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FACULTY OF EUROPEAN STUDIES

SUMMARY

DOCTORAL THESIS

Richard Rorty - The conversational philosophy

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Key words: conversation, final vocabulary, alternative vocabularies, contingency, contextualism, re-description, self-creation, edification (bildung), irony, metaphor, humanities, interdisciplinary relations, philosophical narration, discursive practices, created language, language games, rules of speech, neo-pragmatism, postmodernism, anti-essentialism, anti-representationalism, philosophical reformation/revitalization, interaction, public sphere and private sphere, linguistic creativity, poetic culture, Einbildungskraft, Weltansicht, solidarity, communicative community, the construction of meaning through communication, interpretative and therapeutic philosophy, philosophical and cultural progress, discursive activity, speech acts, pragmatics, inter-subjective recognition, literature, the principle of the efficiency and the practicability of ideas, identity and self/determination, social practices and descriptions, inter-human relations.

I. Motivation for the choice of the subject for the present thesis :

The present thesis is focused on the conversational philosophy of the American thinker Richard Rorty – a radical turn (a genuine revolution, we may say even) – that shook the foundations of the traditional metaphysical philosophy. Rorty's extremely original contribution regards the reformation (the revitalization) of the philosophical field of activity whose popularity and importance has diminished in the last century.

In an interview Richard Rorty affirmed that if the German idealists had raised philosophy to the status of a „candidate for the leadership of culture”¹, today it has become just one more academic discipline among many others, captive in a vicious circle of theories and of ideas which no longer resonate with the current cultural scenery.

We live in a tense moment in the history of philosophy, when internal movements of society have generated restructurings of paradigms and doctrines, as well as intense critic which ended with the contesting of the very necessity of philosophy (especially in its traditional form) as a field of activity. Richard Rorty restructures and redefines philosophy as „Humanities” – a domain with an interdisciplinary character which surpasses the philosophical impasses produced by the traditional metaphysics and epistemology and which opts for a general reorientation towards literature and towards literary criticism. The themes Rorty approached in his work are

¹ „From Philosophy to Post-Philosophy: An interview with Richard Rorty. Conducted by Wayne Hudson and Wim van Reijn” in *The Rorty reader* edited by Christopher. J. Voparil and Richard J. Bernstein, Wiley-Blackwell, A John Willey & Sons, Ltd., Publication, 2010, p. 495.

varied, *actual and of major relevance* within the larger cultural and implicitly philosophical frame. Considering all this, we have chosen as subject of the present thesis one particular aspect from the rortian universe, that which refers to language. Our interest gravitates most especially around the notion of *conversational philosophy*, however, in order to create a more comprehensive image of it we will treat linguistic, social and literary aspects as well, although constantly remaining in direct connection with the center which is the conversational philosophy.

During centuries of investigations, analysis and rigorous observations the philosophical community's intention was to attain relevant and clarifying answers to questions of great importance referring to the human nature, to truth, good, and to the relation object and subject, to the relation between the inner and the outer world of the individual, and of course to many more. Declared the science of knowledge, philosophy had suffered multiple reorganizations due to the invention and the adoption of new means of accessing knowledge according to the perspectives suggested by currents, sub-currents and dominant tendencies, and suggested also by the historic period and its leading community. On a diachronic level it can be observed the evolution from the *idea* as object of philosophizing and as base of the mental discourse specific to the seventeenth century (as direct consequence of the ancient influences) to the focusing on the public discourse characteristic for the actual tendencies / whose center is the *sentence* (the verbalized linguistic expression) - an artifact of the speaking subject (if in the past the philosophical talk revolved around the *idea*, now the entire argumentative undertaking gravitates around the *sentence*). Certainly, in this summary we have oversimplified the problem of the evolution of philosophy, however with the precise purpose of demonstrating how the philosophical discourse permits, from the perspective of the *dynamic character of language*, such permutations as the surpassing of the idea by the sentence.

In the context of the present doctoral thesis which is focused on the dialogical and conversational possibilities inherent to the philosophical endeavor, we will evaluate Richard Rorty's neo-pragmatism as a revolutionary one which repudiates the Cartesian ideas, which rejects the objectivity of truth and which finds suitable the conversational answers to the great epistemological questions.

II. Research objectives and the novelty resulted from the investigative endeavor:

One of the aims of this paper is the construction of a philosophical „background” which facilitates the familiarization with the rortian theories and visions (an extremely original philosophical universe whose edification has marked a turning point in the history of philosophy) through the analysis of previous ideas and through the synthesizing of the pragmatic, analytic and linguistic influences (in respect to the linguistic influences the focus is on the speech act theory). We intend to display the essential ideas of those parts of the rortian work which refer to the conversational philosophy, as well as to identify the conditions and the philosophical context which have contributed to the construction of this philosophy which is organized around the notions of: conversation, contingency, contextualism, re-description, self-creation, edification and irony.

Our thesis presents a wide opening towards innovating aspects (at the level of the content of ideas and of the research method, as well as at the level of the expression [i.e. at the level of the scientific vocabulary]), which are worthy of entering the arena of the philosophical discussions. The purpose for the election of this model of philosophical investigations is the popularization of the field of inquiry and the approaching of philosophy closer to a specialized public and also to people who are educated and trained in other domains of research (which are professionally constructed by way of other specific terminologies). *The openness towards the people* represents a „humanization” of philosophy which, once it has become accessible, it preoccupies itself with the individuals’ concrete problems and less with the eternal, universal and abstract subjects. One of our efforts resides in confirming and of persuading the philosophical academic sphere of the fact that inter-subjectivity *can* replace successfully objectivity and transcendence once the researchers’ system of reference no longer involves non-human realities such as the Truth, God, Good and Philosophy (capitalized concepts which have antecedently been placed on the superior level of the architectonics of knowledge).

We wish to demonstrate through logical, relevant and clear reasoning that the fighting arena of the philosophical debates is *the conversation*, where in a contextual and historical

manner there is made a selection between old philosophical vocabularies and new and alternative philosophical vocabularies which are more adequate to the contemporary cultural situation.

The main objective followed here is that of displaying and of applying the rortian conversational theory which affirms that the communicative process is a living one, a process of interactions exerted between the communicational actants who - by acknowledging the contingent character of language, as well as that of the human existence – construct and structure vocabularies with renewed/transformed aspects and contents with the intention of developing abilities to express precisely the significance of the state of affairs, and at the linguistic level of creating new senses with which fill the verbalized expressions.

The chosen style and argumentative method are congruent with the tone and the vocabulary of the American thinker - vocabulary which wants itself to be first and foremost an accessible one – capable of guiding through the intricate weavings of philosophy those possible readers which might not be of the same professional construction.

Regarding the technique of argumentation we have considered it appropriate to opt for a form of *philosophical narration*, interested by the redescription and the dissolving of the philosophical problems.

What distinguishes the present thesis as an innovating one is the used research method – redescription - and the neo-pragmatic argumentative style. In respect with the relevance of the thesis within the larger context of the philosophical inquiry we have made the effort of taking a step further (while maintaining a rortian line of analysis) the discussion (that is extremely important within the conversational philosophy) in reference to the problem of the tension between the private and the public sphere, the one subject for which Richard Rorty has not proposed a satisfying and well-shaped solution.

I. The structure of the thesis (the synthesis of the main parts of the thesis)

The paper is divided in five chapters, each of them being concentrated on the observation, analysis and the interpretation of the object of a preoccupation relevant for the larger frame of the thesis. Our effort has aimed at the detailed construction of arguments, coherence, clarity in argumentation and scrupulousness in the collection and the processing of data from specialized

publications – from international sources as well as from local ones. The structuring of the thesis is meant as a logical, fluent, relevant and argumentatively enforced listing of the displayed ideas.

Richard Rorty's philosophical intentions imply three specific positions which come together in the formulation of the conversational philosophy. It is the case of the *anti-essentialism - anti-representationalism - the doctrine of conversation* triangle which will be molded onto the structure of the present doctoral thesis (respectively chapter I, II, III, chapter IV representing the core of the approached subject – for which reason it bears the name of *The conversational philosophy*).

Commencing from the idea that in the history of philosophy there appear periodically shifts of directions that stand out due to the contribution of extremely gifted personalities (which on account of their innovating features manage to grasp nuances with transforming characteristics and to valorize them in an original manner), we have identified Richard Rorty's philosophy as a defining moment for philosophy and especially to the philosophy of language.

Richard Rorty's philosophical inquiry is focused on the dialogical and conversational possibilities inherent to the philosophical endeavor, following a line of analysis profoundly marked by the influence of Ludwig Wittgenstein, John Dewey and of Martin Heidegger. Rejecting the idea of philosophy as founding science, defined by the terminology of the traditional philosophical vocabularies, Rorty (who could not be clearly defined neither as analytic nor as continental) has classified himself as pragmatist. By analyzing the rortian universe as a combination of pragmatic principles (elements taken from John Dewey, William James and Charles Sanders Peirce) and linguistic aspects (the main influences being Ludwig Wittgenstein, W. von Humboldt, J. L. Austin, John Searle, Paul Grice, Donald Davidson, W. Sellars, W. von O. Quine) we have considered it appropriate to refer to Richard Rorty as a neo-pragmatist.

Chapter I with the title „*The conceptual structure of the present doctoral thesis – the neo-pragmatic reconstruction of philosophy*” is compounded of five subchapters for which we shall offer a short presentation in the following lines:

„*The conceptual structure of the present doctoral thesis – the neo-pragmatic reconstruction of philosophy*” has an introductory character displaying the rortian solution to the

central problems of the traditional philosophy (the concept of mind, the relation between language and reality, the distinction object – subject [as accurate correspondence of a signifier with its signified], the matter of truth) and identifying the essential notions of the vocabulary of the conversational philosophy: irony, contingency, final vocabulary, self-creation and interpretation. The solution resides – in Rort’s view - in the dissolving and the disentangling of the epistemological and metaphysical problems in language games and conversation.

„The desacralizing of the mirror metaphor – The eye of the mind and the mind as mirror” deepens the discussion regarding the abandoning of the perception of the concept of „mind” as an isolated, elitist space that facilitates a communicational channel with the transcendental, with the unseen world of the essences and of ideas.

We have insisted on the fact that, in the absence of the linguistic element and of the historically placed language games, it is impossible to identify a position from which to distinguish the mind in relation with the world.

„The problem of truth in the conversational philosophy. Truth without correspondence” brings forth the theory according to which truth is a construction, a human artifact attributed to the linguistic expressions within the communicative – interactive processes. The key word here is that if „created” as the truth is created and not discovered.

There does not exist any entity named „Truth” (with capitalization) to which reality must refer to. Neither there is a consistent relation between the „Truth” and reality by means of which to establish truth relations. On the contrary, the truth is revealed by practices, action, utility and through linguistic agreement between the members of a community. Without falling into relativism the truth must be regarded as a property of meaningful sentences, sentences which compile vocabularies. The vocabularies are continuously compared between themselves in order to decide which is the most adequate to a certain context and to a particular conversational philosophy. The justification of the force and of the value of the vocabularies is accomplished retrospectively within an analysis of the history of philosophy.

Hereinafter, in the subchapter *„An interpretative (creative) and therapeutic philosophy”* (while following a wittgensteinian line) we have placed the bases of the conversational philosophy on the imperative need to characterize philosophy by means of interpretative and

therapeutic criteria and *not* as a theory of knowledge based on the existence of a system of ahistorical concepts.

The redefining and the reattribution of cultural missions to philosophy is a process which can be realized only through the immersion of the philosophical interests in the contexts of life and by the assigning to them practical and justifiable values relevant for the communities of individuals.

The return to pragmatism underlines the theory according to which the senses of ideas and their hidden meanings rely and are recuperated from their contextual consequences. The major influences in respect to this subject were Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, therefore the following fragment entitled „*Rorty, Heidegger and Nietzsche*” is dedicated to them. Our concern regards the characterization of the *Dasein* through its inherent possibilities and through its own existence captured in full development. Heidegger’s *Dasein* represents the authentic existence of man to whom the world no longer reveals itself on ontological levels but structures and defines itself in relation to the individual who uses language as a creative instrument. The constituting of the world is decided by every moment of the human existence by means of the linguistic uttering.

With this vision in mind Rorty opposes to the philosophy-centered culture an art oriented one focused on the poetic elements – that he calls the *poetic culture*. The anti-metaphysical, anti-universalist and historicist positions marks this type of culture as one which refuses to situate the good and the truth on a higher level than that of the everyday living. The rortian message affirms that there is the hope of a „poetic culture” while identifying a central figure that of the „strong poet”.

Within this culture the accent falls on the construction of alternative final vocabularies. The syntagm „final vocabulary” denotes a set of words which a person possesses which represents the ultimate point where that person can reach by means of language. Each final vocabulary is different because of the individual education and previous readings which have facilitated the comparison with other alternative and better vocabularies. The characteristics of a final vocabulary permits the identification of the *blind imprint* (of that aspect which confers the

uniqueness of a person) of the person using it. The word „final” in the syntagm „final vocabulary” must not be associated with the metaphysical ambition of reaching a final point in the philosophical investigation. Then final vocabulary represents the knowledge accumulated by a person until the moment of employing them in speech. As new data is added to the informational luggage that forms the vocabulary, the later expands and enriches.

Richard Rorty considers that this poetic culture needs a central figure / that of the ironist. The figure of the ironist (as opposed to that of the metaphysician) is compound of two typologies. It is the case of the *ironist* – who is also a *theoretician* (who is interested in power and perfection) who wants to install his system and his own person as philosophical authority, to introduce a strategy which would put an end to the history of philosophy and the *ironist* – who is *not a theoretician* who does not desire to invest himself as any kind of authority. The first one focuses on the sublime while the second is attracted and interested in beauty for which he offers a frame – which is death. Focusing on the sublime the ironist which is also a theoretician finds himself in a continuous peril of regressing back into metaphysics.

The ironist understands the ephemeral and context-dependent character of his own final vocabulary - which he continuously wants to improve by placing it in contrast with alternative vocabularies which might prove to be better or more developed. The ironist uses as method of work the *re-description* because he believes that anything can be re-described in such a matter so that it could look desirable or not. He accepts the fact that vocabularies are subjected to alteration, while in parallel, other potentially-charged visions may arrive.

In parallel with the method of re-description (which he prefers in the detriment of inference), the ironist considers that dialectics is a more efficient form of argumentation. This opinion is explained in the following way: it is not the sentences that must be compared but the vocabularies amongst each other. The term „dialectics” was taken by Rorty from Hegel and by it he understands that literary ability that produces the linguistic gestalt-switches.

The ironist realizes the importance of the self-creation as a project in a never ending evolution and never as something with a final outcome. The process of self-knowledge during the confrontation with one’s own contingency is similar with the process of inventing a new language and that of imagining new metaphors.

In the second chapter of our thesis – „*Linguistic and analytic influences within the philosophy of conversation*” – we have treated Rorty’s contribution within the philosophy of language, while noting the linguistic and analytic influences on the conversational philosophy. The focus fell on the explanation of the notions of *edification* (the notion of self-formation/bildung replaces the linguistic matrixes and refers to modes of speech which are richer due to the creation of new metaphors), the notion of *re-description* (a method of work through which the linguistic practices, the description of the self and of the world are reconditioned –method which marks perfectly the philosophical gestalt-switch), *created language, linguistic contextualism* (the thesis of the placing of the theories of language in the larger frame of the history of humanity, connected to that of the contingency and thus, together defining the man as an entity deeply rooted in the time and the environment which had created it) and on the establishing of the wittgensteinian nuances which emerge from the rortian conversational philosophy (the theory of the usage of language - „meaning is use”, of the language games [linguistic activities whose combinatory movement form the language and of whose multiple connections render the significance of the words] and of their afferent rules).

The language is a dynamic process, creator of multiple and varied senses, a process which generate mechanisms of extending, restriction, degradation and transfer of meaning. Beginning from these assumptions we have discussed in the third chapter dedicated to communication, and thus called „The philosophy of communication”, subjects as the linguistic creativity, or the notion of metaphor as a productive and creative form of knowledge – generator of the linguistic novelty and of cultural progress. Our interest was equally directed towards the subject of the *Einbildungskraft (the creative power of language)*, towards Humboldt’s theories regarding the articulation of meaning and of language as *Weltansicht* - vision on the world and on the tendencies of evolutions of the pragmatic theories which had a very relevant impact in the formulation of some basic features of the conversational philosophy.

The structure of our inquiry pursues the model which characterizes the theory of the illustrious German professor Jürgen Habermas. He identified three defining moments for the history of philosophy which gravitated around three remarkable personalities Giambattista Vico (the author of the first linguistic turn), W. von Humboldt (the author of the second linguistic turn) and Richard Rorty to whom Habermas attributed the third major move in the study of philosophy, and more specifically in the philosophy of language - the third linguistic turn.

The Italian humanist Giambattista Vico attempted a philosophical research through which to reveal to the world that the process of knowledge should be mediated by signs and language. Rorty agrees with Vico in what regards the fact that the characteristic trope for the creative language is the metaphor. The latter allows the projection on reality of the image of an undetermined space, with fluid limits, just like a novel with an open ending. Rorty takes over and assumes the metaphor, submits it to the process of re-description and transforms it in the indispensable tools of the poet as creator of „the new“. The communicational actor becomes thus a creator of new metaphors when in the middle of a conversation he is capable of giving new meanings to previously acquired terms. The meaning of a linguistic expression is dynamic (mobile) – Nietzsche suggests as well in *The birth of tragedy – Out of the spirit of music* when he defines the bacchantic concept as being the incapacity of being contained in a single form, the movement generator of „the new“. The meaning is lived and re-lived continuously as the creativity inherent to the linguistic expressions assures the cultural progress.

Hereinafter, in order to clarify the phenomenon of the unfolding of language as social practice and as form of living we have imposed a re-evaluation of the traditional values and conceptions which regard the communicative praxis and we have oriented our interest towards Humboldt's work. His visions suggest that a dry study of language, for the sake of language and exclusive references to the formal structures is not sufficient in order to formulate a proper theory of language. The language is action, social practice therefore the study of language must be approached from an anthropological perspective with the focus on the social and the cultural ambience in which the speakers of a language exist and move. The language reveals the spirit of a people, of a community – spirit which is shown in full development as creative energy, as activity and as *energeia*. The living process, the conversation, is the creative center of the meanings of language, a center which is deeply rooted in the interactive dimension.

In order to construct a new vision on the world (Weltansicht) and in order to demonstrate the creative power of language (Einbildungskraft) Rorty insists on creativity, subjectivity (more exactly on inter-subjectivity) and on change. Through the creative element with which it is filled, the rortian thought offers to philosophy an essential esthetic effect. The latter brings in the foreground the unequalled importance of the fact that significances can be inter-changeable, and this phenomenon unfolds within the communicational contexts.

In the followings passages we will compare Humboldt's theories with those of the American linguist Noam Chomsky who sees language, through the notion of „performance”, as a generative process, a dynamic one, thus coming closer to Humboldt's notion of *energeia*, but in the same time focusing on the process of the actual production of language. *Richard Rorty prefers the humboldtian version* and considers being much more plausible the theory according to which the language is not a product but a *production (Erzeugung)* which conditions the active speaker but which in its turn is being conditioned by the use of the language in the context chosen by the speaker. We will pass from semantics to pragmatics (as part of semiotics) by commencing from the context-dependable indexicality, by passing through the performative action of certain acts in particular contexts (Paul Grice persists, in this stage, on the notion of „performance”, however it no longer regards the production of language – in a chomskian manner – but rather its *understanding*), and finally reaching the speech acts theory as pragmatic theory oriented on action (John Austin and John Searle).

Chapter IV – „*The conversational philosophy: Richard Rorty and Jürgen Habermas*” – is dedicated to a comparative „dialog” between the two titans of the contemporary philosophy – Richard Rorty and Jürgen Habermas – who have, otherwise, conversed constantly during their carriers. The subjects attained are the dialogical dimension of the human life, the constituting of the sense through communication at the level of a communicative community, the establishing of the telos of communication as the understanding and the continuation of the conversation of the world, the interaction and the inter-subjective relations of the communicative actors.

The main arguments from which we begin in the analysis of the issue of conversation and therefore of the verbalized interaction are those according to which the meaning of the linguistic formulations are recuperated from the dialogical horizon of the human existence and that which assumes that the communicative process wants itself to be conceived as an active process of collaboration of the syntactic-semantic functions with the action-oriented ones of pragmatic type.

The final destination of our endeavor, on what concerns this particular chapter, is that of clarifying the communicational mechanisms – the articulation of the sense, the establishing of conversational maxims and norms of speech (while remaining within the pragmatic theory of language – and insisting on the aspects of contextualism, of the practices of argumentation and that of undistorted communication, on that of the communicational structuring of experience),

with focus on the discursive structuring of the interpersonal interaction and on the demonstrating of the way in which communication as a medium for socialization aims at the attaining understanding and human solidarity.

All along the length of this chapter we have related the rortian ideas in respect to conversation and to language, in general, to those of Habermas. The reason for this choice of action is, expressed *in nuce*, the following: Richard Rorty and Jürgen Habermas have chosen each other as partners within the framework of the philosophical debate. During the time span of their carriers, the two have maintained a fruitful conversation, embodying (following a rortian model) the typology of the ideal thinkers - those who are interested in the maintaining and the continuing of the conversation of the world.

The conversation, as part of the communicative process, derives from the dialogical character of the latter and combines the operational conventions with the dynamic hypostasis that generated the originality of the free discussion. The goal of the conversation is not that of encountering the truth but that of construction through it and its use a guide for the relations between people who lead their existence while being constantly aware of their own contingency.

The conversation reaches its true purpose when, while freeing one's creativity, it formulates new metaphors and vocabularies and when it does not self-restricts to a rigorous argumentative system.

It is imperative to replace reason (of any sort) with narrations placed in historical contexts, narrations which, by means of free and open communicative encounters, would identify the truth as property of some sentences and by extension, of some actions.

The linguistic interaction presupposes in parallel a social interaction as well, while the communicative actors recognize each other reciprocally as communicative individuals and attribute to each other social roles. The communicative ego is constituted, in parallel, with the other subjects, creating itself in the process of socialization (*Sozialisierung* – term used by Habermas). We may refer even to a dialogical relation of the recognizing the self through the connection to the other.

The human solidarity is not the recognition of a central self but an inter-subjective agreement related to historical circumstances, an ability to transgress the traditional differences towards the including of those different from us into an „us” of an extended meaning.

In this chapter we will approach the matter *of the public and of the private sphere in the conversational philosophy* and we will conclude that – because these aspects of the human life cannot be approached as a whole, the solution for assuring a good communication between the two spheres resides in the construction of a society which gives credit to both dimensions, to understand in depth the differences that exist between the two and to create the proper mediums in order for those to prosper.

Chapter V – „*The applications of the conversational philosophy inside the post-philosophical culture*” – the closing chapter of the thesis is an applied one that is preoccupied with the direct and concrete effects of the rortian philosophy in the context of today’s society. In this distinct moment of our thesis we intend to demonstrate the efficient functioning of the alternative social vocabularies, to describe the image of the philosophy of today as a one which is oriented towards the cultural progress and towards the productive cooperation of philosophy and of literature.

Our effort is to demonstrate the applicability of the rortian theories to the contemporary reality. In the center of the post-philosophical culture there is positioned *the new predilection for narration and for conversation (as a reaction to the weakening of the rigid argument)*, the new propensity for the transgression of the limits between the disciplines and of the liberation from behavioral matrixes – all these finding themselves and being discussed inside a comprehensive, flexible, creative and new discipline called „humanities”.

In the closing of the present doctoral thesis we have formulated the following conclusions: the conversational philosophy, elaborated as a welcome interweaving of the pragmatic principled with the linguistic turn has represented the saving formula which has transformed philosophy from an decaying/declining aria of research into an actual field of activity, directed towards progress, whose evolution marks the shifting of the emphasis on the study of the applied language (that of conversation) and on the correlation with the other humanist disciplines. It can be said that through the redefinition of philosophy, Richard Rorty has saved it from disappearing in the sea of theories and of the obsolete and old-fashioned system.

His attempt, in respect with the remodeling of philosophy is a double - sided effort: on the one hand he aims at the construction of a productive philosophy and on the other side he tends towards a rapprochement with the arts (especially with literature).

Literature is no longer the only life-creating field of activity – today, philosophy too, turns its face towards the human element and towards the everyday life. Similarly to the literary creation, philosophy represents a work of synthesis. The philosophical vocabularies prove their adequacy to the human realities and their utility inside culture. Our language is a filter that shapes reality with every sentence. The sentences and the fragments of speech are always related to other sentences and other forms of language and never to an objective reality which we can never know as it is impossible for us to escape the boundaries of our language, position ourselves outside it and observe it objectively.

Certainty ceases to represent the goal of inquiry once we acknowledge the contingency of the human life, of truths and of vocabularies. Central to the philosophy of contingency is the human being in its uniqueness with the collection of features that distinguish him from others of his kind. The goal of the individual who assumes his own contingency is that of leaving behind him the mark, the print of his existence on Earth. The conversational philosophy re-establishes the place of pragmatism inside culture (by giving it a new appearance), and puts it in connection with contemporary linguistic and literary currents (such as the postmodernism, the poststructuralism and the deconstructivism). The interdisciplinary tone specific to this philosophy emphasizes the line of analysis which represents the predisposition of our century.

We consider that the research study accomplished in this doctoral thesis has analyzed productively, has explained and clarified multiple aspects referring to the rortian conversational philosophy while proceeding through the anti-foundationalist and anti-representationalist tendencies. Richard Rorty has declared that the only philosophical point to which he was unable to present a precise solution is the matter of the reduction of tension between the public and the private sphere. This issue has, most notably, gain our interest and curiosity and following our analyses we have concluded that the human being, as a social individual cannot and should not attempt to make a rigorous delimitation between the two sides of his/her internal structure (the need to self-improve and to construct a private, prolific universe *and* the need to interact with others). Maintaining the tension is desirable because this is the way to realize and support a

functional balance, no matter which side the balance inclines more. A definite exit from one or the other spheres is impossible, and a partial abandonment in the detriment of any of the two generates dysfunctions at the existential level.

The present thesis also comprises an annex in English named „*Coping mechanisms for the perception of finitude*” which considers the discussion concerning the process of producing linguistic and poetic coping mechanisms for an unknowable phenomenon – death. By declaring death a cultural artifact, a semantic problem, Richard Rorty proposes *poetry* as a possible solution for the reduction of the anxiety and the negative, daunting attitudes generated by the idea of the imminence of death. The aesthetic pleasure, in Rorty’s perspective, facilitates the acceptance of the evanescent and contingent condition of the human life and the resignation impregnated with a hopeful scent of persisting in the situation of a *Sein zum Tode* – as Martin Heidegger affirms.

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