness there might make someone very happy. Among the many different ways of being happy this might as well be a legitimate one as many others.

Moreover, if happiness is a matter of different ways of contentment within the sort of life led, then, Eagleton examplifies, the brutal and violent can also be happy. This might easily be another different way of being happy. Eagleton employs two striking example here: The murderer and the army commander. A murderer could gain a considerable amount of pleasure from murdering doctors who terminate pregnancies, if he fells that he is acting as an instrument of God's will. A military commander, similarly, derives huge satisfaction from a hard day's massacring the local population believing that he has just made the world safer for freedom.

Eagleton states that it is again a possibility that these people might not be happy in that deeper sense, but that in no ways would mean that they are not happy at all. And this does not either mean that they actually hate having to murder abortionists or natives, but have managed to convince themselves otherwise. He warns that we must be careful against the mistake of always letting people off the hook with an appeal to ideological self-deception. Because, wicked people can really be content with their wickedness and do well out of it, whereas the good people are rarely happy, in Eagleton's words, in such a predatory world, since, being virtuous "probably means that you will be atrociously put upon"(113). Innocent people would have to look sharp for

themselves and that is, Eagleton comments, a potential hinderance for their innocence to continue.

Afterwards, Eagleton handles the idealized status of martyrdom, in connection with virtuous death. Innocent and virtuous people would most probably perish in such a cruel world. And they might prefer to die without betraying their principles, and by refusing to yield in to wickedness. This situation applies to martyrs who are willing to offer their lives as a sacrifice so that other human beings will thrive. This might be the end of a life fulfilled and content, but hardly a life of joy, Eagleton says, because it is hardly what they would have chosen, had the situation not seemed to demand it. Even a martyr who is so ecstatically happy about dying would barely be a martyr, since martyrs give up on their lives, because they acknowledge the fact that human lives are the most precious thing at hand, not because they are so eager to die. Someone slaughtered innocently for one's virtues, Eagleton concludes, would only feel self-fulfilled but not happy at all.

Choosing cases of extremes in exemplifying the ambiguity and diversity of our understanding of happiness deliberately to lay out his case, Eagleton sums his arguments by saying despite all the conditions he has exemplified up to then, we have something in our intuition that human beings were probably made for more than murder and chip-munching. In search to find out what it could possibly be, he draws upon the very well-known British footballer George Best's personal history.

A –NOTION OF FLOURISHING IN GEORGE BEST'S EXAMPLE

Having lived between 22 May 1946 and 25 November 2005, George Best was a very famous –and infamous as well- Northern Irish football player. George Best was a winger best known for his years with Manchester United. His game was renowned for its pace, acceleration, balance, two-footedness, goalscoring and the ability to beat defenders. In his native Northern Ireland the admiration for him was summed up by the local saying: "Maradona good; Pelé better; George Best." He was one of the first celebrity footballers and won himself many fans, during his career and after, despite his public drunkenness on TV, his convictions for drunk driving and assaulting a policeman and allegations of domestic violence. However, his playing career was ruined by his alcoholism and his inability to rehabilitate himself even after he had to have a liver transplant eventually led to his death at the age of 59. His cause of death was a kidney infection, a side-effect of the immuno-suppressive drugs he was required to take after the operation. (Wikipedia, 2009)

Eagleton begins with his example of George Best by commenting upon an anectode that was told as a joke by Best himself:

> Best, the ex-footballer was lounging in a five-star hotel room surrounded by caviar and champagne, with a former Miss World lounging amorously beside him, when a member of the hotel staff entered, weighed down with yet more luxury goods. Gazing down at the supine star, he shook his head sadly and murmured: 'George, where did it all go wrong?' The joke, of course, is that one would hardly claim that life had gone wrong for a man with such lavish lifestyle. This is how Best tells the story himself. Yet, the hotel worker was *right*: Best's life *had* gone wrong. *He was not doing what it was in him to do.* He was certainly *enjoying himself*, and

> might even in some sense have been happy; but he was not *flourishing*. (113-114, first, third and forth emphases mine)

The notion of flourishing is the key point in Eagleton's approach to happiness. On the whole, Eagleton proposes that flourishing should replace happiness. Eagleton develops his idea of flourishing over Best example. The notion's importance is underlined in Best's case with reference to his failure in "what he was supremely equipped to excel at."(114). Eagleton submits the possibility that Best has led a life of pleasure in his luxurious idle post-footballing days, and in that sense, he was probably more happy than he had been during his hard training days. And it is neither that his post-footballing days brought him suffering, as it is mostly the case with those we call Yeşilçam Actors. His case is, Eagleton states, that he ceased to prosper, in the sense that his life was not going anywhere.

Then, the question that quite logically occurs is the one about where human lives are supposed to be going. Eagleton clarifies what he means by the metaphor by first eliminating its connotations. It is not, as the idea of movement suggests, that human lives are the sum of a series of efforts given one after another to achieve some goal. To examplify that Eagleton use animals again. As it was mentioned in the case of toads, animals know what is good for them by their instincts. Their actions which are determined by their natures does not get them anywhere further then what they are. Giraffes, Eagleton picks, follow their instincts that will lead to their well-being, and in obeying their instincts they do nothing but the griaffe-like things their nature orders and they do it not for a further purpose but for its own sake. Well-being or happiness that human beings are supposedly after is, similarly, a means to no further ends. It is the end

in itself. Therefore, to claim that Best's life was not going anywhere means simply it was not fulfilling itself:

> What had come unstuck in Best's life was not that he was no longer *achieving*, but he was not fulfilling himself. It was not that he was no longer piling up goals, silver trophies and salary cheques, but that he was not living, if the pun may be excused, at his best. *He was not being the kind of person he was able best to be.*(114, my emphasis)

Eagleton explains that what Best should have been doing at best was to go on with his football career. Constant training and the restricted way of life it requires to be an athlete is not supposed to be fun. However, if he continued by following this less enjoyable life style, Best would have best prospered, flourished and fulfilled his nature, in the sense that carrying on doing what he was *gifted* to do. For Best, Eagleton says, playing footbal would be, then, the *moral* thing to do.

On the other hand, Eagleton submits, throwing up his football career could be seen in one sense as a courageous rejection of success ethic for the part of Best. It is for the capitalist success ethic that goal achievement is the pattern for moral behaviour. Thinking in terms of means and ends, capitalism leads to instrumentalization of everything to futher ends. Eagleton says, that is why Best could not play football just for its own sake, and thus, could not enjoy the delight of self-fulfilment by what he was doing. Indeed, "no footballer can in a sports industry which is about shareholders, rather than players, artistry or spectators", Eagleton adds, "To live a really fulfilling life we have to be allowed to do what we do just for the sake of it. Best was no longer able to play just for the delight of it, and turned instead from delight to pleasure. His hedonism was just the other side of the instrumentalism he chafed at." (115)

The idea that human life is supposed to be going somewhere refers to capitalism's instrumentalization of human lives and turning them into goal achievement projects. Therefore, the moment we ask where our lives should be going, what we have in mind is mostly to what destination we are headed for or what aim we are focused to achieve. Tragically, if it is the case of arriving at some place, the destination would obviously be our graves. And in that sense, assuming that life has a goal as some destination point that we must achieve would be quite unpleasant and would not require much effort either. Nobody particularly would and need to strive to die for death's own sake. We might settle down with death, yield to death but we never would aim it. We might prefer to die or aim at death only for the sake of some greater good, and in that sense we instrumentalize death. And in that case, death again will not be an aim but only the means.

Since we, human beings, imagine ourselves as moving through time and as we imagine that our life is a movement forward, we think of life as some sort of a journey. This has much to do with what semantics has lately discovered by conceptual metaphors**.** The term was brought into semantics by two linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980, in their study *Metaphors We Live By* where they claim to have found out that most of our conceptual system is metaphorical in nature (Goddard, 77). What they mean by that is in acquisition of the knowledge of an abstract concept we identify it with a more basic or concrete one. The examples of this process are visible in language, and even in everyday expressions. And the conceptual metaphors which apply to a given word or concept reflect aspects of a prototypical characterisation of the concept. Lakoff and Johnson give many examples for conceptual metaphors and one of

these examples is “Life is a journey”. How come we concretize the abstract concept of life by using a very concrete concept of journey is reflected in metaphorical expressions of our everyday speech; for example: “Look *how far we’ve come.*” “We’ll just have to *go our separate ways*” “This relation-ship is a *dead-end* street.” (op. cit, 78).

Life might seem a journey because of our way of conceptualising it; but we have to bear in mind that all journeys in this sense are terminated in the same place. It is a journey that ends in a *dead-end*. Moreover, human life barely seems to be in pursuit of a goal and it even need not, because the journey of life is *bound to* end in some place whether we aim it or not. Therefore, the journey should be experienced for its own sake, since it stands for its own sake, not for a further end which is nothing but its negation. We focus on the idea of access to some destination and seem to ignore the process. The idea of fulfilling one’s nature and flourishing refers instead to a focus on the process.

B – SUCCESS ETHIC VS ARISTOTLE'S ACCOUNT OF VIRTUE

Eagleton contrasts capitalism's success ethic with Arsitotle's account of virtue:

> The idea of fulfilling your nature is inimical to capitalism's success ethic. Everything in capitalist society must have its *point and purpose*. If you act well, then you expect a reward. For Aristotle, by contrast, acting well was a reward in itself. You no more expected a reward for it than you did *for enjoying a delectable meal or taking an early morning swim.* It is not as though the reward for virtue is happiness; being virtuous *is* to be happy. It is to enjoy the deep sort of happiness which comes from fulfilling your nature. (Eagleton, 116, first and second emphases mine)

Aristotelian ethics, as opposed to capitalism's success ethic, rejects instrumentalization. Just like it is the case with Eagleton's account of human nature which not necassarily has a goal to achieve, in Aristotle's ethic acting well is all for its own sake. Expecting a further reward for acting well, on the other hand, fits in capitalism's success ethic which is mostly influenced by puritan morality. How capitalist ethic and puritan morality in fusion approaches the virtuous behaviour is probably best concretized by Samuel Richardson's *Pamela: Virtue Rewarded.* By contrast, this idea of *virtue rewarded* is completely rejected by Aristotle, since he claims the reward of acting virtuously *is* being a virtuous person and that is the best reward. In other words, the act contains its reward in itself.

Being a virtuous person does not have to bring happiness. Indeed, it does not have to bring anything. Eagleton comments, on the other hand, that it is more probable that a virtuous person would be happy. Because, if a person is "brave, loving, resilient, compassionate, imaginative, resourceful and the like", it is less likely that other people

would prefer “to drop iron bars on [them] from a great hight.” (117). And even if they did, the virtuous person would have “the resourcefulness to dodge them”.

However, Eagleton also admits the possibility for the part of the virtuous to come unstuck. He also admits that what unsticks them may be their very own virtuosness. In this case, they cannot be regarded as happy, but Eagleton states by relying on Aristotle’s view that although their virtue brings them unhappiness, being virtuous is still a source of fulfilment in itself. To concretize that, Eagleton picks the example of the man of extraordinary physical fitness who, thus, runs the risk of being the target of “puny bar-flies” who are envious of his mascular physique. For him, it is very much a possibility that in case of drunkenness, these men would find some courage in themselves, which actually stems from envy to physically attack this shapely man. This man would be likely to experience this sort of problems frequently, and in that sense, being healthy might bring disturbance. However, it does not nullify the fact that “being healthy remains enjoyable in itself” (117). Similarly, when the virtuous come unstuck in their lives, the fact that they have acted well would still be enough to make them feel fulfilled. Aristotle thought that those who do not act well, on the other hand, would be punished not by hell fire or a sudden bolt from heaven, but by having to live a damaged, crippled life.

C – ANTI-ESSENTIALISM & CAPITALISM vs HUMAN NATURE& SOCIALISM

The anti-essentialist stand of course rejects this Aristotelian line of thinking, as it rejects the existence of natures in the first place. But by doing that, Eagleton comments, it unwittingly brings grist to capitalism's mill. The anti-essentialist point, Eagleton explains, is:

> They imagine that for something to have a nature means that it must be eternally fixed and unalterable. In their view, talk of nature also brings out what is common to certain things, an unpopular thing to do in *an age which makes a supreme value of difference*. Critics of essentialism also suspect with some justice that, when it comes to human beings rather than giraffes, the answer 'It's just in my nature' is usually a shifty self-rationalization. Destroying tribal communities in the pursuit of profit is part of human nature. Being a wife beater is simply what I am. Anti-essentialists are therefore wary of the idea of nature, just as the apologists of capitalism are. (117-118, my emphasis)

In his efforts to reconcile the anti-essentialist rejection of natures with his Aristotelian account of nature, Eagleton takes up the matter of fear against fixity. What he first points out about this fear is its seemingly being common to both anti-essentialism and to capitalism. Capitalism, Eagleton states, wants men and women to be infinitely pliable and adaptable. As a sytem, he comments, it has a Faustian horror of fixed boundaries, and of anything that turns out an obstacle to the infinite accumulation of capital. That makes capitalism a virulently anti-material system, while it is a thoroughly materialist one on the other hand. Because, materiality in the sense of fixity

is what comes in its way. It is the inert, recalcitrant stuff which puts up resistance to its grandoise schemes says Eagleton, and he comments that for capitalism to prosper, everything solid must dissolve to air.

Eagleton adds that no way of life in human history is more fond of transgression and transformation than capitalism is. And because of its ruthlessly instrumental logic, it has no room for an idea of human nature that stands for an existence that consists simply in fulfilling or unfolding itself purely for its own sake with no thought of a further end. On the other hand, Eagleton states, Aristotle thought that because it involved a boundlessness which is alien to us, the idea of economic production for profit was unnatural. Eagleton states that the economic for Aristotle, as it is for socialism, had to be embedded within the moral. However, he points out to the fact that, once this unnatural system known as capitalism was up and running, socialism, in contrast, came to seem contrary to human nature in time.

In response to the anti-essentialist fear of fixity, Eagleton points out to the fact that there is no need to imagine natures as being eternally fixed, and he adds that the most dramatic example to nature's changing nature is human nature which perpetually re-makes itself and he, in that sense, finds the advocates of transgression right in their claims that going beyond ourselves is *in* our nature. Moreover, Eagleton says that "[b]ecause we are the kind of labouring, linguistic, sexual, sociable animals we are, it is *in our nature to give birth to culture*, which is always changeable, diverse and open ended. So it is easy to mistake the *peculiar kind of nature we have for no nature at all*, and come, like the champions of trangression, to cultivate a Faustian image of ourselves" (119, my emphasis).

Eagleton's point is, as human beings we have the kind of nature that enables us to push beyond our boundaries and the very act of pushing beyond the boundaries of our capabilities results in human culture. In that sense, it is in our human nature to bring out the human culture. However, the mistake of postmodernist anti-essentialism is mistaking the notion of nature for firm and fixed aspects of human beings. And as they denounce fixities they reject the existence of such nature. In denouncing the existence of human nature, the fixed side of human beings that makes them what they are, postmodernists point out to culture which by contrast is changeable as the driving force that makes human beings what they are. However, as Eagleton points out nature in some ways is much more pliable than culture. Because, he explains, throughout the history "it has proved a lot easier to level mountains than to change patriarchal values. Cloning sheep is child's play compared to persuading chauvinists out of their prejudices. Cultural beliefs, not least the fundamentalist variety which are bound up with fears for one's identity, are far harder to uproot than forests." (50).

Eagleton points out that another reason why the idea of nature is rejected is its being linked to the idea of function. For that Eagleton gives the example of a watch. A watch's function is to tell the time accurately, and when it fulfills its function we call it a good watch, as it perfectly does the kind of thing that watches are supposed to do. In Eagleton's terms that is a watch that fulfills its nature. Here, the way Eagleton uses nature is not different than Sartre's use of essense. Essence or nature reminds us of function of the things, when used for things, as it is laid out in the example of watch. Therefore, talk of human nature reminds us of the question what the function of human nature is. And the answer given by Eagleton is when it comes to human nature, the

function is *to be functionless*. This, again, is another way of repeating the Sartrean argument that as far as the human beings are concerned, existence comes before essence.

Sartre's point is that we are not born with particular functions to fulfill, and we are not born to achieve pre-determined goals. In that sense, our lives are *meaningless*, if meaning comes to mean to function well in order to achieve a goal, with the aim of which we were thrown onto the world. The idea that human existence comes before human essence is to say that we are first born, then we make our essences; unlike a watch which *is* produced to be a watch. The watch's essence is pre-detemined, a watch is produced according to that essence. And its essence is its function. In contrast, human beings are not born to be particular things, and we, by our own *choices* and *actions* in life, make ourselves what we are. According to Sartre, freedom is the ability to *choose* as freely as possible, and to be able to *act* upon our *choices* as much as possible.

For Eagleton the function of our essence is to realize our nature as an end in itself, and the word nature is only to avoid saying *ourselves* instead. Because, Eagleton states, a good deal of what we are capable of -in the sense of realizing ourselves- should by no means see the light of day. In Eagleton's account nature only means 'the way we are most likely to flourish'. Admitting the fact that what "this way" refers to is rather oblique, Eagleton states this is another reason why it is easy to mistake this situation for having no nature at all. This he says is where anti-essentialists are mistaken.

In his defence of essentialism Eagleton refers to the political philosopher John O'Neill who points out that most of what postmodern thinkers criticize as essentialist is a caricature of the doctrine of essences which is defended by no one. He adds:

> Essentialism, [O'Neill] points out, is the belief that there are properties which some things need to have if they are to be the kind of things they are. For something to be copper, it must have ductility, malleability, fusibility, electrical conductivity, atom number 29, and so on. It does not follow that all the properties of an object are essential to it, or that there cannot be a great deal of difference and diversity between objects of the same class. All sheep are unique. Essentialism does not mean uniformity. (120-121)

In order to further explain himself, Eagleton defines his account of essentialism. He states that neither does it follow that all the objects assigned to the same class actually do share essential properties in common. To figure it out we have to look and see. Eagleton states essentialism does not involve ignoring the difference between natural and cultural phenomena. Because cultural phenomena *can* have certain *properties* without which they would be something else. To exemplify that he says if songs don't have sounds they are not songs. However, Eagleton submits the fact that anti-essentialists are right in one way and that is when they complain that talk of human nature is embarrassingly general. The point is fulfilling one's nature to lead a flourishing life might come to mean a horrific 'unleash hell' as far as human beings are concerned. Because, Eagleton states, human beings have many different powers and capacities at any given historical time, and it is not obvious which of these they should strive to realize, or in which ways. We have the capacity to slaughter others for personal gain and we are even able to torture others just for the hell of it. Then, in this sense, torture and slaughter are natural to us. Human nature can describe the kind of creatures we are, or it can mean how we *should* behave says Eagleton and he acknowledges the

fact that it is not easy to see how we can leap from the descriptive sense to the normative one.

All along, Eagleton's aim is to get reconciled with anti-essentialism with which he partly agrees. Eagleton says that anti-essentialists might concede that human beings do have a physical/material nature, in the sense that there are certain peculiar features which characterize human beings as species. That acknowledgment would not be different than Rorty's usage of featherless bipeds to refer to human beings. And indeed, even when the cultural and political thinkers of our times agree with an idea of a material/physical side to human existence -as it is the case with Rorty- anti-essentialist influence on postmodernism still prevents many contemporary thinkers from considering what Eagleton calls "moral or political consequences" derivable from that. Because for them, talk of morality or politics based on human nature is "too general a way of talking to tell us anything very informative", as it is the case with Richard Rorty.

By contrast**,** Eagleton aims to design a moral/political philosophy derivable from a notion of physical/material human nature in the normative sense.**,** and in order to do that he turns again to Aristotle who thinks that there was a particular way of living which allowed us to be at our best for the kind of creatures we are. For Aristotle this is the life conducted according to the virtues. Then, Eagleton reminds us of the Judeo-Christian tradition in which the way of living at our best is the life conducted according to principles of charity or love. Eagleton comments that this, in a sense, means we become the occasion of each other's self-realization. He further explains that it is to say one person can only attain his/her self-fulfilment by being the means for another's. Eagleton points out that unlike the Judeo-Christian tradition, there is little about such

reciprocity in Aristotle himself, and he says the political form of this reciprocity-based ethic is known as socialism, for which, as Marx comments, the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. Eagleton comments that "[it] is, as it were, *politicized love* or reciprocity all around." (122, my emphasis). Stating that Aristotle himself did not believe ethics to be a matter of universal principles, Eagleton concludes when we universalize the idea of self-realization, unlike Aristotle did, by crossing it with the Judeo-Christian account of reciprocity or democratic-Enlightenment creed that *everyone must be in on the action*, what we come up would be socialism. This is the outline of his moral/political opening which he will back up at the end with an account of human nature.

D- INSTRUMENTALISM

According to the outline he has drawn, Eagleton compares and contrasts socialism with liberalism to further emphasize that it is socialism which better fits in this reciprocal self-realization model. He says both doctrines depend on the fact that human beings naturally live in political society. Where they differ from one another is the way they offer to arrange political life. Liberalism arrange it in the way that all members of liberal society are allowed to "realize their unique capacities without getting in each other's way". On the other hand, socialism tries to organize political institutions so that the members of socialist society manage their self-realization as reciprocally as possible. Therefore, Eagleton states, the reason why one can judge socialism superior to liberalism is "the belief that human beings are political animals not only in the sense that they have to take account of each other's need for fulfilment, but that in fact they achieve their deepest fulfilment *only in terms of each other.*" (122, my empasis)

Eagleton begins to elaborate on the outline he has put forward by stating that the modern period in particular has made moral questions hard to handle. He gives two reasons for that. First, because, not everyone agrees on what love or self-fulfilment is, or on which virtues are important, or on even this model of the good life. The virtues that Aristotle favours, Eagleton says, are not necassarily the ones which we moderns would be keen to affirm. Because, "they are too bound up with his own social history, wheras, conversely, his view of human nature in general is too little historical."(123). Yet, Eagleton adds, thanks to Marx and his "great mentor" Hegel, a powerfully

historical critique from Aristotle's ethics is available. This idea is the basic dynamique of Eagleton's Aristotelian & Marxist moral/political scheme.

Eagleton offers that in order to reach an agreement on what self-realization means we simply need to argue about it. However, it might turn out to be a more complicated bussiness than it looks. Because, "[m]odern existence, being fragmentary, specialized and diverse, has come up with too many solutions to the question to make a decision between them at all simple." (123). However, for Eagleton, there is a second reason why moral questions *were* turned out hard to handle: "It is not only because in a complex society, there are too many answers rather than too few; it is also because modern history makes it especially hard for us to *think in non-instrumental terms*." (123). Then, Eagleton, takes up again this notion of instrumentalism, this time in more depth.

While Eagleton further deliberates on instrumentalism, he first contributes to his critique of the notion in terms of its link with capitalism's success ethic. But he ends up acknowledging that instrumentalism in some *other* form is morally indispensible for human beings. Eagleton begins by reminding us that modern capitalist societies are so preoccupied with thinking in terms of means and ends, of which methods will efficiently achieve which goals that their moral thinking becomes *infected* by this model as well and what it is to live well, thus, becomes a matter of acting so as to attain a certain goal. Then, the only problem on the part of moralists, Eagleton says, is to determine what is that goal. And he compares and contrasts different instrumentalist paradigms of morality, in terms of their arguments concerning the matter. Eagleton says:

> For utilitarians, we should act so as to bring about the greatest happiness of the greatest number. For hedonists, we should act so as to maximize pleasure, preferably our own. There have been those who held that the aim of human action was to glorify the political state. Still others believe that we should act so as to achieve social justice or some other praiseworthy end. In a moral climate where what matters seem to be the results, some people might well think twice about trying to help an injured man if they knew that the roof was about to fall in on him and finish him off. Yet a lot of people would help him all the same, and it is interesting to ask ourselves why.

Eagleton submits the fact that, in contrast to what is mentioned above, not all the moral thinking is of instrumental kind. He states that being one of the most influential schools of modern moral thought, Kantian moral philosophy is of just the opposite persuasion. However, as what Kantians suggest is "what matters is not goals, but the purity of will with which we act in a certain way regardless of its consequences, and regardless of its contribution to our happiness", this, Eagleton states, seems like an over-reaction to goal oriented thinking. Eagleton comments that Kant is right to claim that to act morally is an end in itself, however, the short-coming of his account is he can only formulate his non-instrumental morality in a way which totally separates the idea of end-in-itselfness from self-fulfilment.

In contrast to Kant, Aristotle thought that acting morally is a matter of fulfilling one's nature and is not of a duty, therefore, that acting morally brings enjoyment. Eagleton commenting upon Aristotelean ethics says that "we live well when we fulfill our nature as an enjoyable end in itself and since our nature is something we share with

other creatures of our kind, morality is an inherently political matter." (124). However, he also points out that in Aristotle's ethic enjoyable well being cannot be an immediate gain, but an enjoyable well-being comes in turn from living a life of virtue. "Virtue in this sense is a worldly affair" as it is intrinsically linked to how we act, but also it is quite an unworldly affair "in the sense that success is its own reward". Eagleton underlines that he is not suggesting to give up on instrumental ideas of morality forever. Because:

> If we are historical animals, *we are bound to be instrumental ones,* too, concerned with fitting means to ends. If the good life is fulfilling our natures and if it is true for everybody, then it would take a deep-seated change of material conditions to make such fulfilment possible all around. And this would require the kind of instrumental action known as *radical politics*. A lot of functional activity would be needed to achieve a situation in which we did not have to live functionally. In the modern age, *this project has been known as socialism*. (126, my emphasis)

However, Eagleton also submits, there is a conflict here. If some people have to act instrumentally to create a world in which nobody needs to live functionally, in other words, if some people need to live against the principle of fulfilling one's nature, that being the moral behaviour to secure one's well-being, so that others would flourish, then, it means some people had to sacrifice their happiness for others. He adds it seems historically necessary that some people had to abnegate themselves, to bring about the desirable form of life for human beings in which people do not abnegate but fulfil themselves. After submitting that Eagleton comments this is something unavoidable, since "there are, tragically, situations in which the self can be fulfilled only by being

relinquished. If history were not as dire as it has been, this would not be necessary. In a just world, our condition would not need to be broken in order to be re-made."(126)

Summarizing the point, leading an enjoyable life is linked to living a life of virtue and it is also fulfilling one's nature. However, being a human, in the sense of fulfilling one's nature, does not come naturally, it is determined by the person's acts. It is not something *in* there that we simply bring out by introspection, but something we put inside by our acts. In that sense, our "humanness" is not within ourselves, but it is rather a product of our inter-relations within the members of our species. This idea of reciprocity or account of inter-relation not only makes this ethical model a very political one, but also attributes paramount importance to the notion of objectivity. Well-aware of that, Eagleton continues to lay out his moral philosophy by arguing about objectivity just in order to combine this whole scheme with his precedent aim of justifying theory and truth.

6. OBJECTIVITY vs SENTIMENTALISM

These two notions in their opposing positions are employed by both philosophers in their philosophical schemes. However, using this dichotomy runs the risk of reiterating the strereotypical rationalist binary between the mind and the heart, in other words, Reason and Emotions, and Richard Rorty falls exactly into that. In his model he calls "sentimental education", what he demands is precisely to give up on theoretical justifications, and by focusing on practice instead, to re-educate our sentiments so as to feel for one another to a greater extent. This idea of feeling for one another to a greater extent, he believes, is the only way to prevent the violent outcomes of political conflicts based on cultural diversity. And in that sense, following the line of thinking once employed by both philosophers, Richard Rorty is an inverted Rationalist. He thinks he is an anti-rationalist because.he is going against the traditional Rationalist view that counters acting on sentiments to stop world-wide conflicts. Being erratic, wild and chaotic; sentiments –the Rationalist believed- is detrimental to civilized man and his order. But while Rorty is taking a completely anti-rationalist position, by assuming that sentiments and objectivity are mutually exclusive paradigms he reiterates rationalist premises.This is no different than how Samuel Johnson believes, only he replaces these terms with common sense and emotions.

Eagleton's point, by contrast, is that feeling for another to a greater extent requires a considerable level of knowledge about the condition of this other and "trying to understand the condition of this other as it really is" is nothing but what is traditionally called objectivity. Eagleton's objectivist position and his conception of objectivity is in exact opposition to that of Rorty and this conception of objectivity fairly undermines the conventional attributes of the term. And he presents his account of

objectivity with references to binary oppositions between subjectivity and objectivity, feeling and knowing, reason and emotions.

Eagleton clearly makes his point that as far as the flourishing of one individual is dependent on his relations with the other members of the species and/or his compatible acts within the larger body of the species, "flourishing" hardly proves to be a subjective affair. He adds that ethics is all about human beings, however it is not about –as subjectivity would suggest- *what they like*. Ethics, he states, is rather a matter of *what human beings are like*.

However, Eagleton submits the fact that there exist some kinds of happiness that can be regarded subjective, in the sense that you may be knowing that you are feeling content, gratified or at ease, as you know that you are feeling pain when you have a bad tooth. On the other hand, people might think they are happy but might not be in some deeper sense of the word. This kind of happiness which is harder to determine is what counts in his view. In Eagleton's Aristotelian framework, flourishing pertains to this sort of happiness. One person cannot know that he is flourishing by simply introspection, as it a matter that is determined by how people live –namely what they do- not their state of mind in the sense of how they feel. Happiness, for Aristotle, "is a practice or activity rather than a state of mind. It is about realizing your capacities, not having a particular outlook on life." (127).

Eagleton explains that in Aristotle's framework there are two reasons why one cannot find out whether they are flourishing by simply checking out "how they feel". Because, in order to see whether it is a flourishing one, one person has to check out his life as if it is a kind of *narrative*. But to do so they have to have some idea about what

counts as human kind of prospering in the first place. And this, Eagleton states, is not an individual claim, anymore than it is to decide what counts as mental stability in a mouse. He gives the example that 'torturing Tyroleans feels like thriving for me', and says that one person cannot say such a thing not only because it is not true, but because it is not up to him to lay down the law. Because, moral values are not 'what a person happens to plump for', but they are 'what all of us plump for' (128). In that sense, they are largely inter-subjective. By this view, 'even if we were all to agree that torturing Tyroleans was an excellent idea, it would still not count as an instance of human flourishing.' (128). Eagleton adds, although there would be many people to regard this an impossibly objectivist position, at least Tyroleans would not.

Eagleton points out in response to anti-objectivists like Richard Rorty that objectivity as it is defined here is not something that *has nothing to do with us*. It is rather that you have to look at your life in a much wider context and that wider context is what Aristotle knows as politics. One person cannot be happy or at ease by act of will, it requires among other things certain social and material conditions, in that sense the idea of flourishing is as much *political as it is moral.* Flourishing, Eagleton says, is a complex idea and involves a whole range of factors. One might be prospering in some ways but not in others. They have to ask themselves about these aspects when they are analyzing their lives to see whether they are flourishing. These aspects involve, as he randomly lists, "whether they are happy, at ease with themselves and others, enjoying life, working creatively, emotionally caring and sensitive, resilient, capable of fulfilling friendships, responsible, self-reliant and the like". Indeed, most of us rationalize themselves by blaming the hypocritical or insecure conditions of society when they are

answering these questions in the negative. And Eagleton submits the fact that most of these are not wholly within one's control. That renders "flourishing" a social, thus, non-subjective affair.

That is why, Eagleton states, Aristotle makes no rigorous distiction between ethics and politics. Eagleton reminds that Aristotle begins his *Nichomachean Ethics* by saying there is a science that studies the supreme good for man, and adds -rather unexpectedly, Eagleton comments- that it is known as politics. For Aristotle, he says, ethics is a sub-branch of politics, because, nobody can thrive when they are starving, miserable or oppresssed. He accepts Aristotle's own inconsistency with his own arguments by endorsing slavery and the subordination of women. However, what is basic in Aristotle remains relevant and that is the idea that if you want to be good you need a good society.

Of course, there are people who remain good in atrocious social conditions, Eagleton says, and that is why they are saints. But an ethic based on the presence of these people, would be an ethic based on rarity, rarity being part of the reason why we admire this people. Moreover, he comments, an ethic based on the presence of these people would be like restricting everyone to a diet of only three raw carrots a day, relying on the fact that there are few rather weird people capable of surviving on that. Eagleton says:

> Ethics is in Aristotle's view the science of human desire, since desire is the motive behind all our actions. The task of an ethical education is to re-educate our desires, so that we reap pleasure from doing good acts and pain from doing bad ones. It is not just a matter of gritting our teeth and capitulating to some imperious moral law: *we need to learn to enjoy being just, merciful,*

> *independent and so on.* If there is not something in it for us, then it is not true morality. And since all our desires are social, they have to be set in a wider context, which is politics. *Radical politics is the re-education of our desires*. (129, my emphasis)

However, he admits that Aristotle was on no accounts a radical, still he held that playing an active part in political life was a virtuous thing itself. Because being politically active helps us create the social conditions for virtue, but also *it is* a virtue in itself, and in that sense it fits the model of being both means and end.

One important sense in which morality turns out to be rather an objective affair, for Eagleton, is the fact that it frequently is very easy to be mistaken about whether one is flourishing or not. Feeling happy might be a good sign of flourishing, but happiness might stem from, in his example, the relief of the fact that the parents of your abductee have finally showed up with the ransom money. This is barely a flourishing kind of happiness. Then, there must be some public criteria to determine whether someone is flourishing or not. Those public criteria would have to be objective by definition.

That sort of public criteria would also serve, Eagleton points out, for us to supply a case against those who claim that well-being or happiness is not a practical condition but a state of mind. He quotes Aristotle that people may be content with a terrible life, but if they are not, for example, allowed to play an active role in determining their own lives, they cannot be genuinely fulfilled. Eagleton by following Aristotle exemplifies this argument that slaves may feel in good shape from time to time but they are hardly the object-lesson in how to excel at being human. If they were, we would not bother to free them. Objectivity, he concludes, is a political affair and it is a

matter of there being ways of refuting those who insist that all is well as long as we are feeling fine.

In his definition of objectivity, Eagleton states that objectivity can mean a selfless openness to the needs of others. And in that sense, it is again related to ethics on one deeper level. He says that the selfless openness in this sense is something that lies very close to love: to try to see the other's situation as it really is, which is an essential condition of caring for them. The opposite of this openness will not be personal interests or convictions. It will be egoism. The idea of seeing another person's situation as it really is also lies underneath Rorty's sentimental education which he says is the sort of education that acquaints people of different kinds with one another by manipulating their sentiments *so that they will be less inclined to think people different from themselves as quasi-human*. In order to manipulate the feelings of people to those against whom they are biassed, you have to spend a considerable amount of time to make them *sympathize* with them. What Rorty means by sentimental education is nothing but arousing sympathy by telling people sad and sentimetal stories about the situation of these others and in that sense, Rorty also offers to teach people to see the others' situation as it really is.

Eagleton states that the idea to try to see another person's situation as it really is brings notions of knowledge and morality together, rendering them inseperable unlike the modern age tendency to do so. This tendency that is criticized here by Eagleton is very well epitomized by Rorty when he says that we should put the issue in moral and political terms, rather than in *epistemological* and metaphilosophical terms and see that the question is not about how to define words like truth, knowledge, rationality or

philososphy, but about what self-image our society should have of itself, since, he believes that the emergence of the human rights culture seems to owe nothing to increased moral knowledge and everything to hearing sad and sentimental stories. In response to this tendency, Eagleton says that trying to see the condition of another is trying to gather *knowledge* about them, an effort which, Eagleton says, involves capacities like imagination, sensitivity, emotional intelligence and what not. Indeed, sentimental education also involves these capacities, although Rorty does not point them out. Eagleton adds that knowing another person is the kind of knowledge that is bound up with moral values, "since establishing the facts is usually a gruelling process, given the complexity of the world, the deceptiveness of some of its appearances, and our own chronic tendency to self-delusion, it is *bound to involve value of a kind.* (132, my emphasis).

Eagleton claims objectivity is something only the virtuous can attain. He explains himself by saying that, only the virtuous –the one with patience, honesty, courage, and persistence- can delve through the dense layers of self-deception that prevents us from seeing a person's condition as it really is. Those who are never capable of doing that would be those who wield power. Because, "power tends to breeed fantasy, reducing the self to a state of querulous narcissism. Moreover, Eagleton adds that seeing the other's situation as it really is, is the opposite of sentimentalism which sees the world as benignly coloured by itself, in contrast to selfishness which colours the world malignly by itself. Within the scope of this criticism, Rorty's sentimental education also finds room for itself.

In attacking sentimentalism, Eagleton, in a way, targets at what is stated above as a comment about Rorty's method; namely, at the idea of arousing sympathy. Rorty's argument that when people ask why should they care about a stranger, a person who is no kin to them and whose habits they find disgusting, instead of the inefficient traditional answer that goes because kinship and custom are morally irrelevant to the obligations imposed by the recognition of membership in the same species, the answer to be given should be the sort of long, sad, sentimental story just refers to that act of arousing sympathy by making the question-poser identify themselves with the object of question. In this model of sympathy, how people like Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin and George W. Bush should be located is not clear enough. We, as well, could sympathize with the long, sad, sentimental biographies of such people who are associated with extremely monstrous acts. Most probably, their mother would also be grieving for them. However, Rorty does not propose to deprive this sort of people from sentimental sympathy, anyway. What he rather offers is that we should not see these people as evil or irrational, but only as deprived.

But deprived of what? Not elaborating on that, Rorty gets himself off the hook of being essentializing these people. He only says that these people's problem is that they were not so lucky in the circumstances of their upbringing as we were, therefore he suggests the term "deprived" to define their conditions. This seems no news, and if we think deeper about the possible connotations of this state of deprivation, we can come up with a list of hints, which is more interestingly not news either. Deprived of sentimental capabilities because they did not have caring and loving parents? Deprived of the ability to sentimentally sympathizing with fellow-beings because they were not

taught by their parents to love? Deprived of acknowledging the autonomy, individuality or humanness of others because these of their own were not acknowledged by their parents or neighbours or teachers? An analysis of the situation of these so-called deprived people needs much more than that, which results in an autonomous branch of science called psychology. What about sentimentally educating this group of people? It is mostly them who need to be educated sentimentally so as to learn to cherish their fellow-beings, as much as it is to educate others to see this group of people as deprived. Given the fact that a considerable amount of world population is included in this group of "The Deprived" as the unlucky circumstances of upbringing do apply to rather too many people across the globe, sentimentally educating these people who are deprived in sentimental capacities because of childhood traumas turns out to be a huge clinical effort and goes beyond the scope of "education".

This idea of education is also referred to by Eagleton when he says the task of an ethical education is to re-educate our desires, so that we reap pleasure from doing good acts and pain from doing bad ones. And he suggests this task as an outcome of radical politics. In this type of education not only "ethical" replaces "sentimental", but also the term "education" fits into its definition. Any hint at the term necessarily invokes the necessity of *knowledge* and systemic transfer of knowledge between subjects who are necessarily assumed mutually compatible in terms of intellectual capacities, rather than the term having the meaning of a therapeutic manipulation of a person who is rather deprived in these capacities by another who happens to be "luckily" supreme in terms of these. In this case, ethical education is more of an education in contrast to sentimental education. Moreover, ethical education makes no difference of an educator and an

educatee. It suggests that we all should comply with a non-subjective law. Ethical education is not conveyed from one individual to another but it is imposed by the self to himself as a result of a political consciousness. Thus, it is obvious that "ethical" is way more democratic than "sentimental".

Within Eagletons framework, this idea of sentimentalism is further problematized. According to this framework both sentimentalism and selfishenss turn out two inverted versions of self-centredness for which the world is just an imaginary doubling of one's ego. This uncanny undertone is also apparent in Rorty's justification of the uses of sentimental manipulation of people as he says such sad and sentimental stories repeated and varied over centuries, have moved the rich, safe, powerful people, to *tolerate* and even to *cherish* those people whose appearence, habits or beliefs at first seemed an insult to the former's sense of the limits of permissible human variation and *to* their *own* moral identity. What stands in opposition to this sort of self-centredness, according to Eagleton, is what modern theory calls decentring, or what has been more traditionally known as disinterestedness. This he offers against Rorty's sentimental sympathy based model:

> Disinterestedness, a notion almost universally scorned by the cultural left nowadays for its bogus impartiality, grew up in the eighteenth century as the opposite not of interests, but of self-interest. It was a weapon to wield against the Hobbesians and possessive individualists.*Disinterestedness means not viewing the world from some sublime Olympian height, but a kind of compassion or fellow-feeling.* It means trying to feel your way imaginatively into the experience of another, sharing the delight and sorrow without thinking of oneself. (133, my emphasis)

In this view, Eagleton explains, it is not suggested that we should not have interests of any kind. It is rather suggesed that our interests lie in *another* rather than *ourselves*. This kind of imaginative sympathy, Eagleton comments, is like Aristotle's virtue, in the sense that it is its own reward. It does not seek for profit or further gains but takes pleasure in the well-being of others. In that sense, Eagleton comments, unlike postmodernist delusion against it, disinterestedness is a radical political concept in origin. Objectivity or disinterestedness, in the way Eagleton uses, do not mean judging from nowhere. On the contrary, it suggests that the only way to fully grasp the nature of a situation is being in a position to know it. And that position is mostly the position of those who are persecuted, damaged, or subjugated by the situation. "Only those who know how calamitous things actually are can be sufficiently free of illusion or vested interests to change them." says Eagleton (136). Moreover, he says, one cannot change the situation at all, unless they appreciate the depth of the problem; and to be able to do that one necessarily needs to be either at the sticky end of it, or at least must have heard the news from there. In that sense, in Eagleton's model it is underlined again that objectivity is not *detaching oneself from any particular community and to look down on it from a more universal standpoint*, as Rorty claims. One problem with this model is that the notion's itself seems to *replace* Rorty's sentimental sympathy; however, Eagleton clearly differentiates his account of associating with the other from Rorty's method of identification, and the key phrase here is *taking sides*.

Eagleton says that given his definition of disinterestedness, objectivity and partisanship turn out allies, not adversaries as it is traditionally coded. On the contrary, what seems by this view as an opponent to objectivity, for Eagleton, is "the judicious

even-handedness of the liberal" (136). It is the liberal myth, says Eagleton, that misleads its followers to the idea that one can only see things aright –objectively, in other words- so long as one does not take sides. Eagleton comments "[t]he liberal has difficulty with situations in which one side has a good deal more of the truth then the other –which is to say, all the key political situations." (136). For liberals, Eagleton continues, the truth generally lies somewhere in the middle, and he sharply states that this sort of an even-handedness is not in the service of objectivity: "Faced with the poor's view of history as for the most part wretchedness and adversity, the liberal reaches instinctively to trim the balance: hasn't there also been a great deal of splendour and value? Indeed there has; but to claim that the two balances each other out is surely to falsify."(137)

This liberal attitude criticized by Eagleton is also latent in Rorty's offer to give up the idea of application of criteria to cases and accept Putnam's picture of inquiry as the *continual reweaving of one's beliefs*. As previously mentioned, Rorty gives the example that the Tasmanian aborigines and the British colonists had trouble in communication, but it was no different a trouble than Gladstone and Disraeli experienced in communicating with one another and he states the reason behind the trouble in all such cases of disagreement is just the difficulty of explaining why other people disagree with us, in other words, *reweaving our beliefs so as to fit the fact of disagreement together with the other beliefs we hold*. What this picture comes to suggest is to give up on desiring for an impartial status of mind to apply certain criteria to cases of dispute and to try to "reconcile the opposing views" instead, which is expressed by an unclear metaphor of *weaving* or *reweaving*. And when a liberal aims to

reconcile with opposing views, how much hipocracy is committed is obvious from Eagleton's example above. Against this position Eagleton offers judiciousness, and he states that true judiciousness is by taking sides.

In his definition of objectivity, Eagleton finally evokes the binarist convention that regards the subjective as pertaining to the self, and the objective to the world. In that framework, subjective seems to be a matter of value, whereas the world is a matter of fact. Eagleton states that there is one condition that these two opposites -value and fact- converge and that is *self-reflection*, and objectivity is the *product* of self-reflection. In contrast to what the binarist view holds, he states that objectivity is not a condition outside the self. On the contrary, as in the form of self-knowledge, it is the pre-condition of a successful living. Self-knowledge, Eagleton claims, is inseparably a matter of fact and value; and a question of *knowing ourselves*. But this knowing ourselves requires us to be unusually secure, so that we can find the courage to confront our deepest self-delusions. In other words, we can only dare to encounter the truth of ourselves, if we believe that we will still be accepted. In that sense too, Eagleton says, value and objectivity are linked to one another strictly.

What strictly opposes objectivity as it is defined in Eagleton's account is narcissism. The narcissist has problems with yielding to the fact that the world does not revolve around himself. He even has doubts about the fact that there is a world outside himself and independent of him. The world in narcissist's view is nothing but an extension of himself as if it moved with his will or stopped by his death. Indeed, the narcissists do not look and see the world; therefore, *objecitivty* is only an empty signifier for them. They rather assume that the world rests its gaze on them. In contraat

to their delusions, Eagleton says, the world is impeccably democratic in the sense that it has no particular regard for any of us. And those who have the folly to imagine that "the world has taken a shine to them, that its existence depends in some sense on their own, will never be able to grow up." Evoking Freud's argument that we never grow up anyway, and the maturity is nothing but the fantasy entertained only by the young, Eagleton comments there still are degrees of infantile narcissism and "supermodels and idealist philosophers rank high in the scale." (138).

The most politically engaged problem of the narcissists is their having problems with acknowledging the autonomy of others. Refering to that, Eagleton states that one way in which we realize that the world is objective is by recognizing the presence of others "whose behaviour manifests the fact that, at a very basic level, reality is pretty much the same for them as it is for ouselves."(138). Or at least, he says, there *is* someone out there with whom we can argue the toss. In that sense, *the others*, Eagleton concludes, are the paradigm case of objectivity. They are the only fragments of a world that is independent of us, that has the capacity to impress upon us this truth about the world. He adds that other persons are *objectivity in action*; as they are so-called others, they are also very familiar fellow-creatures to slap us on the face with our own otherness, as they simply reveal for our eyes their own.

Rorty points out a very important thing about human beings, which he believes is what discerns us from other animals, and that is the human capability of feeling for one another to a greater extent than all other animals, which is perfectly true. However, for Rorty, this idea is the basis of his sentimentalist model and a basis to reject rationalist projects like objectivism. But in Eagleton's model, this idea is the very basis

for objectivity. Because objectivity, for Eagleton, is seeing the other's situation as it really is and this renders the affair hugely inter-subjective and, more importantly, political. Those Rorty refers to as "the deprived" in his sentimentalist scheme are whom Eagleton calls narcissists, not in a clinical but in a an ethical sense, and education of those, as well as the others, is a political issue.

7. EAGLETON vs RORTY

A) ETHICS AS POLITICS: EAGLETON'S ACCOUNT OF MORALITY

There are three subtitles to Eagleton's account of morality within the scope of which his definition of objectivity is further underlined.

i) ARISTOTLE & MARX

Before Eagleton explains his Aristotelian&Marxist ethical model in detail, he mentions a mistaken view of morality that instantly comes in mind as the word is uttered. This account of morality is worth attention particularly because, he claims, the way it defines morality reduces it to a fuss about sexual intercourse. And this, for Eagleton, is partly the reason why morality has been disfavoured by cultural theorists for a long time. He adds that since it seemed preachy, unhistorical, priggish and heavy-handed, cultural theorists avoided the question of morality as something of an embarrassment. Moreover, Eagleton claims, it gave way to politics after the 60s: "The ethical was for suburbanites, while the political was cool. Ethics were those who made a fuss about whether to go to bed with each other, not for political types."(140)

Stating that this view of moraliy is mistaken, Eagleton reminds that morality is all about enjoyment and abundance of life and in that sense, ethics and politics are indistinguishable from one another for classical thought. Eagleton finds the fault with the cultural theorists who, he says, passed over the political for the personal and therefore felt uneasy with moral questions. However, he also submits the fact that morality has been enough of a way of ducking hard political questions by reducing them to the personal. To exemplify the reductionist attitude Eagleton says:

> In the so-called war against terrorism, for example, the word 'evil' means: Don't look for a political explanation. It is a wonderfully time-saving device. If terrorists are simply Satanic, then you do not

> need to investigate what lies behind their atrocious acts of violence. You can ignore the plight of the Palestinian people, or of those Arabs who have suffered under squalid righ-wing autocracies supported by the West for its own selfish, oil-hungry purposes. The word 'evil' transfers the question froım this mundane realm to a sinisterly metaphysical one. (141)

When the question is cynically transfered from political to metaphysical, the underlying motive is to deny the reason and purpose behind the atrocious acts of terrorists, since to ascribe reason and purpose to those actions would be to acknowledge them as rational creatures. As post-colonial theory points out with the case between the colonizer and the colonized, rendering those in subject position as irrational serves the oppressor with rationalization of his dominion. Bringing democracy to Iraq is of the same discourse as bringing civilization to savage Africans, in both cases the bringer bestows his subjects with something they themselves are not culturally capable of coming up with, unlike their masters. However, this approach has a shortcoming for its user and Eagleton explains it is because labeling your opponent with irrationality, unpurposed spontaneity, a child-like or a mad-like mental credibility serves unwittingly to let them off the hook for the resposibility of their crimes, both legally and morally. Therefore, claiming the ex-colonized terrorist as a madman only redeems him for blowing out subway stations.

Reducing the moral into mere personal helps to veil down morality's political complexion. Eagleton states that defining morality in mere individualist terms is to believe that "a history of abuse and emotional deprivation has nothing whatsoever to do with a teenager becoming a petty criminal. It is sometimes pointed out by those who

hold this view that not all the abused children become criminals; but then not all the smokers develop lung cancer. This does not refute the relation between the two." (142). Eagleton adds that appeals to morality, as it is the case with those to psychology have often been enough a way of avoiding political argument as it is very well observable in Rorty's idea of 'the deprived people'.

Eagleton compares this view of morality with Aristotle's moral thought. And comparing Aristotle's view with Marxism, Eagleton develops his moral/political model, in the sense that ethical *is* political not metaphysical. Eagleton explains this identification by saying that ethics is about excelling at being human, and nobody can do this in isolation and without the available political institutions that will allow him/her to do so. Eagleton linkes this thought to Marxism by saying that it is this kind of moral thinking that was inherited by Karl Marx. He states that manifesting that the questions of good and bad had been falsely abstracted from their social contexts and had to be restored to them again, Marx was a moralist in the classical sense of the word. Because he believed that moral inquiry had to examine all of the factors which went to make up a specific action or way of life, not just personal ones. Despite that, Eagleton comments, Marx was not aware of himself's being a classical moralist, and like many of the radicals since his time, he believed that morality was just ideology. Eagleton points out that this is becasue Marx made the characteristically bourgeois mistake of confusing *morality* with *moralism*.

He further explains that it is moralism that believes there is a set of questions known as moral questions which are quite distinct form social and political ones. Moralism does not see that "moral" means exploring the texture and quality of human

behaviour as richly and sensitively as possible, and that this cannot be done by abstracting men and women from their social surroundings. Having mistaken this approach with what is called morality, Marx is quite understandable in his rejection of it, comments Eagleton, and adds Marx did not seem to realize the fact that he was the Aristotle of the modern age.

ii) JUDEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION OF ETHICS

Eagleton states that some types of behaviour are so vital to the flourishing of human life, or alternatively so injurious to it, that we hedge them around with laws, principles and obligations. These laws are part of the scaffolding of a good life. But it is not to say that these principles are unbending while the rest of our conduct is a matter of rule-of-thumb. Principles can be flexible and still be principles, says Eagleton and adds that it is not their unbendability that distinguishes them from the rest of our lives, but it is rather the vital nature of what they safeguard or promote. This vitality is in terms of fostering an abundance of life, and this cannot be managed without laws like the one that serves the prohibition of unjust killing. Eagleton states that any thriving form of life necassarily will have its prohibitions and obligations. The problem, on the other hand, is one may come to identify morality with the obligations and prohibitions, rather than thriving. To exemplify these arguments Eagleton refers to Judeo-Christian moral tradition and compares and contrasts Judaism with Christianity in this context.

Eagleton firstly states that what he has argued is roughly like St. Paul's position on the Mosaic Law and he adds that St. Paul's criticism of the law does not stem from his mistake of assuming the law of Judaism being just about ritual observances and legalistic prohibitions when he compares it with Christian gospel which is mostly about love. Eagleton says:

> As a devout Jew himself, St. Paul understands perfectly well that the Mosaic Law *is* the law of love and justice. It is not just a neurotic fussing about washing and diet. It was not contrary to Jewish law to set the law aside in the name of human compassion. The law against fashioning graven images of God, for example, is really a prohibition of fetishism. To carve a totem of God is to

> make an ideological idol for him, which you can then manipulate as a magical device to get him to fall in with your wishes. For the Jewish scriptures, you cannot manufacture images of God or even give him a name, because the only image of God is humanity. And humanity is equally resistant to definition. Another such ideological fetish is *labour*, which is why the law insists that men and women are granted a periodic rest from it on the sabbath. It has nothing to do with going to church. There were no churches. It has to do with leisure. (145, my emphasis)

What these all suggest, as explained by Eagleton, is that there can be no love without law. And the love here in Judeo-Christian tradition means acting in certain material ways, like caring for the sick and imprisoned, not feeling romantic about them. Moreover, love as it is thus defined needs to be codified, because the poor and the weakly cannot simply trust their well-being to the kind sentiments of their superiors. In other words, they need law for their protection.

Given that, laws have to be precise, because the result of obscurity might easily be injustice, states Eagleton. And he adds that they also had to be ruthlessly impersonal so as to treat all those who take shelter under it in an equal manner. Treating people in an equal manner, Eagleton explains, does not necassarily mean to treat them as if they were all the same. On the contrary, it means attending even-handedly to each individuals unique situation. In that sense, equality means "giving as much weight to one individual's particularity as to another." (147).

Eagleton says that for St. Paul, the law is only for children and novices. Because, they are those who are not yet morally independent, and therefore need propping up by codes and censures. "They have not yet developed the spontaneous habit of virtue, and

still see morality in supersitious fashion as a matter of offending or placating some higher authority." (147) The law will serve to help them to grow into an enjoyable moral autonomy, but they will have done so only when they are able to throw it away and manage by themselves. In other words, learning the law is to help them to know when to throw it away. Eagleton likens this situation to that of a person who tries to learn a foreign language, and says we will know that they are fluent in that language, when they are able to dispense with the dictionary.

Moral laws, in that sense, seem to tell me 'Thou shall not steal', only until I reach a state of consciousness, or of conscience, by which I do not desire to steal, and do so not out of fear from my law representing superiors, but out of the pain that I suffer from doing what I have been taught to be a bad deed. Appearently, morality in St.Paul's view is very much like Aristotle's morality, who defines it to be a re-education of our desires.

Why people who do not steal do not steal anyway? Is it because God forbade them to do so? Or is it because it would be against the sacredness of private property? If it is so, why people who call themselves atheist or anti-capitalist not turn into an unorganized gang of violent burglars? For the part of the atheist, it might be because they feel more responsibility in themselves in a world which is not protected by a god, as many others believe to relieve themselves. For the part of anti-capitalist, it might well-nigh be the case that since they abhor property, they do not bother to try themselves out for its possession, or, it might as well be because they believe property itself is a form of theft. Maybe, the atheist and the anti-capitalist are too weak to steal. It may also be the case that the reason why an atheist and an anti-capitalist do not steal is

in fear of the legal measures against stealing, like many people would say. However, stealing a seemingly insignificant piece out of your friend's bookshelves does not put you into jail anyway.

What is tried to be explained is that morality is not necassarily metaphysical. No one needs a god, or a god-like superior notion of Reason, or legal regulations to know that it is bad to steal and that we should not be bad. We know that it is bad to steal, thanks to our culture and also because we know that people who have been robbed would feel bad. The morality here is very much like internalizing the democratic restrictions on the basic rights of the individual. That restriction is 'not restricted so long as these rights are not employed to violate those of another'. How we know that we do not violate those of another is by our moral intuition. Similarly, nobody needs to read penal or constitutional law to know that theft would disturb people's well-being, even if they abhor the notion of property in the first place.

And even if we have been brought up in a culture that approves stealing from one another, which is barely possible since cultures are supposed to serve as *adhesives* among their members, it will not change the fact that we would feel bad when robbed. The fact that our culture approves stealing would only determine our degree of submission to our condition. We feel bad when we learn that one of our belongings has been stolen. Not because it costs money, it does not need to be of high monetary value, or even of some special emotional value we sometimes attribute to our things. It might not be a golden ring, or a music box given by a loved one. It might just be a German-Urdu dictionary that is stolen from our library. We would feel bad to find out that it is missing, because we would feel deprived not finding it there when need it. Or because

we would feel bad from being betrayed, or because we would feel bad from being treated not as much *a person* as to be given consideration to our basic rights of ownership. No matter why, we would feel bad anyway.

Thank God, there exists not a culture which urges its members to ransack their neighbours' house. Cultures rather say 'Love thy neighbour', love meaning not romance, but helping them when they are needy and desperate. As it is with the Mosaic Law, love is caring for the well-being of others and law of love means acting in certain ways to show that you care for others, like "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and visiting the sick" (154, Eagleton). In that sense, Eagleton claims, even in religions ethic is not showing one's love to God, but to other human beings.

iii) *PHILIA* AND SOCIALISM

Eagleton elaborates on what he specifically means by love. He says that we should take love in its traditional sense as *agape* or *charity*, not in what he says to be an impoverished meaning which narrows it to the erotic or romantic variety of stuff and we need a term that is somewhere between the intensive love and rather cooler friendship. He points out that our lack of such a term is a significant detail. Still, without that term at hand, he tries to explain what he refers to when he says love:

> Love is no respecter of persons. It is remorselessly abstract, ready to attend to the needs of any old body. In this, it is quite indifferent to cultural difference. It is not indifferent to difference in the sense that it is blind to the *specific* needs of people. If it was, it would not be attending to *them* at all. But it is quite indifferent as to whose specific needs it attends to. This one way in which it differs from friendship, which is all about particularity. Friends are irreplaceable, but those we must love are not. Love is also indifferent in the sense of being unilateral and unconditional. It does not give on the assumption that it will receive. It is unresponsive, too, in the sense that it does not repay injury with injury. (167)

Given the explanation above, Eagleton states that the paradigm case of love is not love of friends but love of strangers. Unless what we deduce from love is a mutual mirroring of egos, it has to attend to what is in the Other which is strange, fearful and recalcitrant. In that sense, love is loving that *inhuman thing* we underline in the Other without paying attention to the fact that it is also what lies in the core of ourselves. Eagleton says that we have also to love ourselves in the way we are advised to love

others, not in the form of a perverted self-admiration. And he admits that neither case is as simple as it is to preach.

Quoting Alasdair MacIntyre, Eagleton says that Aristotelian Man is a stranger to love. Yet, he adds that love is the very model of a just society even if the word has lately been faintly ridiculous when used in anything but interpersonal affairs. In Aristotle's dictionary love means creating for the other the kind of space in which he can flourish, at the same time this other person does the same for you. It is finding happiness in being the reason for the happiness of another. It definitely is something else than two person finding their happiness in the same goal; instead, each person finds his/her fulfilment in the other.

Eagleton states that there is already a politics implicit in this model of two person finding their happpiness in the same goal and it is liberalism. The liberal model of society, he explains, wants individuals to flourish in their own space without mutual interference, thus the political space in question remains neutral. It is to wedge them apart so that one person shall not thwart another's self-realization. He submits that this ideal is an admirable one being nurtured by what is in many ways a deeply honourable political tradition and the 'negative freedoms' it cherishes have a vital place in any just society. But he adds that the space involved in love is rather more positive, since it is created by the act of relationship itself, rather than being given from the outside. And, Eagleton states, this sort of a freedom is able to be at one's best without undue fear, which is, thus, the vital precondition of human flourishing. Because, fear is a natural response of human beings in face of the Other, and they can only make themselves known to those whom they love and trust. Only love and trust can achieve this kind of a

security that is the precondition of a relationship between the two in which they will aim their reciprocal self-realization. In other words, the space involved in love is the precondition of human flourishing because it enables the secure grounds where two people can reciprocally fulfill their nature. Thus, fulfilling one's nature is synonymous with self-realization.

Eagleton adds that the freedom to realize one's nature is not the freedom to express any impulse. If it were, that would not rule out torture and murder. What he rather means is a normative nature which is realized as an end in itself and directly allows the other to do so. This would be a nature realized at his best. And the reason why it will indirectly lead the other's self-realization is that the other's fulfilment *is* the medium through which a person flourishes. In that sense, nobody would be free to be violent, dominative and self-seeking. Stating that the political equivalent of this situation is socialism Eagleton concludes:

> When Aristotle's ethics of flourishing are set in a more interactive context, one comes up with something like the political ethics of Marx. The socialist society is one in which each attains his or her freedom and autonomy, in and through the self-realization of others. Socialism is just whatever set of institutions it would take for it to happen. One can see, too, why equality is a key concept for socialist thought. *For you cannot really have this process of reciprocal self-realization except among equals*. (170, my emphasis)

Nevertheless, Eagleton admits that equality is on no accounts a precondition of love. People may love their children, their hamsters and even their bedroom slippers. But equality is necessary for that specific kind of love that Aristotle calls *philia* or for

friendship. And he says that rather than love, philia is perhaps the more appropriate political term. He adds that there cannot be full friendship between non-equals, because we may feel too constrained in the presence of a superior to express ourselves fully and freely, while the superior may be stymied by his need to preserve his authority. Only a relationship of equality can create individual autonomy, Eagleton concludes. However, it is not in the liberal sense of two autonomous individuals entering an equal relationship, but in the sense that equality is what allows them to be automomous. Eagleton says, friendship frees us to be ourselves.

In his definition of objectivity, Eagleton was reported to say that objectivity can mean a selfless openness to the needs of others. His further claim is that the selfless openness in this sense is something that lies very close to love, thus objectivity becomes the pre-condition of love. Because, trying to see the other's situation as it really is, is the pre-condition of caring for them.

B- EAGLETON OR RORTY: UNIVERSALITY OF BIOLOGICAL HUMAN NATURE AS A CRITERIA

According to Eagleton's claim, even in religions, ethics is showing one's love to other human beings and there are certain material ways to do so. As far as this explanation goes, ethics turns out to be a *biological* affair. Because, Eagleton states, it is the mortal, fragile, suffering, ecstatic, needy, dependent, desirous, compassionate body that furnishes the basis of all moral thought. Saying moral thought puts the body back into our discourse, he concludes that it is because of the body, not because of Enlightenment's abstraction that we can speak of morality as universal.

Claiming about universality of human bodies is to claim the universality of human nature. The definition of the human nature here is restricted to the human body. Eagleton states :

> The material body is what we share most significantly with the whole of the rest of our species, extended both in time and space. Of course it is true that our needs, desires and sufferings are always culturally specific. *But our material bodies are such that they are, indeed must be, in principle capable of feeling compession for any others of their kind*. It is on this capacity for fellow-feeling that the moral values are founded, and this is based in turn on our material dependency on each other. (156, my emphasis)

It is by our bodies that we are capable of familiarizing, identifying and associating with other human beings and thus we are capable of feeling compassionate about them. However, Eagleton adds that something may persuade us that certain human bodies lack all the claim on our compassion and that thing is *culture*. Regarding others as inhuman requires a fair degree of cultural sophistication, says Eagleton. And

on looking at history, we can easily say that it is exactly what all the oppressive ideologies do in order to justify themselves. This sort of a sophistication, on the other hand, is "literally to disregard the testimony of our senses"; and this "should give pause to those for whom 'culture' is instinctively an affirmative term" (156).

Eagleton adds that there is another sense that culture can interpose itself between human bodies, and that is known as technology. Being an extension of our bodies, technology can blunt their capacity to feel for another. "It is simple to destroy others at long range, but not when you have to listen to the screams" (156). Thus technology makes our bodies far more flexible and capacious, but in same ways less responsive and Eagleton adds that it is what Marx considered when saying capitalism had plundered us of our bodies by even turning our senses into commodities.

Talking of human bodies as animal entities is rejected by culturalist as it was traditionally done by humanists. Naturalist on the other hand highlight the natural aspects of human bodies and see a continuity between human beings and other animals. Referring to that Eagleton comments both positions in the opposite ends are mistaken when either underestimating or overrating this continuity. Because, "(…) the link between the natural and the human, the material and the meaningful, is morality. The moral body, so as to speak, is where our material nature converges with meaning and value." (157).

Eagleton submits that culturalists are right in one aspect, and our capacity to acquire language does involve a quantum leap which transfigures one's entire world, rather than being just an animal with linguistic bonus. But for Eagleton this culminates in saying that we are universal animals *because of the* kind of bodies we are born with,

and because our bodies are the way they are, we can in principle enter into forms of communication far deeper and richer than simple physical contact, unlike the case with other animals.

With respect to this matter of deeper and richer physical contact that human beings only are capable of, Richard Rorty says that the principal difference between us and animals is that we can feel for one another to a greater extent. However, whereas in one account it is used in invalidating claims to objectivity and kinship by membership within the same species, in the other account this affinity within the members of our species is a precondition for both these notions. While Rorty offers sentimental education in place of theoretical justifications to human rights culture, relying on the fact that our primary source of association is our capability to feel for one another so extensively, Eagleton states that because our primary source of association with one another is our bodies we are capable of feeling compasionate for another. This compassion stems from our being capable of seeing each other's situation as it really is and this for Eagleton is objectivity.

Rorty is right in his claims that membership within the same species is barely a criterion in the sense that a great majority of human right violators do not think of themselves as doing so by use of various pretexts to deny the 'humanness' of their victims. With respect to that Eagleton says this is to disregard the testimony of our senses. Rorty also claims that the question "What is man?" in the sense of "What is the deep ahistorical nature of human beings?" was tried to be answered by foundationalist philosophers to clean the mess done by those who easily can disregard the testimony of their senses. And he concludes that since this effort has done no good up to now, we had

better put all foundationalist projects behind us and should concentrate our energies on sentimental education by which people of different kinds will be made acquainted with one another so that they will be less inclined to think of those different from themselves as quasi-human. The goal of sentimental education is to expand the reference of the terms ‘our kind of people’ and ‘people like us’.

Richard Rorty’s sentimental education has its merits. Particularly in the sense that he underlines how important it is to educate and re-educate people. However, it is a mistake on the part of Rorty to underestimate the power of theory. Because most basically, you cannot manipulate sentiments without theoretical justifications. Arousing sympathy is never enough, you have to show them that their sentiments are not naturally developed but mostly shaped by culture or ideology. Without tearing apart that cultural veil or ideological blindfold, it is not an *education* of sentiments but soap opera sentimentalism. By making them cry there is no further gain, people may cry over any melodrama. You have to make them be not sentimental but feel *responsible* about the wrongdoings of men to one another, for that, you need better sources than sad and sentimental stories, and the best appliance at hand seems to be theory. With exposure to a considerable amount of world history and literature and philosophy, no one needs to be further educated in their sentiments to understand that claiming certain human beings as non-human is disregarding the testimony of our senses or to see that it is for our best to pay respect to human rights or to acknowledge that we can find our source of well-being in the flourishing of others.

Being a pragmatist, Rorty’s account is based on practice. Being an objectivist, Eagleton focuses on theoretical arguments. There is no practical scheme Eagleton

bothers to develop for the applicability of the political/ethical model he offers. Indeed, Eagleton offers nothing new anyway. He concludes that the political equivalent of his moral scheme is socialism. His arguments that love means a selfless opennes to the need of others which will enable the onlooker to see their situation as it really is, and the opposite of this will be egoism are significant. The idea is, cultural or political or whatever coflicts that these are, no solution is available despite capitalism. Because these are all conflicts of vested interest, cultural difference being the pretext. This is to say that so long as it is in my use to claim that Kurdish people are beasts, no story, no theory, no sentimentally moving effort can talk me out of my belief. However, Eagleton does not lay out for us how the world he envisages for the best of mankind could come true. All he says is we have to get rid of capitalism and we have to have faith in the socialist state, which we already know. Eagleton's work is only an outline (perhaps what philosophy at best can hope to do is sketching outlines) and an unfinished work. With respect to that, he concludes his book in such a way that it also summarizes his point against postmodernism:

> With the launch of a new global narrative of capitalism, along with the so-called war on terror, it may as well be possible that the style of thinking known as postmodernism is now approaching an end. It was, after all, the theory which assured us that grand narratives were a thing of the past. Perhaps we will be able to see it, in retrospect, as one of the little narratives of which it has been so fond. This, however, presents cultural theory with a fresh challenge. If it is to engage with an ambitious global history, it must have answerable resources of its own, equal in depth and scope to the situation it confronts. It cannot afford simply to keep recounting the same narratives of class, race and gender,

indispensable as these topics are. It needs to chance its arm, break out of a rather stifling orthodoxy, and explore new topics, not least those of which it has so far been unreasonably shy. This book has been an opening move to that inquiry. (221-222)

8. CONCLUSION: DIFFERENCE OR OBJECTIVITY

For Richard Rorty, the human rights foundationalism is outmoded, with which I strongly disagree. The human nature in the sense that Rorty or any anti-foundationalist philosopher has in mind in rejecting foundationalist projects does not seem to exist. But the existence of a human nature without metaphysical attributes, namely the existence of human body cannot be denied. That's not only the point made by Terry Eagleton in *After Theory*, but also what Rorty himself endorses when he refers to human beings with the phrase "featherless bipeds".

The question is whether it is possible to enforce a foundationalist project based on Eagleton's account of human nature. Eagleton attempts at devising an account of human nature which is based on the very materiality of human bodies, an account which excludes all sorts of metaphysical attributes associated with human nature throughout the history of philosophy and thus is less vulnurable to the criticism which is traditionally and quite rightfully directed at foundationalist ideas. And Eagleton comes up with the idea of "re-education of our desires" for a better world by borrowing much from Aristotelian ethics. . According to Rorty, on the other hand, justifying human rights in theory is inefficient to stop worldwide human rights violations and what we shold do instead is educating sentiments. That's why Rorty turns his back on theory. And in response to this kind of resentment for theory, Eagleton says we can never turn our back on theory so long as we, as a species, are born with the capacity of self-reflection. Or in other words, because it is in our nature to critically reflect about our situation, we cannot do without theory.

What Rorty points out about human rights violators with respect to the fact that they do not think of themselves as doing so because they do not think of their victims as

human beings seems to be the reason why he is weary of human rights foundationalism. And to rehabilitate this habit of ours to think of those who are different from us as non-human, we have to think about our understanding of "difference". For over decades difference has been the "catch-cry" of the new world, as Eagleton also submits in After Theory (46). And now the political theory of our times is mostly about finding an answer to *the overwhelming question* 'how do we manage to live in peace despite our fundamental differences?'. But, there are two other questions that call for an answer even before that: The first is, "Is it really the case that we are all irreconcilably different or is it because we need to believe that we are different to feel more of an individual? And the second is, "Is it really the case that all our conflicts stem from our differences, or is it because of our similarities or common interests that we most frequently fall into conflicts?"

A- EAGLETON'S POINT : DIFFERENCE PRESUPPOSES AFFINITY

Relying on the universality of human bodies, Eagleton's study investigates upon notions of difference and diversity in the context of culture. Whereas the universality of our bodies is our primary source of affinity, culture is our primary source of division. Stating this, Eagleton reminds us that human history would certainly have been much more peaceable, if cultural differences had never sprung on the scene and "the world had been almost exclusively populated by gay Chinese." (158). What is most striking about Eagleton's account of difference is his manifesting that difference entails affinity. To explain this he says:

> To claim, as Marx does, that individual humans share a 'species being' in common is to claim, for example, that they can conflict and conspire, kill each other for cultural and political reasons and virulently disagree. This, then, is how cosy it is to share a nature with others. We have no quarrel with stoats. Our needs may sometimes conflict with theirs, as when we destroy their natural habitat in order to bulldoze a motorway through it; but because we cannot talk to them about this, we cannot be said to disagree. *Stoats cannot affirm their difference from us*. They do not have the concept of difference. *Only someone with whom you can communicate can affirm their difference from you.* Only within some kind of common framework is conflict possible. Socialists and capitalists, or feminists and patriarchs, are not at daggers drawn if they are simply speaking about different things. Difference presupposes affinity. (158- 159 my emphasis)

The affinity mentioned stems from "the shared human nature" (159), in other words from the universality of human bodies. Eagleton adds that our murderous

conflicts stem from our having a shared human nature. This comes to say that human beings are conflicting entities not because they are different, or culturally diverse; but because they are the one and the same thing. This shared human nature not only makes for murderous contentions but also is what makes for solidarity, Eagleton states and adds that we would not celebrate solidarity with a stoat. We might feel sympathetic about it when we learn that some fellow human beings are insidiously planning to wipe up their species. But that would not make for what we call solidarity. Those who are for the stoats and those against them would be in fierce conflict, if such scenario came to be real. Then, it will not be the case that a party of human beings are in solidarity with stoats against another party; but there will only be a party of human beings in solidarity for the protection of stoats, as opposed to their persecutors. We get united in solidarity or fight in conflict *with* our fellow-beings for stoats, for democracy, for national elections, for global warming, for football games, or for our favourite candidates in BigBrother.

Culture is what is specific to the species called human beings and in that sense, culture is what is natural to us. Similar to animals which prepare the appropriate environmental conditions for their offsprings, or their colony, we human beings have produced what we later called culture to "survive and flourish through" it (159). Eagleton says because our bodies are materially geared to culture, which means that meaning, symbolism, interpretation and the like are essential to what we are, we can get on terms with those from other cultures, as we cannot get on terms with stoats. Because we cannot communicate with them, stoats are eternally closed to us.

Even if they were capable of some kind of language (and from one viewpoint they already are, because animals communicate with one another in their own ways) in the sense that they could speak, Eagleton states that we still would not be able to understand the single word coming out of their mouth, because, their material practices so radically differ from ours because of their bodies. The point Eagleton tries to make is, even though radically different from or even in opposition to one another, human cultures are far more accessible for their human beholders than their own lovable, long-standing spaniels. This is partly because as human beings we share the same nature which makes us the cultural creatures we are. But it is also because the kind of communication we can set up with different cultures is incomparably richer than our relations with non-linguistic creatures. Eagleton concludes, the word 'understanding' is transformed when we stop talking about spaniels and start talking about Sardinians instead.

Eagleton's account of difference as "difference presupposes affinity" is derived from his account of biological human nature. When put in other words, this means that because human beings have this much in common in terms of "nature" because of their bodies, their differences which are mostly associated with "culture" are so conspicuous. This account of difference has also too much to say in the context of cultural diversity discourse.

B- THE MYTH OF DIFFERENCE

How has the notion of difference ended in a myth? To analyze that we have to think back to Structuralism, because, it is the very paradigm that brings the notion of difference to the forefront by its methodology. Structuralism laid it bare that the meaning of a sign is defined by its binary opposite. This idea puts the greatest emphasis on the notion, because it comes to suggest that meaning is produced "out of difference". However, as this is the case with every binary opposition, this should apply to the sign "difference" as well, and this means that the existence of the sign difference should entail the primordiality of another sign like *likeness*, or *similarity*, or *resemblance,* or *affinity*, otherwise we would not name it in the first place This is what Eagleton refers to by saying "difference presupposes affinity". In order to differentiate the difference, there has to be a precedent state of resemblance by which differences could be figured out . And as opposed to Structuralism, Gestalt Psychology points this out.

But these two paradigms should be reconciled for a better analysis of the question whether our perceptions depend on differences or similarities? We can test this with an example: When the white man had his first glance of the black man, he had immediately understood that he was just a human being as he himself was. This perception on the part of the white man was by courtesy of his abiliy to find in the black man the characteristics of the species which, indeed, are easily acknowledged by any beholder, human being or animal, by use of one or another sense out of the five, (it is mostly the smell in animals' case, wheres it is originally sight in human beings' case) on meeting the other member of the species. Black man also had two arms, two legs, a vertical vertabrate, and had no fur; in short, he was similar. But the black man was also

different from himself, by his colour, his cultural habits, and the language he spoke. Consequently, the black man was both "like" and "unlike" the white man. This inbetween situation was disturbing and uncanny for each party, and prevented a completely affirmative or completely negative answer to be given to the question that "Is he one of us?".

This state of doubt is best formulated by what Lacan's describes as 'alike, but not quite'. We all are alike, but far from being the same. We are both different and not, we can neither be completely different, nor be exactly the same. This state of difference is what discerns us from our kind. In other words, this is what separates us as individuals and makes us exist by drawing a contour line around our figure. Each cat is only a cat, but each human being is not only a human being but also a *person*.

We exist only when we are different, and our differences bring about disputes. From this it may follow that as long as the opposition between the Self and the Other is the principal dynamique in the formation of the human Ego, we are doomed to disputes stemming from our differences; however, this is not necessarily the case. By such an account, difference is completely emptied of the notion of resemblance which is, indeed, intrinsic to itself. Moreover, if everybody is different, being a shared attribute of each member of the species, this difference, then, only makes them similar because it is in their nature to be different in someways. This intrinsic status of resemblance within the notion of difference requires a fresh outlook at this notion which is commonly mistaken to sound like totalizing, unifying, or like eradicating individualities. This requirement seems to be one of the basic dynamiques of Eagleton's study as well.

Jacque Derrida critically points out to the hierarchical structure of binary oppositions. In this one between difference and affinity, the hierarchical emphasis is apparently on “difference”, as we have seen above and this is how the notion is mythified. And the more this notion is overrated, the more discrepant it is considered to be from the notion of resemblance which, indeed, has been complementary to it. For example, believing that a fundemantalist Islamist and a fundamentalist Orthodox can barely stand one another because of their differences in terms of their beliefs and interpreting this conflict between these two parties as a conflict of differences is a result of such mythification. This account totally disregards a more comprehensive account that both parties are in resemblance with one another in terms of their fundamentalisms and as a result of this, they antagonize each other in *similar* ways, and they are even in resemblance in the way they highlight the differences they find in between.

The issue is as simple as this: our differences scare us, although these are what make us what we are. On the other hand, what scare us as hell are, actually, our similarities. We both want to be *unique*, and want every body else to be *like* ourselves. We both want to be “the one and only” and want to comform and belong with the rest. And we all want these in the *same* ways. Because this is part of what we are.

Any talk about our similarities directly will take us to a notion of human nature. Eagleton follows the same path in his book. If the political scheme he derives from Aristotlean ethics in the form of "a person fulfilling himself in The Other” is put in “difference-similarity” terms, this comes to say that the acknowledgment on the part of the people that they, infact, are very similar to what they have thought themselves to be very different from, is the only force to make them feel comfortable enough to meet

with it on common grounds. Today, we need to talk about “our similarities despite our differences", rather than about “our differences despite our similarities” or solely about “our differences”. As it was previously refered to by Eagleton in the “stoats” example, the reason why no person steps up to the front with auch a political goal as ‘Let’s Terminate All The Green Apples Worldwide’ is the fact that green apples and human beings have no common grounds. If there is no common ground, there is no conflicting interest, no difference, no relevance. Those having no common grounds are completely discrepant. They do not exist for one another so as to show off their differences. This is the only reason that has spared the green apples of a genocide.

It is simplistic to say that we are in huge conflict because of our difference, and this is barely correct. Moreover, this idea does not leave enough room for “settlement of disputes”. Saying that we are doomed to be in conflict with one another, because we are bound to be different, forces us to settle down with the idea of a world in which everybody slaughters whomever they can, although there would be no single human being that would like to be living in such a world. That might be far too ambitious to say that the great majority of our conflicts stem from our similarities, and the precondition to avoid those conflicts is proving that this is the case; nevertheless, this is, at least, to have a look at things through a new glass, and to acknowledge that there possibly is a way to sort things out and that the method is intrinsic to the issue at hand.

Objectivity, in this context, is our primary requirement. In the sense that seeing the other’s situation as it really is, objectivity includes seeing our similarities, and therefore, it refers to reminding ourselves the fact that we might be sharing more than it shows, while we are terrorized in face of the other. Objectivity requires acknowledging

our affinity. It is not an attempt at a non-human reality, it is the very precondition of acknowledging our humanity.

As Eagleton brings ethics once again to the forefront and offers to re-educate our desires, he re-defines objectivity. As long as we adopt that definition of objectivity we cannot turn our backs on theory. Moreover, theory can never be extinct and human rights foundationalism can ne ver be outmoded, so long as we have to argue against our political opponent. And it is good news that we still can argue against our opponents rather than trying to solve every political conflict by brute force. It is even better news that what we share with our opponent is what we have at hand to solve our problem.

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