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Richard Rorty
Pragmatism, Irony and Liberalism

Matthew Festenstein

Since the publication of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Richard Rorty has become one of the most widely read and controversial of contemporary philosophers. Significant though his previous writing was, this book not only represented an important contribution to a range of key debates in the philosophy of mind and language, but inaugurated a broadening of Rorty's interests, as he developed the ethical, social and political implications of his philosophy. The results have been immensely provocative. Rorty has become perhaps the most extensively referred to of contemporary philosophers, both inside and to an unusual extent outside academia. With this impact, he has attracted vast opprobrium – as a renegade from analytic philosophy, as a frivolous debunker of moral and intellectual standards, and as a complacent American bourgeois.

Our aim in this book is to offer a range of perspectives on Rorty's significance for social and political philosophy. The assumption of the authors is that neither ritual denunciation nor, for that matter, deference is an appropriate response to his work. In offering a more nuanced engagement they traverse a wide array of topics, including liberalism, socialism, irony, humanism, aesthetics, modernity and postmodernity, pragmatism, international relations, and the moral significance of the Holocaust, a breadth which itself indicates the scope and suggestiveness of Rorty's writings. But taking Rorty seriously is not the same as accepting all his beliefs, and the essays collected here offer in various ways critical perspectives on this

oeuvre. The purpose of this introduction is to set the scene for the essays and for Rorty's responses, by blocking out in broad outline the themes and concerns of his work, and relating them to the contributions which follow.

Philosophy without mirrors

Rorty trained as a philosopher at Chicago and Yale, although for nearly twenty years he has taught outside academic departments of philosophy. His earlier writing included important papers on transcendental arguments, reductionism, incorrigibility, and the mind–body problem. While influential on its own terms, this work did not attract much attention outside the circle of philosophers concerned with these particular problems. This changed with the publication of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* in 1979, a book which imposed itself not only on philosophers but also more widely on the intellectual scene. In an engaging autobiographical essay, Rorty describes himself as having 'spent forty years looking for a coherent and convincing way of formulating my worries about what, if anything, philosophy is good for'.[1] This worry is not near the surface of much of his earlier philosophical writing, although the latter is characterized by methodological self-consciousness, notably in the anthology *The Linguistic Turn*.[2] In the preface to that text, he confronted the thought that the differences between competing approaches to analytic philosophy could not be resolved with reference to criteria which were uncontroversial from the point of view of one or other approach. For example, 'ordinary language' philosophers such as J. L. Austin addressed issues through the inherited wisdom embodied in everyday speech, where the tradition descending from Bertrand Russell and Rudolf Carnap aimed at more rigorous forms of logical expression. But these differences could only be addressed through the commitment to an ongoing dialogue, Rorty argued, rather than through the quest for criteria of validity which would settle such differences once and for all. But if philosophy does not aim at such criteria, what does it do?

Rorty's worries emerge as central to *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, in the form of a critical narrative of modern Western philosophy. The work sets out to deconstruct this tradition's purported demonstrations of grounds for knowledge and rationality which reach beneath the wilfulness and contingency of actual human

thought. The terminus of this account, Rorty's pragmatism, addresses the problems and dilemmas encountered along the way, not by specifying solutions, but by setting them aside, as the products of a misconception of philosophy as the supreme arbiter of all human knowledge, 'knowing something about knowing which nobody else knows so well'.[3]

In an essay on the historiography of philosophy, published five years after *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty distinguishes several genres, as he calls them, in which this history may be written. Historical reconstruction is the detailed presentation of the ideas of a past thinker, on her own terms, which attempts to show the meaning of that thinker's utterances in the specific social, cultural and linguistic context in which she lived. Rational reconstruction, by contrast, is an effort to mine the past for ideas and arguments relevant to current philosophical concerns. This usually involves reworking the original thinker's ideas in ways he or she could not have recognized, transplanting those ideas to quite other contexts; for example, we may understand Hobbes's account of the state of nature as a contribution to the efforts of recent game theory to describe how cooperation among humans is possible. Rorty's own narrative in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* belongs to a third genre, which he calls *Geistesgeschichte*. Like rational reconstructions, these accounts are written in the light of current concerns and problems. However, unlike a rational reconstruction, a *geistesgeschichtlich* account operates at the more general level of problematics rather than of solutions to particular problems. It 'spends more of its time asking "Why should anyone have made the question of——central to his thought?" or "Why did anyone take the problem of——seriously?" than in asking in what respect the great dead philosopher's answer or solution accords with that of contemporary philosophers'.[4] This aims to sweep away a current but, in the view of the narrator, outmoded or pernicious way of understanding philosophy by tracing back current practice to its origins in order to diagnose the source of the error. In doing so it tells a story which tries to recast what constitutes the basic subject matter, problems, and canon of philosophy. The paradigm of such an account, in Rorty's opinion, is Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, but his work may also be affiliated with the diagnostic attempts of contemporaries such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Ian Hacking, and Michel Foucault to illuminate and criticize prevalent modes of thinking (about ethics, in MacIntyre's case, about probability and statistical reasoning, in Hacking's, and about penology and sexuality (among other matters), in Foucault's) by tracing them back to their origins.[5] As with these other authors, Rorty's narrative

is an assault on the alleged timelessness of philosophical problems and concepts.

Rorty holds with Wittgenstein that 'a *picture* held us captive': the picture is that of the mind as the mirror of nature and of philosophy as the custodian and caretaker of this mirror.[6] The tradition that Rorty rejects is structured around the discipline of epistemology, understood as the ultimate arbiter of the grounds on which a belief may be found true or false. The idea of this arbiter, in Rorty's narrative, was constructed around the complementary fantasies of nature, envisaged as wholly independent of the categories through which humans come to understand it, and of the human subject, whose own essential nature drives it to gain an increasingly complete and accurate view of nature. This vision encouraged the belief that in order to achieve knowledge of nature, and to know that we have achieved it, we require

> a special privileged class of representations so compelling that their accuracy cannot be doubted . . . The theory of knowledge will be the search for that which compels the mind to belief as soon as it is unveiled. Philosophy-as-epistemology will be the search for the immutable structures within which knowledge, life and culture must be contained – structures set by the privileged representations which it studies.[7]

Candidates for this privileged class of representations have included sense impressions and innate ideas; the role of epistemology is to discern the best candidates. The picture of the 'mirror of nature' is vague enough to be interpreted in different ways: for empiricists, the mind passively reflects reality, while idealists envisage the mind as more actively moulding reality. These differences are relatively unimportant in comparison with what is shared: the goal of 'finding some permanent neutral framework of inquiry, an understanding of which will enable us to see, for example, why neither Aristotle nor Bellarmine was justified in believing what he believed', a framework that can act as a touchstone for sorting justified from unjustified beliefs.[8] We avoid a regress in justifying a belief only by virtue of the fact that there exist some beliefs which possess unconditional justification: their acceptability does not depend on their relation to other beliefs.

However, he argues, the picture is fundamentally flawed, since the idea of a privileged representation, or an unconditionally justified belief, is incoherent. The central contention is that there are no entities which possess any justificatory force prior to human inter-

pretation, and that the necessity for such interpretation means that there can be no intrinsically veridical relationship between mind or language and the world. Simple perceptual beliefs, for example, may appear to have some 'phenomenological' claim to be uninferred from other beliefs and thus to be plausible candidates for the status of unconditionally justified. But even simple perceptual reports presuppose abilities and presuppositions on the part of the reporter, and possess justificatory weight only against that background; that is, conditionally. There is no privileged grid of concepts or categories against which the variety of human practices and beliefs can be judged in order to determine their rationality.[9]

The justification of beliefs is instead understood as intelligible only within particular social practices of reason-giving; rationality is not the product of a privileged relationship between mind and nature, but is contingent on 'what our peers, *ceteris paribus*, will let us get away with saying'.[10] Adopting pragmatism for Rorty is a matter of accepting that 'there are no constraints on inquiry save conversational ones – no wholesale constraints derived from the nature of the objects, or of the mind, or of language, but only those retail constraints provided by the remarks of our fellow inquirers'.[11] This is not to say that we cannot make judgements about whether some description is accurate. But the criteria by which we judge accuracy in description are given sociologically, by the language game or vocabulary in which we are making the judgement. As he puts this point, in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*:

> We often let the world decide the competition between alternative sentences (e.g. between 'Red wins' and 'Black wins' or between 'The butler did it' and 'The doctor did it') . . . But it is not so easy when we turn from individual sentences to vocabularies as wholes. When we consider examples of alternative language games – ancient Athenian politics versus Jefferson's, the moral vocabulary of Saint Paul versus Freud's, the jargon of Newton versus that of Aristotle, the idiom of Blake versus that of Dryden – it is difficult to think of the world as making one of these better than another, of the world as deciding between them. When the notion of 'description of the world' is moved from the level of criterion-governed sentences within language games to language games as wholes, games which we do not choose between by reference to criteria, the idea that the world decides which descriptions are true can no longer be given a clear sense.[12]

Conceptions of truth and falsity, rationality and irrationality, are constituted within particular vocabularies. For entire vocabularies,

the ideas of truth, rationality and correspondence lose their grip. There is no view of the world *sub specie aeternitatis* against which particular human versions may be judged. The role of philosophy is not to adjudicate among different vocabularies but only to offer a conversational rapprochement or mediation, which helps us to illuminate our commitments and beliefs in the light of very different vocabularies.

In accordance with the conception of *Geistesgeschichte*, Rorty's account reconfigures the philosophical canon. Important influences on the assault on the epistemological tradition and on the defence of the idea of rationality as a matter of 'conversational' rather than intrinsic relations include W. V. Quine, Wilfrid Sellars and Thomas Kuhn.[13] More famously, in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty enlists a more heterogeneous and striking trio as figureheads for his counter-tradition, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein and John Dewey.[14] The pre-eminence for Rorty of Dewey in this list quickly became apparent.[15] This is not because Dewey offered the purest account of a philosophy which rejects neutral standpoints and underlying essences – there was, Rorty concedes, a 'bad' or 'backsliding' element in Dewey's thought which had not wholly shaken off the grip of this tradition.[16] Yet Dewey also tethered his critique of the epistemological tradition to the 'social hope' for a liberal and egalitarian society, rather than to despair at the absence of epistemological foundations. The assault on tradition also opened up a continuing dialogue in Rorty's work with contemporary Continental philosophy – with Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Habermas and others.[17] Yet this engagement for Rorty is framed by the presumption that what is valid in their work overlaps with his pragmatism; that (as he wrote in 1982): 'James and Dewey were not only waiting at the end of the dialectical road which analytic philosophy traveled, but are waiting at the end of the road which, for example, Foucault and Deleuze are currently traveling.'[18]

There is no need to emphasize the controversial character of Rorty's claims about the character of epistemology and of the historical analysis which he offers: 'the very obscurity of the suggestion that we should abandon the epistemological enterprise', as Ian Hacking has argued, 'makes one insist quite vigorously on the obligation to tell the history right'. [19] And Rorty's account has been contested at each step of the way. At the same time Rorty's interpretation of those figures whom he casts as fellow-travellers, such as Kuhn, Foucault and even Dewey, has been sharply criticized. These concerns are not central to this volume, but are touched on particularly in the essays by Kate Soper, Richard Shusterman and Matthew Festenstein.

More centrally at issue here is the meaning of this account for social and political theory. To paraphrase Rorty's worry, what is political theory good for? The clearest conclusion is negative: Rorty's philosophy intends to rid us of 'theory-guilt', the belief that there exist uncontroversial rational criteria by which we should judge particular beliefs and desires.[20] Yet his writing after *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is replete with more positive ideas and suggestions about the meaning of his pragmatism for social and political thought, and it is to this that I now turn.

The primacy of practice

In a series of essays published in the 1980s such as 'Postmodernist Bourgeois Liberalism' and 'The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy', Rorty rejects the idea that moral views, and specifically his own preferred liberalism, require philosophical foundations. Justificatory accounts of liberal (or other) political practice embody a version of the systematic mistake of the epistemological tradition: they strive to hook up the particular beliefs, desires, institutions and practices which people have to a general and authoritative framework, which will justify them. By contrast, Rorty argues, we should reject the myth of such a framework: this is something philosophy is *not* good for. My belief that a person ought to be free to worship whatever deity she pleases, or none at all, should be viewed as the product of my particular background, not as a response to an underlying truth about human beings which everyone ought to recognize, or at which everyone would arrive, if they reflected hard enough.

Yet Rorty holds on to the thought that someone who fails to have this belief is wrong, and not, as a relativist may argue, 'right within the context of her culture or her system of beliefs'. There is no neutral standpoint outside particular evaluative schemes or world-views from which to assess those schemes. But it does not follow that it is impossible or inappropriate to appraise other world-views; indeed, part of what it means to be a liberal is that one appraise other world-views in particular ways. If one is asked 'Why be a liberal?', then this should not be treated as the occasion to construct a justificatory framework which aspires to be authoritative for all rational agents (an 'Archimedean point', in John Rawls's well-known image), but as a particular sort of dialectical challenge, which requires the liberal only to come up with enough concrete examples of the

superiority of liberal proposals and practices to persuade her interlocutor. If the latter remains immune to such persuasion, he is eventually written off as 'mad'.[21]

The primacy Rorty accords to practice over theoretical articulation has attracted flak from both left and right. From the right he has been criticized for cynicism, nihilism, and for mobilizing students to mindlessness.[22] From the left authors such as Richard Bernstein and Norman Geras have censured him for complacency.[23] Rorty's bold statements on these themes furnish the starting point for Simon Thompson's essay in this volume on truth and justification. Rorty's conception of reason and practice is also an issue in the contributions from Richard Shusterman (who compares Rorty's conception to Habermas's) and Matthew Festenstein (who examines Rorty's relationship to Dewey).

In rejecting the myth of the neutral justificatory framework, Rorty wants to hang on to the idea that forms of human organization, including science, art and politics, may progress, but he does not want to view this as a process of 'getting the world right' or of 'more accurately expressing human nature'. The latter are only empty compliments, or generic descriptions of what particular forms of organization hope to achieve, but not a justification from a neutral standpoint of why one language game should have replaced another (e.g. why Galilean mechanics replaced Aristotelian physics). Instead progress is understood to occur through a radical redescription of some subject matter until 'a pattern of linguistic behavior [is created] which will tempt the rising generation to adopt it, thereby causing them to look for appropriate new forms of nonlinguistic behavior, for example, the adoption of new scientific equipment or new social institutions . . . [A]nything can be made to look good or bad, important or unimportant, useful or useless by being redescribed.'[24] Rorty's conception of progress is grounded in a romantic interpretation of Kuhn's famous account of scientific revolutions.[25] We do not test theories according to how well they fit with the facts, since the facts are themselves filtered through our existing paradigms. One can compare paradigms and theories but not from an objective position outside any theory or paradigm; in this sense differing paradigms are incommensurable, and (in Kuhn's notorious formulation) scientists working in one operate in a different world from those in the other.[26] Where Rorty is more romantic than Kuhn (or Promethean, as Kate Soper puts it, in her essay) is in his belief that we should try to launch new paradigms or languages into the world in a self-conscious effort to improve the human condition, 'to respond to the needs of ever more inclusive groups of people.'[27]

Irony and cruelty

Yet this is not the only implication of the rejection of philosophical foundations and the importance granted to powerful redescriptions. In Rorty's view the rejection of foundations removes the metaphysical and theological glue which binds together two distinct sorts of human motivation, the drive to individual self-fulfilment and the impetus towards ameliorating the lot of others:

> The attempt to fuse public and private lies behind both Plato's attempt to answer the question '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. Such metaphysical or theological attempts to unite a striving for perfection with a sense of community require us to acknowledge a common human nature. They ask us to believe that . . . the springs of private fulfillment and of human solidarity are the same.[28]

But they are not. Or, at least, there is no presumption of a common human nature which unites individual self-realization and social obligation: 'one should abjure the temptation to tie in one's moral responsibilities to other people with one's relation to whatever idiosyncratic things or persons one loves with all one's heart and soul and mind.'[29]

Rorty's view of this relationship is explored in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989). If one accepts the contingency of language which Rorty presses on us, one finds oneself in the position of an 'ironist', someone whose fundamental values and commitments (what Rorty calls a 'final vocabulary') become problematic in a particular way. Ironists'

> realization that anything can be made to look good or bad by being redescribed, and their renunciation of the attempt to formulate criteria of choice between final vocabularies, puts them in a position which Sartre called 'meta-stable': never quite able to take themselves seriously because always aware that the terms in which they describe themselves are subject to change, always aware of the contingency and fragility of their final vocabularies, and thus of their selves.[30]

For the ironist this is a liberating revelation, unleashing powers of self-creation. Most people, however, are not ironists, and distrust the powers of redescription. For the rest of us there is 'something potentially very cruel' about the claim that their final vocabularies are 'up

for grabs'; for the 'best way to cause people long-lasting pain is to humiliate them by making the things that seemed most important to them look futile, obsolete, and powerless.'[31] Fortunately, the *liberal* ironist's commitment *qua* liberal to eschew cruelty squares this circle: in public at least, she will refrain from humiliating redescription of her fellow citizens; in private, of course, she may describe them as she pleases.

Rorty's account of the relationship between irony, liberalism and cruelty has been the subject of fierce critical onslaught. He has been accused of reinforcing the gendered and oppressive distinction between a political public sphere and an allegedly depoliticized realm of personal relations. The commitment to avoid cruelty has been considered too bland as a view of the content of liberal political morality. At the same time, contingency on the favourable dispositions of individuals has been thought too precarious a basis for this political morality. The interest in self-creation and private redescription has been attacked as narcissistic, and the ironist's moral psychology as unstable.[32] The essays here by John Horton, Daniel Conway and David Owen engage in these debates from different perspectives, although each combines a detailed critical understanding of Rorty's concerns with a degree of sympathy for his arguments.

Enlarging community

An obvious item of evidence to establish that Rorty is not merely concerned with elaborating an apologia for private fantasy is the emphasis in his work on community and solidarity. If we can create ourselves in any way that we wish through redescription, what becomes of our obligations to, and the entitlements of, others? The absence of a common human essence and the licence to redescribe ourselves freely means that it is not the case that we *must* view ourselves as obliged to respect the needs and interests of others – or even to notice that they have needs and interests, or that they are human. Nor are we restrained from any actions on the grounds that they violate our essential nature: '[o]ur insistence on contingency, and our consequent opposition to ideas like "essence", "nature", and "foundation", makes it impossible for us to retain the notion that some actions and attitudes are naturally "inhuman"'.[33] Obligations flow not from the recognition of such a foundation but from particular loyalties.

To the extent that community is possible it is as an achievement not a presumption, and best promoted through detailed imaginative identification with the lives of others. In Rorty's opinion, the intensity of solidarity is stronger the more parochial the attachment is in scope. In the absence of any general grounds for identifying with the universal human community, we should acknowledge that the most potent identities are particular: fellow Americans, fellow Sikhs, or fellow Glaswegians constitute the groups whose lives we understand and to whom we may feel sympathy and obligation.[34] Conscious that this argument may appear to endorse a complacent or vicious ethical chauvinism, Rorty emphasizes that the burden of liberal political morality is to extend the sense of community in order to include hitherto neglected or despised social groups: it is 'a form of life which is constantly extending psuedopods and adapting itself to what it encounters. Its sense of its own moral worth is founded on its tolerance of diversity'.[35] Justice aims at a larger loyalty than the narrowly parochial. The achievement of this sense of expanded obligation proceeds through radical redescription, the telling of stories which alter our self-understandings so that we come to see ourselves as sharing a common predicament with those whom we had thought of as strangers. This does not boil down to a banal injunction to respect difference, reducing morality and politics to niceness: 'some cultures, like some people are no damn good . . . they cause too much pain and so have to be resisted (and perhaps eradicated) rather than respected'.[36] But the respect and loyalty which we can extend is not the product of ahistorical standards but of the particular sympathies and motivations which we possess already.

Kate Soper in her essay builds on her work on humanism in order to tease out what she sees as a residual commitment on Rorty's part to some of the conceptions of human nature which he officially rejects. Richard Shusterman and Norman Geras, writing from different perspectives and sympathies, find too much contingency remaining in Rorty's conception of human nature. In his wide-ranging study, Shusterman taxes Rorty with possessing an excessively linguistic conception of the self. Geras discusses the grounds for moral community through the exploration of a stark limit case for ethical thinking, the Holocaust. The essays by Molly Cochran and by Matthew Festenstein discuss the political meanings of Rorty's account of community. Cochran takes as her cue Rorty's Amnesty lecture, 'Human Rights, Rationality and Sentimentality', in order to explore the lessons Rorty's work holds for the theory of international relations.[37] Festenstein discusses his narrative of the American left, *Achieving Our Country*, and particularly his relationship to Dewey's rather different account

of liberal individuality and community.[38] Rorty speaks for himself in reply to each of the contributors, and in the closing essay on justice. Our hope is that the conversation which results deepens the reader's understanding of Rorty's work and of its repercussions for social and political thought. This body of work is full of possibilities, as well as pitfalls, and deserves continued serious attention.

Notes

1 Richard Rorty, 'Trotsky and the Wild Orchids', *Philosophy and Social Hope* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1999), p. 11.
2 Richard Rorty (ed.), *The Linguistic Turn* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967).
3 Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1979), p. 392.
4 Richard Rorty, 'The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres', in *Truth and Progress, Philosophical Papers*, vol. 3 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998), p. 256.
5 See, for example, Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd edn (Duckworth, London, 1985); Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1991); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1984). For Rorty's own account see Rorty, 'Trotsky and the Wild Orchids', pp. 11–12.
6 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Basil Blackwell, Oxford), s. 115; Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 12.
7 Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 163.
8 Ibid., p. 211.
9 Ibid., p. 330.
10 Ibid., p. 176.
11 Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1982), p. 165. See Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 389.
12 Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989), p. 5.
13 See W. V. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View* (Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1963), esp. pp. 20–46; Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd edn (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970).
14 Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, pp. 5–7, 365–72, 392–3.

15 See Rorty, 'Overcoming the Tradition: Heidegger and Dewey', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, pp. 37–59, and the essays in Part I of Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991), pp. 9–82.
16 Rorty, 'Dewey's Metaphysics', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, pp. 72–89; Richard Rorty, 'Reply to Sleeper and Edel', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 21 (1985), pp. 38–48; Rorty, 'Dewey between Hegel and Darwin', in *Truth and Progress*, pp. 290–306.
17 See Rorty, 'Philosophy as a Kind of Writing: An Essay on Derrida', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, pp. 90–109; Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, pp. 122–39; Rorty, 'Cosmopolitanism without Emancipation: A Reply to Jean-François Lyotard', *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth, Philosophical Papers*, vol 1 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991), pp. 211–22; Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, pp. 85–198; Chantal Mouffe (ed.), *Deconstruction and Pragmatism* (Routledge, London, 1996).
18 Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. xviii.
19 Ian Hacking, 'Is the End in Sight for Epistemology?', *Journal of Philosophy*, 77 (1980), pp. 579–88, at pp. 580–1. The best places to start for a sense of how these criticisms have been elaborated are A. Malachowski (ed.), *Reading Rorty* (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1990) and Robert B. Brandom (ed.), *Rorty and his Critics* (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2000).
20 Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 96.
21 Richard Rorty, 'The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy', in *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*, p. 187.
22 Neal Kozody, cited by Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 3.
23 See, for example, Richard Bernstein, *The New Constellation* (Polity, Cambridge, 1991), pp. 230–92, and see Rorty's reply, 'Thugs and Theorists', *Political Theory*, 15 (1987), 564–80; Norman Geras, *Solidarity in the Conversation of Humankind: The Ungroundable Liberalism of Richard Rorty* (Verso, London, 1995); Christopher Norris, *The Contest of Faculties* (Methuen, London, 1985), pp. 139–66; Terry Eagleton, 'Defending the Free World', in Ralph Miliband and Leo Panitch (eds), *The Socialist Register 1990: The Retreat of the Intellectuals* (Merlin, London), pp. 85–94.
24 Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, p. 9.
25 Cf. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, pp. 322–42.
26 Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, pp. 134–5.
27 Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 81.
28 Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, p. xiii.
29 Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 13.
30 Rorty, *Contingency Irony, and Solidarity*, pp. 73–4.
31 Ibid., p. 89.
32 See, for example, Thomas McCarthy, 'Private Irony and Public Decency', *Critical Inquiry*, 16 (1990), pp. 355–70; Charles B. Guignon and David

R. Hiley, 'Biting the Bullet', in Malachowski, *Reading Rorty*, pp. 339–64; Bernstein, *New Constellation*, pp. 258–92; Simon Critchley, 'Deconstruction and Pragmatism: Is Derrida a Private Ironist or a Public Liberal?', in Mouffe, *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, pp. 19–40.

33 Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, p. 189.

34 Cf. ibid., pp. 190–1.

35 Richard Rorty, 'On Ethnocentrism: A Reply to Clifford Geertz', *Objectivity*, p. 204.

36 Richard Rorty, 'In a Flattened World: Review of Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*', *London Review of Books*, 8 April 1993, p. 3.

37 Richard Rorty, 'Human Rights, Rationality and Sentimentality', in Susan Hurley and Stephen Shute (eds), *On Human Rights: The 1993 Oxford Amnesty Lectures* (Basic Books, New York, 1993), reprinted in *Truth and Progress*, pp. 167–85.

38 Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth Century America* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1998).

39 I would like to thank Simon Thompson and Mike Kenny for some helpful comments on an earlier draft.