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How to Move Beyond Rorty

Review: Randall Auxier, Eli Kramer, and Krzysztof Piotr Skowroński, eds. *Rorty and Beyond* (Lanham, Md, Lexington Books, 2019), 314 pages.

Preview

Richard Rorty (1931–2007) became a highly controversial figure, both within and without the ranks of academic philosophy upon publication of his 1979 book, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. The controversy over Rorty intensified with his writings over the remaining years of his life and beyond. Co-edited by Randall Auxier, Eli Kramer, and Krzysztof Piotr Skowroński and including sixteen original essays, this new book, *Beyond Rorty* studies Rorty's work with the passage of the years following his death to re-assess his significance and to consider ways in which philosophers might both learn from and move beyond his work. The volume originated in a conference held on Rorty's work in 2013 at Opole University, Poland. It includes both papers presented at the conference together with additional submissions. The essays offer many perspectives on Rorty while seeking to move beyond his work in areas including metaphysics and epistemology, social philosophy, axiology, philosophy of religion, and more. The following review of *Beyond Rorty* discusses each of the essays in the volume together with the introductory essays by Auxier and Kramer to explore directions which contemporary philosophy might take to move beyond Rorty.

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When Richard Rorty published *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* in 1979, his book provoked strong, competing responses. Many professional philosophers disliked the book for its criticism of analytical philosophy and for its rejection of epistemology in philosophy as traditionally practiced. Other readers from both inside and outside

academic philosophy found the work inspiring in pointing toward a revitalization of philosophy, freeing it from outmoded strictures. In the years after *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature,* Rorty continued to write even more provocatively. Disagreements continued to intensify as Rorty moved toward literary criticism and away from philosophy as a compartmentalized academic discipline.

Many books were written about Rorty during his lifetime, and the literature has continued to grow after his death. This new collection of essays, *Rorty and Beyond*,[1] edited by Randall Auxier, Eli Kramer, and Krzysztof Piotr Skowroński, attempts to take the study of Rorty in a new direction. The volume is not intended simply as yet another exposition and analysis of Rorty's thinking. Instead, the book has the goal of using Rorty's work and insights to move beyond him. The nature of "moving beyond" Rorty and the varied directions such movement might take becomes clearer from reading the book. The work brings philosophers from the United States and Europe together to find shared ground to discuss Rorty and to suggest directions philosophy might take as a result of his influence.

A Transitional Philosopher

Randall Auxier explains in the preface that the book originated as part of a series of conferences on American and European Values held annually at Opole University, Poland. A long-anticipated conference held in 2013 explored how Rorty changed both academic and public philosophy and how these changes might be considered and developed in contemporary and future philosophical thought. Approximately one-half of the essays in the resulting book were based on papers given at the conference while the remaining essays were contributed by philosophers, both established and rising, with a strong background in Rorty's work. Auxier maintains that Rorty's work moved philosophy into a phase that Auxier calls post-pragmatism. He states: "to write beyond Rorty is to address a world whose idea of pragmatism was formed by his work. To write in opposition to or in welcome to that context still involves addressing oneself to it. This, I think, is what we do in this volume" (RB, x).

Auxier argues that contemporary academic philosophy, together with the humanities in general, are in a state of transition in the way in which culture is to be transmitted from one generation to the next. The state of limbo has arisen with universities gradually moving away from a highly-specialized departmental perspective with a focus on the sciences and an alliance with the government, publishers, and industry. This change was well underway during Rorty's lifetime and formed the background for his work. Neil Gross' sociologically-informed biography of Rorty, *Richard Rorty: The Making of an American Philosopher* (2008), for example, discusses this change and applies it thoughtfully to Rorty's life and work. With the search for a new direction and purpose for philosophy, the broad questions to be considered in the volume are how the humanities are to be taught and how philosophical humanists may respond to being "beyond Rorty."

In a 2007 essay, Rorty described philosophy as a "transitional genre" and applied the term "transitional figure" to Kant. In his essay-length introduction, "Richard Rorty as a Transitional Genre" Eli Kramer alludes to these terms of Rorty's and applies them to Rorty himself. Kramer's essay is important both in its own right and in framing the content of the book. Thus, it merits discussion at some length. Kramer argues that Rorty has already lost his prior notoriety for philosophers but is instead a "transitional" figure. Kramer offers the following broad summary of what he sees as Rorty's influence:

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1) Randall Auxier, Eli Kramer, and Krzysztof Piotr Skowroński, *Rorty and Beyond*, (Lexington Books, 2019). Hereafter referred to as RB using in text citations.

> Rorty is a transitional figure who shifted philosophy from the often reductionist, abstract, and anti-culturally engaged, post-linguistic turn philosophy of the middle to late anglophone world, to the present more pluralistic, socially minded, and as yet not historically understood period. He heralded and instigated a shift in philosophy from one paradigm to another, but his own narrow position, once the shift happened, became no longer useful or very threatening. (RB, 2)

Kramer describes how in the thirty years following WW II, universities expanded and departments became increasingly specialized and compartmentalized. The universities became an ally of the government to help win the Cold War and to foster economic growth. This development impacted academic philosophy which, Kramer states, "enthusiastically adopted the paradigmatic language of a disinterested and methodologically superior scientism" (Kramer, 3). Subsequent events, including the Vietnam War and the intellectual difficulties many scholars found in scientism and over-specialization led to a decline of the Cold War paradigm of the university. Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* can be understood, in part, as a product of and as contributing to the rejection of the earlier paradigm.

A second group of considerations that Kramer identifies particular to academic philosophy also help make Rorty a transitional figure. These factors include the effect of the anti-intellectualism resulting from McCarthyism together with the linguistic turn that began in the early twentieth century with Russell's and Whitehead's *Principia*. But the major factor that Kramer explores is the decline of the philosophy of evolutionary naturalism as it was being developed by John Dewey and George Herbert Mead. Evolutionary naturalism, Kramer argues, was a philosophy that "did not reduce everything to a historical/cultural matrix nor a purely mechanistic one." He maintains that "to take evolutionary theory seriously means committing to inquiry in a world where process by its very nature, makes all of our actions fallibilistic and where our scientific and mathematical tools help us predict certain events, but do not sit outside of the ever-changing landscape of the moving target that is existence" (RB, 5). Kramer writes:

> Early and middle pragmatism took time, chance, relation, genuine novelty, and personal growth, as fundamental parts of the order of the universe. There is enough consistency for regularity, some mechanism, and a little law, but not enough for eternal and dead dogmatic legislation. Mechanism is taken up because it helps us better predict and explain the predicament of existence in which persons find themselves, but it too is subject to the decay and death of immanency in the flux. (RB, 5–6)

Earlier analytically-oriented philosophers, including Lewis and Quine, had insights that might have lent support to a holistic philosophy such as evolutionary naturalism. However these insights tended to be lost in that they were put exclusively in the service of science and in the effort to turn linguistic philosophy into a discipline approaching a science. As a result, linguistic philosophy became a discipline that had little use to humanistic education and, indeed, of little relevance to those outside the discipline of analytic academic philosophy.

Thus, Kramer places Rorty's work in the context of the broad conditions applicable to the university following World War II and the more particularized conditions relevant to philosophy. He argues that Rorty is "a transitional figure" whose philosophy "leaves him at the door of the new world he created, but not beyond it" (RB, 9). On the one hand, Rorty strongly critiqued the dominant analytic philosophy and its scientific paradigm. This critique had the effect of compelling analytic philosophers to defend their discipline and approach in the broader marketplace of ideas, and it opened up opportunities for philosophical pluralism – philosophers of differing approaches. On the other hand, Rorty was unwilling or unable to develop

a convincing philosophy of his own to help fill the void opened by his critique. Instead, Rorty "had to resort to a set of moves that resulted in limiting him to a rather thin process philosophy" (RB, 9). Kramer characterizes Rorty's philosophy as "self-consuming" in that he realized the limitations of his own project and yet remained unconvinced that philosophy had a broader role to play than he allowed or that further philosophical projects would be useful.

Kramer argues that contemporary philosophy has moved "beyond Rorty" in that he "could not enter the gates of the new city he helped the next generation create" (RB, 11). Philosophers remain in a transitional period searching for a road. For Kramer, Rorty's importance lies in "opening up the possibility for a more robust philosophy" based in part on Rorty's own insights. The effort is important in difficult times for a "city in crisis", for the university, and for philosophy. The essays included in *Rorty and Beyond* explore possible ways of moving philosophy forward in light of Rorty's contribution. With this framing of the context of the book, we will now turn to the essays themselves.

The volume includes essays by sixteen scholars grouped loosely into six sections. The essays suggest different ways in which philosophy may move beyond Rorty. The title of each section of this review, below, is that of the title of the corresponding part of the book. The sections each discuss the essays that fall under their head. The discussion of the essays will be followed by a brief concluding section.

Take Care of the Future and the Past Will Take Care of Itself

Crispin Sartwell's essay, "Bad Boy of Philosophy: Richard Rorty Provocateur," makes an excellent opening to the collection and complements Kramer's introduction in providing context to Rorty's work. Sartwell, a former doctoral student of Rorty, writes that he disagrees with Rorty philosophically but admires his role as a provocateur, a role Sartwell has, with less notoriety than Rorty, tried to assume for himself. Sartwell explores how Rorty provoked outrage among his fellow philosophers with his casual use of the history of philosophy, his politics of "bourgeois liberalism", and his views on truth. Sartwell discusses how Rorty both assumed and played upon the role of provocateur. For Sartwell, Rorty became emblematic of the "postmodern era" with its "alleged trashing of truth and quality and decency" (RB, 27–28) that followed the scientistic, specialized era that Kramer discusses. Sartwell suggests that with the passage of time since Rorty's death a more nuanced interpretation of his work might be possible in an effort to move beyond Rorty. Sartwell injects a well-considered note of caution into the project by warning that "as you attack him again, that fortunate philosophers can grow stronger and yet stronger and stronger still in death" (RB, 28).

Wojciech Małecki's contribution, "Nine Chances out of Ten that Things Will go to Hell," studies Rorty's use of narrative, literary criticism, and literary allusiveness as they apply to Rorty's criticisms of some types of writing about the United States and to the competing roles of pessimism and social contingency in thinking about the future. Małecki discusses Rorty's essay "Looking Backward from the Year 2096" in which two fictitious Rortyan narrators trace the course of the United States from a near-dictatorship during 2014–2044 to a 2096 culture based on fraternity and equality. Małecki shows a late Roycean understanding of Rorty's use of time, contingency and narrative as he writes of Rorty's approach:

> We always understand ourselves and our times in the context of a narrative where the period we live in at the moment is interwoven in a story which includes our past and reaches forward to the future. This naturally implies that our grasp of our times will depend upon how we recall our past and envisage things to come. (RB, 33)

Małecki's essay applies this Roycean-influenced understanding of narrative in contrasting Rorty's criticism – in *Achieving our Country* – of a novel by the American writer Leslie Marmon Silko with his praise in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* of Orwell's *1984.* Rorty is strongly and I think properly critical of Silko and some other contemporary American novelists for their blanket condemnation of the United States as well as for their pessimism, devoid of any hope for the future. Rorty finds, in contrast, that the pessimism in Orwell's famous novel is tempered by Orwell's sense of contingency and by the possibility of hope. Małecki suggests that there is an ongoing value to Rorty's use of literary narrative, with its sense of contingency and hope to counter the "doom and gloom [that] seems to have become our favorite sport" (RB, 39).

In the third essay, " 'Only a God can Save Us' Richard Rorty's Philosophy of Social Hope beyond Secularism" Roman Madzia accepts Rorty's critique of an epistemologically oriented and representational philosophy. Granting the merits of Rorty's critique, Madzia argues that Rorty may have been overly hasty in his rejection of God. Madzia encourages readers to use Rorty's thought to move beyond Rorty in exploring the possibility of an edifying non-epistemologically based religion of hope. Madzia's essay uses two basic arguments that are used by many other contributions to this volume: 1. Rorty's critique of epistemology does not have the broad consequences Rorty claims for it and 2. Rorty's own insights constitute an important source for moving beyond Rorty and for cutting back the overly-broad conclusions he draws from his critique.

Method and Madness

Co-editor Krzysztof Piotr Skowroński's complex essay, "Naturalistic Axiology and Normativity in Rorty," addresses a series of Socratic questions such as "what is value, how may it be taught, and who are its teachers?". The essay reminded me as well of the late Platonic dialogues, particularly the *Sophist,* in its emphasis on classification and division, which is pursued heavily throughout, and in the quarry which it catches. Skowroński locates Rorty as a naturalist within the broad realm of value philosophies which he classifies as naturalistic, theocentric, and axiocentric. Within the realm of naturalism, Skowroński classifies Rorty as both anthropocentric and ethnocentric. Within the ethnocentrism of the Western intellectual, Skowroński identifies two competing groups that discuss the methods for determining the nature of humanistic values. These groups are the scientists who work through argumentation and the practitioners of literature who work through redescription. Within the compass of pragmatism, Skowroński finds that Rorty parts company with Dewey at just this point, with Dewey inclined to science and Rorty a proponent of literature. Skowroński then explores, from a Rortyan perspective, the question of finding the best teacher of values. Rorty rejects philosophers as having any particular competence for this role and suggests instead the works of great poets and novelists. Skowroński broadens Rorty's answer to include makers of cultural policy, with a reference to Jacquelyn Kegley's, (a contributor to this volume) argument that Rorty gives insufficient weight to society and its influences upon individuals. Skowroński concludes his taxonomy of naturalistic virtue and its teachers with the observation that redescription is insufficient by itself to teach value: what is required is a means of unforced cultural persuasion through social institutions that would teach and promote the redescriptions that would encourage human solidarity and the reduction of human suffering. With this modification of Rorty's program, Skowroński follows the theme of the volume in moving beyond Rorty. He suggests that "if we want to extend our discussion to the particular ways in which human happiness, freedom, and sense of life should be provided, then we should respect ethnic and cultural traditions and treat them with understanding and care" (RB, 74).

Brendan Hogan's essay, "The Tenuous Harmony of Imagination, Vision, and Critique," praises Rorty for his critiques of the correspondence theory of truth and of the representationalist theory of mind. Hogan argues that in arguing for the importance of imagination and literary culture, Rorty overlooks forms of nuanced phil-

osophical thinking that do not run afoul of his broadly-based epistemological critique. We have already seen how this approach pervades many essays in the volume. Hogan suggests that philosophers may move beyond Rorty in social thought by considering "a pragmatic philosophy of social science that recognizes the important imaginative practices of a pluralist model of social inquiry that lives up to the intellectual demands of resolving human problems causing human suffering" (RB, 84). Hogan's essay focuses more on metaphysics and epistemology than on value theory, but his conclusion is similar to that of Skowroński.

The final essay in this part, Marcin Kilanowski's "Abandoning Truth is not a Solution" is one of several that involve Rorty's understanding of truth and his concept of irony. Kilanowski discusses Rorty's rejection of the concept of broad, absolute, universalizing truth which has a metaphysical basis and which leads in the social sphere to attempts by those claiming to be in possession of the truth to impose their views on others. Kilanowski argues that the concept of truth does not have the deleterious effects that Rorty claims; he points out that violence, war and disagreement occur with a localized, particularized concept of truth, of the type Rorty endorses, as well as with the metaphysical version of absolute truth. Kilanowski suggests moving beyond Rorty by distinguishing between a belief, whether or not based on metaphysics, and the use to which a belief is put. It is frequently possible to reject the use to which a belief is put without rejecting the underlying claim. Kilanowski shares, with some reservations, Rorty's belief in dialogue to help people of differing views get to know and respect one another and to mitigate violence and hatred.

Democracy and its Discontents

In her essay, "Not Neopragmatism but Critical Pragmatism: There are Times When the Private Must Become Public," the distinguished scholar of Josiah Royce, Jacquelyn Kegley, discusses the differences between Rorty's neopragmatism and the earlier critical pragmatism of Peirce, Royce, James, and Dewey. While praising Rorty's rejection of epistemological Platonism, Kegley argues that Rorty unjustifiably throws out too much in the name of rejecting foundationalism and essentialism. Kegley explains that as a result of his distinction between the "public" and the "private" in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity,* Rorty has a thin, overly-individualistic concept of self which does not fully recognize the close correlation between self and community. She finds that Rorty's concept of self properly denies the essentialist position that selfhood requires a connection to the eternal, but it also underestimates the interrelationship of self and community. She contrasts Rorty's thought to that of the classical American pragmatists and, in particular to the thought of Royce. Kegley writes: "individual fulfillment arises out of and is dependent on communal life. Royce, for example, argues that self-consciousness arises out of a social contrast between self and non-self that "nobody amongst us men comes to self-consciousness except under the persistent influence of his fellows" (RB, 114–115). Thus Kegley looks toward moving beyond Rorty by the development of a critical pragmatism reformulating the approach of the earlier American pragmatists – "one that moves 'democracy' and freedom forward by exposing and critiquing the economic and social dimensions of democracy and by exposing the failures of the American system of democracy to live up to its ideals" (RB, 116). Kegley suggests further that standpoint theory, which shows how an individual's perspective on issues may be shaped by their position in the social order, may form an important part of critical pragmatism. Contrary to Rorty, Kegley finds that pragmatism may be non-epistemologically based and yet engage, as Dewey envisioned, "in solving human life problem and critiquing the institutions, the paradigms, the prejudices, and the ascriptions of contemporary society" (RB, 116).

John Ryder's contribution, "The Problem of Ethnocentrism," follows the approach we have seen in Madzia's essay of using Rorty's own thought to correct some of his excesses and mistakes. Ryder's essay might also be read together with Kilanowski's for the use it makes of dialogue. Ryder points out that Rorty rejects

epistemological foundationalism as a basis for social thought. Rorty instead says he is committed to the values of liberal democracy and of the West without making any attempt to justify this commitment through foundational views of knowledge or of human nature. Rorty is thus an ethnocentrist, but, in his terms, an ironic ethnocentrist who is aware of the contingent character of his final commitments and vocabulary. Ryder argues that Rorty's ethnocentrism prevents him from seeing the values of cultures different from the West or from learning from these cultures. He argues that just as Thomas Jefferson, for example, separated religious commitment from the foundations of democracy, so on pragmatic principles we can separate "civic virtues, republicanism, and liberal democracy from the values of any one community" (RB, 126). In so doing, Ryder maintains, we will be able to learn from different forms of societies consistent with Rorty's pragmatism but without his ethnocentrism.

Kenneth Stikkers notes that his essay, "We Liberal, Ironic Hypocrites: Situating Rorty in the History of American Democratic Thought," tells a story of liberal democracy different from Rorty's "largely from the perspectives of Africana peoples" (RB, 131). Although he accurately describes much of his essay, I found Stikkers' contribution valuable for other reasons as well. In particular, Stikkers begins with an insightful comparison between Rorty and Max Scheler, the founder of the sociology of knowledge, who was influenced heavily by American pragmatism. Scheler and Rorty both recognized the importance of historicism as a counter to epistemological and metaphysical absolutism. But Scheler, in Stikkers' account, did not stop with historicism but instead adopted the strategy of "historicizing historicism itself" and showing that it too was rooted in historical contingency (RB, 130). For Stikkers, Scheler's discussion of the nature of historicism goes beyond Rorty in opening up the space for cross-cultural dialogue and "creat[ing] the possibility for transcendence and critique" (RB, 130). Stikkers proceeds to challenge what he sees as Rorty's historical description of American democracy with its focus on the Enlightenment. He argues that, from the outset, various forms of Christianity played an important role in the development of democracy as well. So too, Stikkers traces well-known tensions in the development of American democracy, arising especially from its treatment of African Americans and Native Americans. He turns to Frederick Douglass' famous Fourth of July oration as a succinct statement of the irony and hypocrisy in some accounts of the development of democracy. Stikkers argues that an examination of the actual tortuous history of the development of democracy raises questions about Rorty's denial that the support of democracy requires a commitment to underlying philosophical principles. Such support is required, Stikkers argues, to account for the difference between ideal and reality. He believes that Rorty could not appeal to this difference because for him "there are no principles underlying liberalism separable and to be recovered from its history, and so if that history is judged corrupt, so must it be judged corrupt" (RB, 138). Hence, the importance of Scheler, whose thought for Stikkers allows for critique without foundationalism.

The final essay in the part, Justin Bell's "Solidarity, Imagination, and Richard Rorty's Unfulfilled Democratic Possibilities" considers how philosophers may move beyond Rorty by investigating practical ways to organize social conduct in promoting democracy and human solidarity without adopting a foundationalist epistemology. Bell argues that Rorty's appeals to solidarity and the alleviation of suffering in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* are largely ineffective because Rorty "cannot work himself out of the blackhole of individuality" (RB, 145). He juxtaposes Rorty's individualism with Dewey's view expressed in *The Public and its Problems* that the ideal of democracy as a social ethic requires a communal reconstruction of individualism – a reconstruction widely regarded as difficult if not impossible of realization. As I understand him, Bell argues for something of a middle way. He argues that Rorty's individualistic view may be expanded through the use of Deweyan imagination and empathy to better promote the goals of human solidarity and alleviating suffering without adopting unrealistic expectations of people or falling into metaphysics.

Nature, Knowing and Naturalisms

Roberto Gronda's contribution, "Vocabularies and the Lifeworld: A Criticism of Rorty's Naturalism," argues, as do many other essays in the volume, that Rorty reads his critique of metaphysics and epistemology too broadly. Gronda argues that the overbreadth of Rorty's argument results in his rejection of the existence of an irreducible normative language usually called "common sense" which Gronda finds is basically equivalent to "human nature". Gronda accepts what he terms Rorty's "linguistification" of pragmatism as opposed, for example, to the difficulties of the concept of "experience" in Dewey. Still, Gronda argues that many of Dewey's insights can be stated linguistically and used to enrich Rorty's own neo-pragmatism. In addition to Dewey, Gronda's essay makes extensive use of the work of Donald Davidson and Bjorn Ramberg. Davidson had argued persuasively for the irreducibility of normative language to other forms of language use, and Ramberg applied Davidson's work to criticize Rorty. Gronda argues that notions of "life world, common sense, and human nature" are important to Rorty's project and that they do not require commitment to metaphysics or essentialism. The exploration of these notions, in particular the thought of Davidson, constitutes, in my view, a promising way of going beyond Rorty.

Unlike most of the volume's essays, Maja Niestrój's "The Solomonic Strategy – the Brain as Hardware, Culture as Software," offers a close analysis of a single essay of Rorty's, "The Brain as Hardware, Culture as Software." Niestrój argues that Rorty criticizes cognitive science from a neo-Wittgensteinian perspective in arguing that cognitive science ignores the role of culture and use in language acquisition and attempts to reduce language acquisition to a mechanism. Niestrój criticizes aspects of Rorty's article, but she finds much of Rorty's critique sound. She finds Rorty's critique of evolutionary anthropologists, psychologists, and sociobiologists, for example, consistent with Karl Popper's philosophy of science and with the attempt to separate science from pseudo-science. Niestrój concludes that in his article and his critique of cognitive science, Rorty comes closer to supporting a particular widely-shared account of scientific methodology and of the nature of science than is the case in most of his other writings.

Representation and Other Mirrors

The three essays in Part V consist, respectively, of comparisons of Rorty with Dewey, Davidson, and Sellars. These essays are each complex and detailed and offer insight in meeting the goal of the volume to go "beyond Rorty." Radim Šíp's provocative contribution, "Why we should move from Rorty to 'Rortwey'" is one of the few in this volume that offers a fundamental critique of Rorty's "obsession with language" and his adoption of the "linguistic turn." Even though Rorty strongly rejected the way in which analytic philosophy carried out the "linguistic turn," he remains, in Šíp's critique, a language or "linguistified" philosopher. Šíp contrasts Rorty's "linguistified" philosophy with the thought of Dewey and what he finds to be Dewey's difficult but richer experiential philosophy. Šíp urges philosophers to consider moving beyond Rorty by combining Rorty's eloquence and way with words with the experiential thought of Dewey. He concludes: "from Dewey we should learn pervasive and transformative thinking, and from Rorty, the art of style, and from both, the nobility of the heart" (RB, 193).

Miklós Nyírő's essay, "Reconsidering Rorty's Theory of Vocabularies: On the Role and Scope of Persuasion in a Post-representationalist Culture," might be read together with Gronda's essay in Part V. As does Gronda, Nyírő makes extensive use of the work of Donald Davidson and Bjorn Ramberg. Davidson had argued for the priority and irreducible character of mentalistic, normative language over other uses of language in understanding the world. He developed a concept called triangulation in which normative speech involved at least

two speakers working to interpret a reality outside themselves. Davidson's use of triangulation and interpretation seem to me to have strong parallels in Peirce and the late Royce. Ramberg used Davidson's discussion of normativity to argue against Rorty's contention for the equivalence of all explanatory uses of language. Unusually enough, Rorty accepted the Ramberg/Davidson critique. Nyírő and Gronda, in their contributions to this volume, consider the impact of Ramberg/Davidson on Rorty in different ways which seem to me consistent. Gronda discusses how Davidson's position allows for the non-metaphysical use of concepts such as life world, common sense, and human nature while Nyírő discusses how Davidson's discussion of interpretation and the privileging of normative discourse allows "for a more fundamental role of persuasion in culture than it would have been without such an acknowledgement" (RB, 211). Nyírő's argument about the importance of persuasion might, for its part, be read together with Skowroński's essay in this volume. Both Nyírő's and Gronda's essays offer fascinating suggestions about the theme of this volume: learning from Rorty while still moving beyond him, in this case through insights derived from Davidson.

In his philosophically ambitious essay, "The Lamp of Reason and the Mirror of Nature" Preston Stovall addresses Rorty's dichotomy in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* between systematic and edifying philosophy. Stovall argues that a philosophy may be both systematic and edifying. By "systematic" Stovall means a philosophy which undertakes to construct a theory of knowledge which may be passed on to future generations. By "edifying" Stovall means a philosophy with strong components of iconoclasm and chance which is open to new ways of discourse. In his lengthy essay, Stovall finds the source of a philosophy both systematic and edifying in the work of Wilfrid Sellars combined with elements of evolutionary theory, the thought of Peirce, and a theory of analogy developed by Auxier. With a reference to "cultivating philosophy in Peirce's sense" (RB, 228) Stovall finds that Sellars' thought suggests "the birth into self-conscious development of a set of capacities that have been naturally evolving for eons and which, by its nature as the pedagogical practice it is, results in the emergence of individual persons as rational agents" (RB, 228). Stovall argues that such a view deserves to be seen as both systematic and edifying. And by offering approaches for the further development of this view, it suggests one way of "going beyond" Rorty. Stovall's essay is perhaps the fullest attempt in this volume to develop an approach to "evolutionary naturalism" as a response to Rorty as set forth in Kramer's introduction.

Logic, Truth, and Progress

David Beisecker is both a formal logician and a proponent of Rorty's repudiation of the view that the mind mirrors nature. In his essay, "Logic Beyond the Looking Glass," Beisecker argues that symbolic logic as generally taught with a focus on the concept of truth and a presentation through truth tables "invites an understanding of logic as a technical handmaiden for epistemology" (RB, 238). In order to avoid a mirroring, representationalist epistemology while preserving the importance of formal logic, Beisecker offers an approach to logic which dispenses with the concept of truth and uses instead the pragmatic concept of entailment based on "*what one may or may not jointly affirm or deny*" (RB, 240). His study moves beyond Rorty in that it preserves an important role for symbolic logic – a discipline for which Rorty had little use. Beisecker presents the rudiments of his logic in his essay and concludes that switching from truth-functional semantics to incompatibility does not materially change the way concepts work in formal reasoning but allows a greater scope for extending the stock of logical operations, such as material implication. Consistently with Rorty's rejection of representationalist epistemology, Beisecker concludes that "by transposing formal logic into a pragmatist key, we can see it once again as a science of fruitful and imaginative extensions to our current ways of thinking and talking" (RB, 249).

John Shook's carefully argued essay. "Reality is More Practical Than Truth: Rorty on Truth versus Justification" agrees with Beisecker in accepting Rorty's rejection of an epistemological understanding of truth.

While Beisecker adopted a system of formal logic to avoid epistemological commitments to truth, Shook's essay constitutes an exposition and defense of Rorty's position. Shook argues, in agreement with Rorty, that truth has no epistemic role to play in philosophy beyond the role played by justification and justified belief. As a first line of support for this claim, Shook analyzes and attempts to rebut various counterexamples presented in the literature which purport to show a large practical difference between truth and justification. These counterexamples involve situations in which a belief appears to be justified but is in fact mistaken, sometimes which tragic consequences. Shook then examines two purported ways to argue for a difference between truth and justification. The first is a rather seat of the pants approach which argues that one can have a true lucky belief without justification while the second way agrees that truth and justification are different but argues for the priority of meticulous, careful justification. Shook's analysis tends to push these positions together and to reduce the differences to the temperament of their advocates to support a Rorty-like conclusion. He argues:

> Where there is envisioned truth, there is a projected objective of inquiry; where there is no projected inquiry, there is no truth. Pragmatism affirms this correlation with the tenet that a belief's object is, for all practical purposes, the objective of inquiry. Truth is accordingly just the culmination, envisioned or at least projected of our inquiries. (RB, 268)

The final essay in this part and in the volume is co-editor Randall Auxier's "Ironic Wrong-Doing and the Arc of the Universe." Auxier's wide-ranging essay discusses and brings together many philosophers, including Theodore Parker, Martin Luther King Jr., Charles Peirce, Andrew Bacevich, and Reinhold Niebuhr in addition to Rorty. Auxier's essay makes use of a broad form of analogical reasoning that also was used in Stovall's essay in Part V. Auxier's essay attempts to go beyond Rorty by putting pragmatic thought on a different path; in particular, Auxier critiques Rorty's use of the concept of irony. For Rorty, irony results from individuals acknowledging the contingent character of their final vocabularies. Auxier argues that Rortyan irony denies the "value and even the reality of the arc of the moral universe" (RB, 278) that Auxier develops through a discussion of Parker and Peirce. Auxier argues for the importance of commitment to one's well-considered final vocabulary when it is a result of thought, growth and maturity, as with, for example, Parker and King, rather than regarding such vocabulary skeptically and as a subject for Rortyan irony. It is still the case that individuals may err in their attempts to implement their final vocabularies. Instead of Rortyan irony, Auxier proposes an understanding of irony and its importance to moral philosophy derived from Reinhold Niebuhr and his famous book *The Irony of American History.* In Auxier's development of Niebuhr, irony results from individuals undertaking acts they find evil but mistakenly believe are necessary to a broader good. Auxier gives as an example Dick Cheney's use of torture during the Bush administration. His essay is provocative and suggestive in its attempt to get beyond Rorty and Rorty's irony. It makes a fitting concluding essay to the volume.

Conclusion

In this review, we have examined the project of moving beyond Rorty by considering the individual contributions in *Rorty and Beyond.* It may be useful by way of summary to consider common threads running through the essays. The contributions by Kramer and Sartwell both place Rorty in the context of his times. Kramer sees Rorty as a "transitional figure" while Sartwell sounds an appropriate warning against the tendency to underestimate Rorty. Some of the essays, including those by Małecki , Niestrój, Beisecker, and Shook, stress their agreement with Rorty and try to move beyond him by building on his work. Another group of essays offer broad-based criticisms of Rorty, including criticisms of his blanket rejection of epistemology and meta-

physics. I would include the contributions of Kilanowski, Stikkers, Šíp, Stovall, and Auxier in this category, together with the essays of Gronda and Nyírő offering a Davidsonian critique of Rorty. The remaining contributions tend to accept Rorty's metaphysical and epistemological critique of representationalism while arguing that it does too much work and that Rorty pushes it too far. Many of the essays in this group are concerned with Rorty's social thought. I find the essays taking this basic approach include those of Madzia, Skowroński, Hogan, Kegley, Ryder, and Bell.

Overall, I think Rorty is shown in this book as a philosopher in the large-scale, grand manner whose thought has important, provocative things to say about many matters, including metaphysics, epistemology, language, history of philosophy, social thought, logic, religion, philosophy of science, and more. As did many of his predecessors who philosophized on a large scale, Rorty claimed that his work was somehow dispositive and would prove to be the end of philosophy as a specific discipline. The making of such a claim may itself be part of the very nature of systematic, reflective philosophical thinking. It differentiates philosophy from disciplines such as chemistry or history where there is always more to learn. The essays in this volume point out ways to learn from Rorty and yet move beyond him, or at least move differently from him, in what Rorty himself called the continuing conversation of the West. Rorty would likely have met many, if not all, of the essays in this book with what has become known as the Rortyan shrug. Yet a sympathetic reading suggests that there are many possible paths to be explored, among them the paths that Auxier's preface described as post-pragmatism and that Kramer's introduction described as evolutionary naturalism. These approaches to philosophizing do not exclude other possible approaches. The essays in the book I found most fascinating, regardless of whether they move philosophy beyond Rorty, were those of Stikkers and Šíp together with the essays of Gronda and Nyírő on the significance of Davidson. Readers with an interest in Rorty will take from this book something of the love for and the continued nature of reflective philosophical thinking which persists, often in spite of itself.