



## Representationalism and Antirepresentationalism - Kant, Davidson and Rorty <sup>(1)</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** The notions of representationalism and antirepresentationalism are introduced and used in contemporary philosophical discussions by Richard Rorty to describe his and the neopragmatists' attitude toward traditional problems of epistemology. Rorty means that the history of philosophy shows that there are no final answers to the traditional questions about knowledge, truth, and representation; consequently, they should be rejected. Rorty thinks such questions should be eliminated from philosophy since there is no possibility to get outside of our mind and language. We cannot say anything about a mind-transcendent or language-transcendent, nonlocal or eternal reality. Hilary Putnam agrees with Rorty on this, but not with the conclusion that we should reject traditional philosophical questions. For Putnam, the epistemological questions are worthwhile asking and, although we cannot find the final correct answers, we should continue our investigations as if there were final answers. Our struggles with those problems can lead to refinements of the formulations and to cognitive developments. Putnam proposes a quasi-realism which is often called "internal realism." Rorty rejects every refinement of realism as still realism and believes that the questions of knowledge, truth, and representation lead to regress *ad infinitum* or to circular reasoning.

Probably few philosophers influenced so decisively the development of epistemology as Kant. Without him it is not possible to describe the last two hundred years of the history of philosophy as well as contemporary philosophy in general. On the other "end of the line" one of the most influential contemporary American philosophers Richard Rorty proposes that we should abandon epistemology and Kantian picture of representation. In this paper I pose the question, whether Rorty is thoroughly successful in his abandonment. I try to investigate the differences and similarities of Kantian and Rortyan thinking with the help of the epistemological notion of representationalism and of the antiepistemological notion of antirepresentationalism. If it is possible to find crucial overlapping areas of both thinking, then there arises a dilemma: either Kant himself is a "Rortyan", postepistemological thinker, and this would be a surprising new idea about Kantian philosophy or Rorty succeeds not completely to overcome the structures of Kantian-epistemological thinking.

The notions representationalism and antirepresentationalism are introduced and used in contemporary philosophical discussions by Richard Rorty, to describe his and the neopragmatists attitude towards traditional problems of epistemology and "to make safe the world" for a "postepistemological" thinking. Rorty means, the history of philosophy

showed, that there are no final answers to the traditional questions about "knowledge," "truth" and "representation"; (2) consequently they should be rejected.

But contrary to Rorty, most of the contemporary American philosophers in the analytic tradition mean, philosophical questions about truth and knowledge are worth while to investigate. For example Thomas Nagel accepts what Kant said, that it is not possible to know the subject-transcendent reality as such, but he suggests that since there *is* a "nonlocal", "eternal" reality, which transcends our mind, knowledge and language, it should be taken as the never knowable and eternal framework of our investigations. (3) Hence for him the philosophical questions are legitimate, but perhaps they will have never a satisfying final answer. Rorty thinks such questions should be eliminated from philosophy since there is no possibility to get outside of our mind and language, we cannot say anything about a mind-transcendent or language-transcendent, nonlocal or eternal reality. (4) Hilary Putnam agrees with Rorty on this but on the conclusion that we should reject traditional philosophical questions. For Putnam the epistemological questions worth while to ask, and although we cannot find the final correct answers, we should continue our investigations as if there would be a final answer. Our struggles with those problems can lead to refinements of the formulations and to cognitive developments. Putnam proposes a quasi-realism, a (refined and raffinate) realism which is called by Putnam himself "internal realism". (5) Rorty rejects every refinement of realism as still realism and means, the question of knowledge, truth and representation lead to "pyrrhonian" style regresses *ad infinitum* or to circular reasoning. (6)

For *antirepresentationalism* the "causal interaction" of the subject with the ("outside") world, the "coping with the world" is a broader term then the "receptivity and spontaneity" of Kantian thinkers. Antirepresentationalism does not try to see the world as it is, it does not investigate knowledge or accurate representation of reality, since in every statement about the world there is an inseparable "mixture" and "cohabitation" of the subject and the object. That means if we think that we know something about the world, we can never exactly make a distinction, what part of it comes from us and what part comes from the "outside world". Consequently, it has no sense to make investigations about the epistemological presuppositions of the possibility of knowledge, it has no sense to research "the idea of knowledge of, or successful linguistic reference to, a reality underlying the appearances that nature presents." (7) Since in the model of Rorty there is no distinction between the objects as they appear and as they are in themselves, it has no sense to think substantially about the things and consequently Rorty argues for an anti-essential view of the world.

The impossibility of the subject-object separation is seemingly similarly recognized by such philosophers as McDowell, who is in Rorty's vocabulary representationalist. McDowell suggests that "empirical knowledge results from a co-operation between receptivity and spontaneity ... receptivity does not make an even notionally separable contribution to the co-operation." (8) Receptivity is of course not the outside world and not the object of knowledge, it is "only" the capability to receive sensual impression from the world. Representationalists as McDowell do not think that co-operation of receptivity and spontaneity would make possible to think a co-operation *as* "continuity" of object and subject, nature and mind. That is one reason why representationalists must maintain the "visual" idea of knowledge where knowledge is a mirroring replica of the "external" world and where concepts as constitutional parts of the representational contents of thoughts (9) "*mediate* between minds and the world". (10)

On the contrary antirepresentationalists like Davidson and Rorty do not need mediation between "minds and the world", between beliefs, sentences and the world. Rorty thinks with Davidson that mind and human being are continuous with the world, we could even

say, both philosophers ontologize the interwovenness (the impossible distinction) of scheme and content. Rorty follows from the impossibility of separation of scheme and content, that "philosophically" it has absolutely no sense to make further investigations of the correctness of our knowledge, of the representative character of our cognitive structure. (It does not mean that Rorty would think, philosophy of mind or cognitive science have not a real object of their researches but as disciplines they have more scientific than philosophical character.) That is why Rorty rejects the separationist representational model of knowledge and proposes to think of knowledge as a continuous interaction between human beings and the outside world, as a "matter of acquiring habits of actions for coping with reality". (11)

There are two characteristic and important figures in the analytic philosophy, who prepare the overcoming of the Cartesian and Kantian epistemology and make possible Rortyan antirepresentationalism: Quine and Davidson. Quine argued that there is no sharp distinction between analytic and synthetic knowledge, proposed by Kant, that means there is no possible differentiation of subjective and objective knowledge-constituents. He blurred, as Rorty expresses it, "the distinction between necessary and contingent truths" with the consequence, that "there is no longer a distinction between constituting 'structure' and constituted 'empirical truth'." (12) Quine showed with his "holistic" and circular argumentation, that for understanding analyticity we have to understand meaning, for understanding meaning we have to understand synonymy and definition, and for understanding synonymy we have to understand analyticity. That means, that there is no possibility to understand by a coherent and apriori argumentation, what the word "analytic" means, and he followed, "a boundary between analytic and synthetic statements simply has not been drawn". (13)

Following the holistic path of Quine, Davidson proposes that analytic philosophers give up the idea, that knowledge should be grounded "on something that counts as an ultimate source of evidence". (14) He says "A major reason ... for accepting a coherence theory is the unintelligibility of the dualism of a conceptual scheme and a 'world' waiting to be coped with." (15) Davidson proposes a coherence theory of truth, where belief systems should not be verified by correspondence-seeking confrontational methodologies. Sets of beliefs are generally true for him, not because they are proved as propositional attitudes in confrontation with the physical reality, but because they cohere with the whole set of beliefs. The sets of beliefs receive their adaptive appropriateness through causality, which originates from the physical world, and so neither needs the physical world a characterization called "true", nor our coherent belief system. (16) Our beliefs are mostly true and they do not need further justification. Rorty accepts the Davidsonian coherentist "overcoming" of epistemology and radicalizes it saying, Davidson is antirepresentationalist (Davidson does not use this notion), and he should give up even the idea of knowledge and truth as serious philosophical topics.

As I have briefly shown, Quine, Davidson and Rorty give up the Kantian idea of epistemology which was central for analytic philosophy and which in Continental context was given up by Hegel. (17) *But* as it is mostly the case, philosophical systems not only bear the possibilities and hints of their overcomings, they "bear" also their "overcomers" with the result that philosophical systems which are left behind, leave their traces, their "genetic codes" in the "overcomer" philosophies. Following this idea and as mentioned at the beginning, in the next pages I try to find nonrepresentationalist elements in Kant's thinking which could have influenced the development towards nonrepresentationalism and Kantian elements in Rorty's thinking, which is a hint to the historic embeddedness of Rorty's philosophy.

"Representation" means that the belief concerning the existence or the attributes of a "thing" in the world is a taking-inward of a substituent of the "thing", of the *eidōs*, the *idea*, the *ousia*, the *hylē* or the sensual components of the thing or object. Some part, some constituent or some feature of the object as substitute or "envoy" will be *present in* or *to* the subject. In the traditional representationalist model the taking-inward happens through the sense organs and mostly by seeing, where seeing is always "impregnated" by cognition. (18) To say it "in" the ocular metaphor, spontaneity and receptivity (that means categories, schemes, forms of intuition etc.) mediate the "world" to the "mental eye". (19) What the mental "eye" "sees" is not the world or the thing in itself, but a result of an interaction. The structure and the capacities of the mediators determine what can be "seen" and so the object (or thing) *as* "seen" is constituted by the capabilities of the subject and by "something" out there. The main point of the transcendental turn was that the origin of knowledge is neither a sensorial taking inward of the outside world, nor an a priori rational construction of it, but a result of the interaction between object and subject, between world and the inseparable receptivity and spontaneity.

It follows that knowledge as co-product, as "interwovenness" of subject and object does not make *present* (re-present) to the subject *that*, what is "out there". In Kant's epistemic system the *Vor-gestellte* (20) is *not* the *thing in itself*, it is the result of a co-operation which is escorted by a correlation between the thing in itself and the subject (as the unity of apperception). "In" the "cognitive structure" there are only the cognitive structure *plus* the *structured* or cognitively impregnated sense data, brought in relationship with each other and organized through and through by the "categorical", schematic and "rational" activities. What is *present* what is *vorgestellt* in the Kantian mind is a coproduct of object and subject. If something is represented by Kant, then it is an object-subject relationship but in a manner, that we can never know *exactly*, what belongs to the one or to the other. Consequently, and this is my main point here, Kant's epistemic model is *strictu sensu* nonrepresentationalist.

That is why Kant cannot say anything about "what is out there", about the "transcendental" objects, about the *Ding an sich* — which is *not represented* in the knowledge. (21) The *Ding an sich* is a limit notion, an empty expression, it has no sense *for us*. As Kant puts it: "was die Dinge an sich sein mögen, weiss ich nicht, und brauche es auch nicht zu wissen, weil mir doch niemals ein Ding anders, als in der Erscheinung vorkommen kann." (22) Although Kant cannot know anything about the *Ding an sich*, it is crucially important for his system. It is the reality, it is the real *Etwas*, towards which our cognitivity is directed, and which guarantees, that our knowledge is about the reality and not only an imagination, a sheer product of our mind. Kant says: "Alle unsere Vorstellungen werden in der Tat durch den Verstand auf irgendein Objekt bezogen, und, da Erscheinungen nichts als Vorstellungen sind, so bezieht sie der Verstand auf ein *Etwas*, als den Gegenstand der sinnlichen Anschauung: aber dieses *Etwas* ist insofern nur das transzendente Objekt. Dieses bedeutet aber ein *Etwas* = x, wovon wir gar nichts wissen, noch überhaupt ... wissen können, sondern, welcher nur als ein *Correlatum* (italics added J.B.) der Einheit der Apperzeption zur Einheit des Mannigfaltigen in der sinnlichen Anschauung dienen kann, vermittelt deren der Verstand dasselbe in den Begriff eines Gegenstandes vereinigt." (23) A thought thing, a *Gedankending*, a transcendental object, an hypothesis of the thinking ensures the reality of our knowledge. With other words, for Kant reality and our knowledge about it remain always hypothetical and imagined. The philosophical question of "what is out there" cannot be answered in and with the system of transcendental philosophy — we have only hypothetical answers and we have only "correlata". Consequently concerning the *real* reality *out there* Kant is more "correlationalist" than representationalist. (Of course, he is a representationalist concerning the *empirical* reality, which is mediated and constructed through the *Vorstellungen*, e.g. representations, which are *Anschauungen* - intuitions and *Begriffe* - notions.)

Since it is based on the visual metaphor, Kant's epistemology is not the antirepresentationalism proposed by Rorty. For Kant there is a mediation between the object out there and the mental eye, what is rejected by Rorty. He thinks, that we do not need mediation, since we are unmediately in (touch with) the world. As he says, "Pragmatists reply to ... arguments about the veil of appearances by saying that we need not model knowledge on vision. So there is no need to think of the sense organs or the mind as intervening between a mental eye and its object. Instead, pragmatists say, we can think of both as tools for manipulating the object. They reply to arguments about the distorting effect of language by saying that language is not a medium of representation. Rather, it is an exchange of marks and noises, carried out in order to achieve specific purposes. It cannot fail to represent accurately, for it never represented at all." (24) Sense organs, mind and language are for Rorty not representational instances, but only tools for coping with the reality.

Since in the model of Rorty there is no distinction between the objects as they appear and as they are in themselves, it has no sense to think substantially about the things and consequently Rorty argues for an anti-essential view of the world. The *correlationalism* of Kant however does not lead to Rortyan radical consequences, to a "world without substances". (25) For Kant the thesis of a world without substances is as much dogmatic as its antithesis, the world with substances or the world as substance. To speak about the substances would lead outside of the sensible and empirical world, about which Kant cannot say anything: "Wenn wir unsere Vernunft nicht bloss, zum Gebrauch der Verstandesgrundsätze, auf Gegenstände der Erfahrung verwenden, sondern jene über die Grenze der letzteren hinaus auszudehnen wagen, so entspringen *vernünftelnde* Lehrsätze, die in der Erfahrung weder Bestätigung hoffen, noch Widerlegung fürchten dürfen, und deren jeder nicht allein an sich selbst ohne Widerspruch ist, sondern sogar in der Natur der Vernunft Bedingungen seiner Notwendigkeit antrifft, nur dass unglücklicherweise der Gegensatz ebenso gültige und notwendige Gründe der Behauptung auf seiner Seite hat." (26) In the second antinomy of the pure reason Kant shows, that it has no sense to speak about a world with or without substances, since "substantial" thinking is only methodological thinking of the pure reason and since the notion of substance cannot be linked with the world *as itself*, there is no sense to speak about substances in the world, neither as existents nor as nonexistents. Both, substantialist and antirepresentationalist thinking are for Kant hypostasis of the structures of thinking and as such, with Rorty's vocabulary, "representationalisms". (27)

### *Kantianism in Rorty's antirepresentationalism*

As it is possible to find nonrepresentationalist "traces" in Kantian epistemology, it is also possible to find quasi transcendentalist elements by Rorty. He is well aware of the "danger" that one can find Kantianism in his philosophy: "Representationalists often think of antirepresentationalism as simply transcendental idealism in linguistic disguise — as one more version of the Kantian attempt to derive the object's determinacy and structure from that of the subject". (28) Rorty neglects here the correlational character and the transcendental "agnosticism" or transcendental "objectivism" of Kantian thinking and emphasizes only the impact of the subject on the object-as-known. Would Rorty realize the correlational character of Kant's epistemology, he could discover the (noumenal) nonrepresentationalist structure of it. Rorty thinks, antirepresentationalists try to free themselves from one sided explanations of truth but he does not see, that Kantian correlationalism is free of this kind of one-sidedness. Rorty says: "Antirepresentationalists ... insist ... that *neither* does thought determine reality *nor*, in the sense intended by the realist, does reality determine thought." (29) Kant would probably agree, but he would formulate this phrase in an affirmative form, saying, nonrepresentationalist transcendentalists insist that thought does determine reality known by *us* and reality

determines thought about it. Davidson or Rorty would continue here saying that there is only one reality, *in* which there are thoughts and beliefs which are results and causes or causal interactions. Again, Kant would agree. In his first critique there is only one correlationalist reality, which can be described empirically. Beliefs are for Davidson and Rorty in causal dependence of the physical world. By Kant - in which relation are beliefs with the world? The affection of senses by the outside world is a part of the "correlational structure". But is it for him causation? Of course not, and this is a difference. (30) Then again, everything is very "similar". The causal dependence between body, language and environment, does not mean for Davidson and Rorty that some contents or pieces of language represent correctly a given junk or "nonverbal rock" (31) of the environment. By Kant again very similarly this nonverbal rock is the thing in itself. Rorty means, in a very Kantian manner, there is no outside perspective for an independent test of the correctness of the representation, because we cannot get outside of our language or of our mind. (32) That is why, every explanations of the accuracy of our knowledge about the world has only the explanatory force of the *dormitive power*. (33) Kant would say here: yes. (34)

Can we agree with Rorty's own description of himself, that he is not a transcendental philosopher? In general a philosophy is transcendental, if its main question is "What is the condition of possibility of true knowledge?" and if it tries to find the answer in the cognitive structures of the subject, which are the constituent presuppositions of every objective knowledge. The fundamental epistemological claim of *Transzendentalphilosophie* is as tautological as every foundationalist statement: We can know what we can know. We can know only a reality, which can be *mediated cooperatively, correlatively* and *interactively* (and not represented) in and through our cognitive structures, through the senses, the understanding, the schemes and the pure reason. Rorty thinks also that beliefs result from the interaction of subject and object, but this interaction cannot yield a *representation* of the world as itself. Beliefs do not refer, they are labels for interaction with the world.

The main structural similarities between Kant and Rorty are their *coherentism* and *nonrepresentationalism*. The main difference between the two thinker is their idea of the relationship between the subject and the world. Kant's epistemological relationship with the world, which he calls "receptivity", is sensiblist and cognitivist. (35) Kant remains in and responses to the empiricist tradition of his mostly anglosaxon predecessors. The senses as the subject's doors to the world open the subject to the non structured empirical worldlike inputs which "will be" structured by the subject. Through that determined and localized contact the subject-object relationship preserves the rationalistic idea of the possibility of controlling, understanding and structuring itself and the world through the *Verstand* and *Vernunft*. The structures of senses and understanding by Kant are Newtonian, linear and gravitational, where the center of the gravitation is the reason, or with a theological vocabulary the reason is the god of the epistemological (not of the ethical) universe. There is no Cartesian gap in the transcendentalist universe of Kant between the subject and the object. The reason as god unifies the world. The gap, the black hole is outside of the system, that is the world in itself, the *Ding an sich*.

Rorty's epistemological subject-object relationship (if it is possible to speak about epistemology by him) is causal. We does not have doors or windows (as open monads would have) to the world: we are in the world, "we are the world", we are from an epistemological point of view not distinguished from the world. Object and subject are both in the nature. In his Darwinian "picture" we are continuous with the world. The naturalized relationship to the world is not limited to the sense organs. We are with our whole body, with our biological structures, cells and genes in causal and causal-historical connection with the world and with the temporal and structural history of the evolutionary biological world. In Rorty's model "the distinction between Self and World has been replaced with the

distinction between an individual human being (describable in both mental and physical terms) and the rest of the universe. The former is delimited by the contours of the body, and the task of explaining the relations between events occurring within that boundary and all other events is a matter of postulating or observing, entities within these contours: inner causes of the human being's behavior. These causes include both micro-structural and macro-structural, and both mental and physical items: among them are hormones, positrons, neural synapses, beliefs, desires, moods, diseases, and multiple personalities." (36) That means for Rorty as for a "Davidsonian" that our beliefs do not result from the manifold of the sense data, but they result from the quasi infinite manifold of the causal relationships and influences which our biological and cognitive structures have with the rest of the world, nature and linguistic community. The Rortyan subject does not need an opening door (e.g. eyes) to the world: *it* is a structure of the world, it is causally in the world. There is no "central" cognitive control, only a causal coping with the reality, where the main aim of this structure is to follow "its" needs and desires. The structure of the cognitive subject is by Rorty not Newtonian, but *thermodynamic*. "Infinite" number of particles are moving in a space which has no center. In the language of computers we could say, Rorty's mind is rather *connectionist* than centralistic. Most of our coherent beliefs are true, says Rorty following Davidson, since our beliefs are causally and interactively *connected* with the world. They are parts of the world as particles of a thermodynamical system or of an other system, where relatively free moving particles have some kind of interrelationship. If "we" are brains in a vat, then the Davidsonian and the Rortyan vat is the whole world inclusively our body *and* brain. For Davidson and Rorty if we are brains in a vat, then the vat begins with the brain. We can say that Rorty proposes with his "thermodynamic" model a democratic type of philosophizing: most of our beliefs as caused by the environment are true and the only possibility to refine them is not a lonely confrontation with the outside world, but a dialogue with other subjects, the confrontation between different belief systems, from which all are mostly "true".

But even in Rorty's system where seemingly there is no centralized godlike subject, there is a "last instance" of the belief systems, which replaces God and the transcendental subject: the democratic society. Democracy for Rorty is the most important value in thinking and social practice. As his thermodynamical subject has a mostly true causally developed belief system, so this belief system is in constant interaction with a "thermodynamical" democratic community, whose members are the dialogue partners of Rorty. - As the community takes the role of the transcendental subject, so takes the *causation* the place of the *Ding an sich*.

If we use fashionable expressions of different communities of discussion, we can say, "causation" is the "zero phonema", the "sign of the sign", the "myth of the myth" or the "blind plot" for Rorty and as such coherently not explicable in his thinking. It is perhaps not by chance, that Rorty never gives an explanation of his notion of causality. Unlike by Kant, the causality taken from Davidson does not have any transcendental, hierarchical or categorial place in Rorty's thinking, and it is not a notion which should be investigated like Putnam (37) or philosophers of science like Mario Bunge do. (38) Rorty's notion of causality is that of Hume. Hume says in the seventh chapter of his *Enquiry*, that cause is "an object, followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second". (39)

For Rorty causality in this context means simply that the human being (with all its capacities, with its desires, needs, feelings, *beliefs* etc.) is always in contact with the world, is always *in* the world in an unmediated physical and nonmetaphysical sense. "Causality" is used as a metaphor to express, that we are through and through in contact with the world, we are continuous with the world and there is no substantial or Cartesian gap between human beings and the rest of the world. In this sense there is no more to say about the

"secret Humean power" of causality as what Nietzsche could say: "die *Kausalvereinigung* ... zwischen Subjekt und Objekt, [ist] uns absolut verborgen — und vielleicht eine reine Einbildung." (40) Those philosophers who do not agree with the thorough naturalization of epistemology and maintain that concepts should be connected with the world not only causally but rationally, find the causal genesis of the notions a mystery. As McDowell says: The "supposed concepts could be bound up with impacts from the world only causally, not rationally (Davidson's point again); and I have been urging that that leaves their status as concepts with empirical substance, potential determinants of the content of judgements that bear on the empirical world, a mystery." (41) But Rorty remarked to this passage, this kind of realism does not take in account, that for Davidson there is no nature-reason distinction, but there is only nature.

If we give up the duality of nature and reason, object and subject, world and scheme, then there is no possibility to have any test for causal relationships between them. In lack of the duality not only "Reference ... drops out.", (42) but also "causality". Davidson recognizes, that causality as mediation annihilates itself in "unmediated touch": "In giving up the dualism of scheme and world, we do not give up the world, but re-establish unmediated touch with the familiar objects whose antics make our sentences and opinions true or false." (43) That means, that "causality" as the fundamental metaphor of the Davidsonian philosophy does not "represent" anything, it does not refer to a mediation, it is the expression of the natural or physical unity of the world.

And it should be so, since as Hume has seen, there can be no "foundation in reasoning" for a causal connexion between the subject's cognitive capacities and the world. (44) On the other hand, if our beliefs or systems of beliefs are all caused by the environment, then the belief that our beliefs are caused is caused also by the environment and so on. If someone wants to reject infinite regress, "causality" as the metaphoric expression of a naturalistic attitude is the nonreferential "stopping point" of every foundationalistic attempt. Although *originally* a completely naturalistic notion, in "*causality*" there remains the reasonably non provable character of the *Ding an sich*, it preserves always the Humean selfreferential secrecy or the Nietzschean mythological character. (45) So the Kantian *transzendente Gegenständlichkeit* becomes by Davidson and Rorty a "quasi" *transzendente Kausalität*.

Peter Klein remarks from the standpoint of "global scepticism", that it is not possible to *found* an epistemology on causality, which would satisfy the radical sceptical claim, which requires the prove of the the existence of the external world. Besides the obvious truth, that if expressed in words, global scepticism is a performativ contradiction, and that since Sextus Empiricus it cannot or should not be stated globally or strongly, Klein misunderstands the notion of causality by Davidson and Rorty, its "quasi" transcendental-metaphoric character. He says, "in order to know that there are any beliefs, we would have to know at least one very important truth about our environment, namely, that there are events outside of our bodies which are (causally) correlated with states of ourselves." (46) Only and only if we interpret causality quasi-transcendentally, is the Davidsonian and Rortyan "epistemology" immun to such criticism. Body and environment are for Rorty and Davidson continuous (where "causality" is the metaphor of continuity) and that is why the problem of scepticism does not evolve in their thinking. The underlying moment of Rortyan thinking is a *trust* in the quasi-transcendental causality. (47) This trust is connected with the *hope*, that causality is "trustworthy", that it is not the joke or the trick of a *demon, a devil, a dieu trompeur, or a causality trompeur*, that it is only a value-neutral embeddedness into the nature.

Rorty thinks, very similarly to *Democritus*, his ancient predecessor, that although the nonessentialistic and causal world does not give us too much to hope as human being, we should find such kind of social practices and of communicational culture, which makes it



possible, that we become as happy in that world as possible, that we get what we need and desire, that we can make a better society for the future generations.

The ethics of Kant and Rorty are very different, and it is connected by both coherently with the "(quasi)transcendental structure of their nonrepresentationalist" thinking. The newtonian or logocentric Kantian subject is itself the fountain of ethiccity. For Rorty's thermodynamic or fuzzy thinking ethics is mutual social responsibility and sensitivity of the members, of the "free and chaotic moving particles" of the democratic society. But this would be a question of an other investigation.

## Notes

(1) This paper was published in German, "Repraesentationalismus und Antirepraesentationalismus. Kant, Davidson und Rorty", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophy*, Berlin 47, 1999/4, 539-551.

(2) In the representationalist thinking truth and representation are for Rorty quasi synonymous characteristics of knowledge: "For representationalists, 'making true' and 'representing' are reciprocal relations". Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 4.

(3) See T. Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 69f. To illustrate Nagel's position, I refer shortly to his "decisionism" and his "imaginative transcendentalism". Nagel thinks, that at the beginning of our epistemological deliberations we can and we must *decide*, what kind of relation we have to the world and consequently we can develop a kind of realistic epistemology. But such a kind of decision can occur only at the end of epistemological investigations and not at the beginning. If it happens at the beginning as Nagel suggests, then he *must* suppose a subject-object relationship, which should be the result of those investigations. (Of course one can say that Nagel *can* put the decision at the beginning, because of the tautological character of every epistemology or because of iterativity of epistemological or scientific deliberations. But Nagel does not want tautology here, he wants an explanation. Otherwise iterations suggest always, that there is *something*, what can be reached more and more precisely and so iteration is from an epistemological point of view always postdecisional and metaphysical. Nagel is not the only one who emphasizes the importance of preliminary decision; a kind of decisionism, common to Peirce, Popper and Lakatos holds, that every rational, epistemological or scientific investigation must begin with some decisions.) Nagel thinks further, that since we cannot escape from our skin, the only possibility we have is to transform ourselves - inside of our skins. And then he says: "the thing we can do which comes closest to getting outside of ourselves is to form a detached idea of the world that includes us, and includes our possession of that conception as part of what it enables us to understand about ourselves. We are then outside ourselves in the sense that we appear inside a conception of the world that we ourselves possess, but that is not tied to our particular point of view." If we cannot get outside of ourselves, how can we know, when are we "closest to getting outside of ourselves"? To know that something is close to something else, we must have a measure of "closeness" which reaches from one point to the other. In this case the one point is "inside", the other is out there. One side of our "measure" is outside, and along this measure we can step outside of ourselves. As Nagel continues with the idea of our appearing "inside a conception of the world that we ourselves possess", he gets into the realm of mere imagination and phantasy. - Of course Nagel can be seen other way round as someone who does not get out of his skin and thinking. When he says as cited, "We are then outside ourselves *in the sense* that we appear inside a conception of the world that *we ourselves possess*, but that is not tied to our

particular point of view" (italics added, J.B.), then it can be understood so, that we remain inside our thinking, language and even inside our conception of the world and we think the conception of ourselves in the conception of the world. But then this conception of ourselves and the world is more a metaphysical than an epistemological conception. It is not clear, how we can get a "God eye's view" which is requested in the conception of a not particular point of view.

(4) See Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, 178. "It is merely to say that nothing counts as justification unless by reference to what we already accept, and that there is no way to get outside our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other than coherence."

(5) For the "internalist" perspective of Putnam, the question "What objects does the world consist of?" makes sense only if we ask it "*within* a theory of description". (Italics added. J.B.) Compare H. Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, 49. For the internalist view "'Objects' do not exist independently of conceptual schemes." Putnam, op.cit. 52.

(6) "Antirepresentationalists do not think such (foundationalistic — J.B.) efforts insane, but they do think that the history of philosophy shows them to have been fruitless and undesirable." Rorty, *Objectivity, relativism, and truth*, 7. It should be a question of further investigation, how Rorty applies pyrrhonian modes of thinking which is demonstrated in Chapter 15. of Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*.

(7) T. Sorell, "The World from Its Own Point of View", A. Malachowski, *Reading Rorty*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990, 11.

(8) J. McDowell, *Mind and World*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994, 9.

(9) Thoughts have for McDowell representational content: "the fact that thoughts are not empty, the fact that *thoughts have representational content*, emerges out of an interplay of concepts and intuitions." Mc.Dowell, op.cit. 4. (Italics added, J.B.)

(10) McDowell, op.cit. 3. (Italics added, J.B.)

(11) Rorty, op.cit. 1. Since subject and object are *thought* as continuous, beliefs are not any more separate pictures of *the* reality, but they are "tools for handling reality, determinations of how to act in response to certain contingencies, rather than as representations of reality". Rorty, op.cit. 118.

(12) Rorty, op.cit. 120.

(13) Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", *Problems of Empiricism*, 248. (It would be possible to show that Quine's "holistic" method is a methodological fallacy, since he presupposes "holistic" for his belief system and then shows, that the notions taken up in this system "behave" holistically, with other words, the investigation of those notions does not lead outside of the system.)

(14) Davidson, D., "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge", LePore, E. (ed.), *Truth and Interpretation*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993 (1986), 313. (Davidson írása megjelent szintén: Malachowski (ed.), *Reading Rorty*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 120-138.)

(15) Davidson, op.cit. 309.

(16) Since beliefs are not representations of the world, they are not true or false, they are only appropriate tools for coping with the reality. The causes of the world are causes of the belief systems but not causes of their truthfulness. Rorty says to this: "although there are causes of the acquisition of beliefs, and reasons for the retention or change of beliefs, there are no causes for the *truth* of beliefs." Rorty, op.cit. 121. Rorty maintains with Davidson the notion of belief, but rejects the notion of truth as a useful characterization of them. Perhaps it should be mentioned here, that eliminative naturalism rejects even beliefs and consequently the notion of truths. About the self-referential paradox of this latter thesis see J. Heil, *The Nature of True Minds*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 8-10.

(17) Compare Rorty, *Hoffnung statt Erkenntnis*, Wien: Passagen, 1994, 21. (Published in German and French. English citation on the basis of Rorty's manuscript.) "The logical empiricists had, with the help of Frege and Russell, linguistified all the old Kantian distinctions which Dewey thought Hegel had helped us to overcome. The history of the re-dissolution of those distinctions by the neo-pragmatists, under the leadership of Quine, is the story of the re-pragmatization — and thus the de-Kantianizing and the re-Hegelianizing — of American philosophy."

(18) About impregnational interpretationalism see H. Lenk, *Interpretationskonstrukte*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993.

(19) For the "mental eye" see Rorty, *Hoffnung statt Erkenntnis*, 41.

(20) "Vorstellung" is the German word for "representation".

(21) There are attempts to eliminate the "dark" notion of the *Ding an sich* from Kant's philosophy, but this is clearly against Kant's intention, as I will illustrate it with some passages of him. (As an erroneous example of eliminative "misinterpretations" of Kantian *Ding an sich* see H. Putnam, *Pragmatismus - Eine offene Frage*, Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 1995. 38-42.) Because I will use later this notion to show a structurally similar limit notion by Rorty, it should be remarked, that Rorty thinks also, that this notion is crucial by Kant: "It is tempting to suggest that one could eliminate all reference to the original position from *A Theory of Justice* [Rawls' book] without loss, but this is as daring a suggestion as that one might rewrite (as many have wished to do) Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* without reference to the thing-in-itself." Rorty, *Objectivity, relativism, and truth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 184, footnote 21.

(22) Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft (KrV)*, A277/B333.

(23) Kant, *KrV*, A250.

(24) R. Rorty, *Hoffnung statt Erkenntnis*, Wien: Passagen 1994, 41.

(25) See R. Rorty, im. 37-66.

(26) Kant, *KrV*, B448-449.

(27) Kant, *KrV*, B462-472.

(28) Rorty, *Objectivity, relativism, and truth*, 4.

(29) Rorty, op.cit. 5. (Italics added, J.B.)

(30) The affection of senses by the undefined multitude of the outside world is in the transcendental system of Kant not causation, since causation is a *Kategorie* whereas the affection of the senses is a primary undefined connection with the sensible world. Causality

is good for him only to connect empirical objects with each other but not for connecting the subject of knowledge with its object. It seems, that Kant is well aware of the Humean difficulty: "But here experience is, and must be entirely silent." (For explication of this phrase of Hume see later in this article.)

(31) The expression is from Davidson, op.cit. 312.

(32) For a criticism of Rortyan coherentism see McDowell, J., *Mind and World*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994, 16.

(33) That means, if we say, that "our statement about an object is true, because the world corresponds exactly to our statement, we say redundantly no more, as 'opium puts people to sleep because of its dormitive power'." Rorty, op.cit. 6.

(34) In his book *Pragmatism* Hilary Putnam describes "his" disturbingly misinterpreted Rorty as one, who thinks in a very much Kantian style and even Rorty's interpretation of Wittgenstein would be a Kantian interpretation. Putnam says all that without going into the deep structures of the texts of Rorty or Kant. (As I mentioned earlier, Putnam misinterprets also Kant.) Putnam thinks, Wittgenstein did not speak about epistemological questions, since he thought there is nothing interesting to say in this field, and he was more consequent as Rorty, who still speaks about Kantian problems. But Putnam does not give any references in his remarks about Rorty, especially not of Rorty's *Objectivity, relativism, and truth* and Putnam probably did not realize Rorty's antirepresentationalism and "Davidsonianism" and he does not take in account that the similarities between Kant and Rorty are not to think in a "representationalist" but in an "antirepresentationalist" framework. See Putnam, *Pragmatismus. Eine offene Frage*. Frankfurt/New York: Campus 1995, 48-51.

(35) See *KrV*, B75.

(36) Rorty, op.cit. 121.

(37) See H. Putnam, "Information and the Mental", LePore, *Truth and Interpretation*, 262-217, especially 268-271.

(38) M. Bunge, *Causality and Modern Science*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1959 and New York: Dover, 1962, 1963 and 1979.

(39) Davidson writes several times about this Humean definition, see. Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, 15 and 149ff. Davidson analyses in his paper "Causal Relations" op.cit. 149-162. "the logical form of causal statements" and the logical relationship of singular causal statements and of causal law(s). Although his investigation can be seen as a technical investigation of causal statements which are based on Humean habit or custom, it does not clear an other *philosophical* aspect of Humean causality, the question of "secret powers". Hume means that we never understand the *real* connexion between causally linked objects. He says for example (seventh chapter of the *Enquiry*), "It appears that, in single instances of operation of bodies, we never can, by our utmost scrutiny, discover any thing but one event following another, without being able to comprehend any force or power by which the cause operates, or any connexion between it and its supposed effect."

(40) Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht*, Stuttgart: Kröner 1980, 332.

(41) McDowell, op.cit. 35.

(42) Davidson, "Reality Without Reference", *Inquiries into Truth & Interpretation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, 225.

(43) Davidson, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme", op.cit. 198.

(44) Compare Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Chapter 12, part 1. The context is the following: "It is a question of fact, whether the perceptions of the senses be produced by external objects, resembling them: how shall this question be determined? By experience surely: as all other questions of a like nature. But here experience is, and must be entirely silent. The mind has never anything present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects. The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning."

(45) Nietzsche, "Systementwürfe und Pläne", *Die Unschuld des Werdens, Der Nachlass*, Stuttgart: Kröner, 1978, 289. "Mythologie des Kausalitätsbegriffs. Trennung von 'Wirken' und 'Wirkenden' *grundfalsch*." Davidson would agree with Nietzsche with the remark, that concerning the human mind even the caused, "das Bewirkte" cannot be separated.

(46) Peter D. Klein, "Radical Interpretation and Global Skepticism", Lepore, op.cit. 386.

(47) Not all thinkers share the trust in causality. McDowell is suspicious, although it seems he interprets Davidson from a "representational" point of view, when he speaks about empirical content which is in our picture about the world: "I think we should be suspicious of his [Davidson's] bland confidence that empirical content can be intelligibly in our picture". McDowell, op.cit 15.