-the attempt to fuse the public and private lies behind Plato's attempt to answer the q "Why is it in one's interest to be just?" and Christianity's claim that perfect self-realization can be attained through service to others. [capitalism proposes the invisible hand, soc – class consciousness and state-sanctioned ideology, Rorty's vision – soc demo and metaphors]

-metaphysical attempts to unite striving for perfection/ self-creation with sense of community => an assumption of a common human nature (remnant of idea that the world is a divine creation), that the springs of private fulfillment and of human solidarity are the same. Not true. We can't unite the public and private with some religious or philosophical dogma. (And yet we don't want to deny that man has a social conscience by saying that man is a prisoner of his instincts (Freud) or 'the will to power' (Nietzsche).)

-we can recognize the private realm of self-creation, and the public realm of social interaction/ culture, etc which over time creates an increasingly broadening understanding and commitment to human (and natural) solidarity. They are not necessarily contradictory. Indeed, as we develop greater sensitivity as individuals to the pain and humiliation of the other, our sense of solidarity grows.

1/ contingency of language
-originally love of God , then in 17th c love of (scientific) truth, in 19th c love of Man and our spiritual nature. Now we don't worship anything, nothing is divine, everything (language, c, community) is product of time and chance.
-truth made, not found – starts with French Rev. Vocab of social relations and social institutions could be replaced overnight. Romantic poets – art no longer imitation but artist's self-creation. Imagination rather than reason is the central human faculty. Art takes place of religion and philosophy (Middle Ages) and science (Enlightenment). Politics and art have cultural hegemony in determining ends (vs means).
-science discovers truth rather than makes it for Enlightenment. Kant consigned science to realm of second-rate truth – truth about a phenomenal world. Hegel saw science as description of spirit not yet fully consciousof its own spiritual nature.
-truth cannot be 'out there', existing independently of human mind, because sentences cannot be 'out there' and truth requires language. Languages are made rather than found and truth is a property of linguistic entities, of sentences.
-intellectual and moral progress as a history of increasingly useful metaphors rather than of increasing understanding of how things really are.
-traditional view is that human beings have beliefs and desires, that there is a core self. Rather human beings are networks of beliefs and desires.
-Wittgenstein: alternative vocabs are like alternative tools rather than bits of a jigsaw puzzle and reducible to one grand unified super vocab.
-language and culture like coral reef. Old metaphors constantly dying off into literalness, and

then serving as a platform and foil for new metaphors. Our 20th c language(s) and cultures a result of many contingencies, a la Darwin. Scientific revs are metaphoric redescriptions of nature rather than insights into the intrinsic nature of nature.
-Neitzsche: truth is a mobile army of metaphors.
-Davidson: tossing a metaphor into a conversation is like making a face, using italics or pics. The metaphor gradually gains habitual use in the language and will become a dead metaphor, just one more literally true or literally false sentence. Don't think of language as a medium (rather a tool).
-thus poet as maker of new words and shaper of new languages is the vanguard of the species.

2/ contingency of selfhood
-don't fear death so much as incompletion, some concrete loss. Fear one might end one's days in a world one never made, an inherited world. Rather, give birth to oneself.
-N(eitzsche): realize Plato's true world was just a fable, seek consolation at moment of death not in having transcended the animal condition, but in being that peculiar sort of dying animal who, by describing himself in his own terms, had created himself. Self-knowledge = self-creation. To fail as a poet/ human being is to accept somebody else's description of oneself, to imitate. We nonpoets are doomed to spend our conscious lives trying to escape from contingency rather than acknowledging and appropriating contingency.
-poet strives for self-creation by recognition of contingency, and at the same time strives for universality by the transcendence of contingency (i.e., bringing the private and public together, 'only connect')
-Western philosophy strives to transcend the world of time and appearance into the world of enduring truth. N says the boundary is rather the old vs the new. Recreate 'it was' into 'thus I willed it' with new description. Life as self-overcoming.
-Freud de-divinized the self by tracking conscience home to its origin in the contingencies of our upbringing (an ego ideal set up by those not willing to forgo the narcissistic perfection of childhood), going a step farther than Kant, who de-divinzed science/ nature, but still maintained the righteousness 'deep within us'. Neuroses include religious impulse, reason, libido mixed up. He created new vocab to help us describe ourselves (infantile, sadistic, obsessional, paranoid) linked with the contingencies of our parents/ surroundings, to replace 'vice' and 'virtue', sane and mad, with far more individual accuracy. There is no central self called 'reason' left, only conscious/ unconscious and feeling, intuition, thought and sensation – mechanisms/ tools of the mind. Condemns those who fail to break free of the past, rather than those who fail to live up some abstract principles. Showed mind to be poetry-making faculty.
-everyone living out (consciously or unconsciously) their own fantasy. Fantasy/ fetish revolves around your own metaphors which do not catch on with others. If they do (meeting some public need), they become poetry or philosophy.
-dream language is all personal metaphors (with archetypes and other correspondences between people), making it difficult to understand

3/ contingency of liberal community
-distinctions between absolutism and relativism, rationality and irrationality, morality and expediency are obsolete and clumsy tools.
-progress is the literalization of selected metaphors, enlarging the scope of one's favorite metaphors.

-language of Enlightenment rationalism already an impediment to the preservation and progress of democratic societies.
-must find meaning in life not from abstractions but from other finite, mortal, contingently existing human beings.
-Isaiah Berlin: negative liberty. Give up conviction that all the positive values people believe must be compatible
-Schumpeter: a civilized person is one who recognizes the contingency of the vocab in which they state their highest hopes, the contingency of their own consciences, and yet remain faithful to them. (a bit of irony filtering into one's community perspective)
-people stuck in the old language will see the new as irrational, while those using the new will see the old as irrational, mired in passion, prejudice, superstition, the dead hand of the past.
-Freud/ Davidson uses rational to mean internally coherent
-openmindedness of liberal society not because 'Truth will prevail', but for its own sake [and to allow the development of new vocabs]
-must poeticize culture rather than rationalize it
-liberal society justification simply because it is (the proof in the pudding)
-Hegel: philosophy paints its gray on gray only when a form of life has grown old. Christianity did not know its purpose was the alleviation of cruelty, Newton not know his purpose was modern technology, Romantic poets not know their purpose was fdns of culture of political liberalism.
-morality – not absolute, but simply the voice of ourselves as members of a community, speakers of a common language.
-moral philosophy: "How did we get to be what we are; what might we become?" not "What rules should dictate my actions?"
-rev poet not protesting in the name of 'humanity' but in the name of society itself against those aspects of society which are unfaithful to its own self-image.
-in 'ideal' liberal society, ideals can be fulfilled by persuasion rather than force, reform rather than rev, so rev = reformer
-modern society has lost the social cohesion of premodern societies
-Foucault: points out the drawbacks of 'demo' society, the constraints and ways it does not allow room for self-creation
-Rorty sides with JSMill: govts should devote themselves to optimizing the balance between leaving people's private lives alone and preventing suffering, i.e., we have the institutions for society's ongoing improvement.

___
4/ Private irony and liberal hope
-ironist – doubts the final vocab he currently uses, can't resolve these doubts within that vocab, one's new vocab is not necessarily closer to reality than others.
-opposite is common sense (current final vocab adequate)
-philosophy: attempt to apply and develop a particular chosen final vocab, using the appearance-reality distinction
-dialectic: playing off vocabs against one another, not inference of propositions from one another. Hegel used many terminologies and developed them in his Phenomenology
-literary criticism has cultural role once claimed by religion, science and philosophy. Now greater proportion of ironists vs metaphysicians among intellectuals, widening the gap between intellectuals and the public.

-My private purposes, and the part of my final vocab which is not relevant to my public actions, are none of your business. Vs Socrates: inner and outer man become one.
-learn as many alternative final vocabs as possible, understand others to minimize their possible humiliation. Put yourself in others' shoes.

5/ self-creation and affiliation
-create your own final vocab => N's golden rule: "Thus I willed it." Become who you are.
-Proust: the discovery of our true life can be made only in the very process of creating the work of art which describes and constitutes it. Freedom by making the finitude of the finite powers imprisoning us evident. Didn't want to seize power (this would take away his freedom). Become free by redescribing the people who describe him, turning them from his judges into his fellow sufferers, and thereby creating the taste by which he judges himself. His job was done once he had put the events of his own life in his own order. Remember, and thereby become (consciously) what you are.
-Plato reified Being, N – Becoming and Power (i.e., inverted P, taking Appearance as the Real, thereby becoming the last philosopher).
-Heidegger: you are what you do and what your final vocab is
-ironist desperately needs to talk to other people because only conversation enables him to handle self-doubts, to keep his web of beliefs and desires coherent enough to enable him to act. He has these doubts because, for some reason or other, his socialization didn't completely 'take'. His utterances detour through his brain (vs unthinking socialized citizen). So, like Socrates and Proust, he is continually entering into erotic relationships with conversational interlocutors.

-two kinds of books: those which help us become autonomous (duty to self), and those which help us become less cruel (duty to others). The latter include books which help us see the effects of social practices and institutions on others, and those that help us see the effects of our private idiosyncrasies on others. Books should work out new final vocabs, both private and public.
-instead of fusion of private and public, we have tension between private irony and liberal hope.
-Nabokov wrote about cruelty from the inside, Orwell – from the outside (for Nabokov – "trash")
-Nabokov: 'tingles'/ ecstasy the highest form of consciousness, gets us in touch with the nontemporal, beyond time and chance (metaphysics). Rorty: don't need to postulate a world beyond time as there is the home of inspiring images which create ecstasy. look at their effect on conduct.
-in middle ages, cruelty so overwhelming that social hope to reduce it was so obviously unrealistic as to be of little interest to intellectuals.

-good artist: must be sensitive, notice things that most people do not notice, be curious about what others take for granted, see momentary iridescence and not just the underlying formal structure. Knowing the 'good' is not correspondence to something abstract, but being sensitive to what matters to others.
-art as redescription of what may happen or has been happening, to be compared, not with some true reality, but with alternative descriptions of the same events. Animal Farm not

necessarily 'true' but provided an accessible alternative description of events. Art a lever (tool), not a mirror (medium)
-deny a fundamental belief -> humiliation, breakdown. (Winston in 1984, gay in str8 society)
-create a more expansive sense of solidarity and recognize it as something that exists antecedently to our recognition.
-privatize irony/sublimity that could lead to cruelty