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'Who Are We?' On Rorty, Rhetoric, and Politics

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It is not unusual to think of Rorty's work as a success in rhetoric and a failure in political philosophy. In this article we re-evaluate this assessment by analyzing a typical feature of Rorty's writing: his frequent use of "we so-and-so." Taking stock of the existing literature on the subject we discuss how Rorty's use of the "we" was received by peers and how he himself made sense of it. We then analyze Rorty's oeuvre in order to show that a better understanding of his rhetorical "we" could make his politico-philosophical "we" more appealing. We suggest that Rorty's pragmatist take on "ethnos" is preferable to other notions that are currently championed in political theory and philosophy.

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