

# Skepticism, Irony and Cultural Politics in Rorty's Philosophy

*Olivier Tinland, Roma, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012*

Abstract: From Peirce to Putnam, Pragmatism has always been seen as one of the most efficient philosophical cures for skepticism. However, the case of Richard Rorty is quite ambivalent and hard to decide. On the one hand, in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty undertakes a theoretical diagnosis of skepticism, linking it to the modern emergence (and decline) of epistemology as first philosophy; on the other hand, in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Rorty sketches an intriguing figure, the “liberal ironist”, who looks very much like a Skeptic and seems therefore at odds with the pragmatist (fallibilistic) conception of truth and justification Rorty otherwise intends to endorse. I would like to show that there is no contradiction between irony and pragmatism in Rorty's philosophy: behind the appearance of an unfortunate skeptical temptation, one may find a new way – named “cultural politics” – of accommodating pragmatic commitments to an original conception of philosophical *skepsis*.