Diskussion/Discussion

Robert G. Turnbull

Richard Rorty and the American Philosophical Scene

Abstract: Richard Rorty's assessment of the American philosophical scene is unduly cynical. Part of the reason for this seems to lie in his recognition (in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature) of the incoherence of "grounding" a linguistic or conceptual scheme on a "given", but proceeding, nevertheless, to think of representation and truth as requiring conformity to a "given". He, therefore, fails to appreciate the unity and seriousness of American philosophers who, abandoning the "given", are working with some success on plausible accounts of representation and truth. Surprisingly, neither in his article nor his book does he attend to the remarkable increase in sophistication and serious research on the part of historians of philosophy and historians of science. Both in serious work on representation and truth and in historical research there is more rapprochement between American and Continental philosophers than Rorty seems prepared to credit.

Richard Rorty's assessment of the American philosophical scene in Rorty 1981 and his assessment of the general philosophical scene in his Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Rorty 1979) are well informed, and they are obviously the work of a thoughtful observer and participant. Rorty is - and has been for some time - an important figure in American philosophy. For all that, the paper and the book are somewhat inaccurate and, in ways which it will take some time to explain, unrevealing. In Part I of what follows, I shall try to show that Rorty's announcement of the death of "epistemology" (Rorty 1979, Introduction and chr. 3 and 4 in particular) is belated and that, perhaps because it is belated, it underestimates or ignores some rather profound changes in American philosophy since World War II. In Part II, I shall attend to vastly increased sophistication in America in history of philosophy, history of science, and in understanding of the actual procedures of productive scientists - a sophistication which Rorty largely ignores and thus fails to take into account its effect upon American philosophy. In Part III, I shall sketch an account of our language which, in its essentials, is widely accepted and which promises more philosophical, if not cultural, unity than Rorty is prepared to recognize.

Despite Rorty's rather hollow praise of the sophistry he finds characteristic of the American scene and his plea for tolerance in what he finds to be a confusing philosophical disorder, I find it hard to believe that he is content with cleverness as a substitute for wisdom and insight. I am inclined to think that his picture of American philosophy as sophistic

Analyse & Kritik 4 (1982), S. 223-238 © Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen

and as placing a premium on mere cleverness reflects a view of the scene rather like the traditional New Yorker's map of the United States, one which extends New York state well into the west, vaguely notes Chicago as somewhere "out there", is ignorant of the heartland, but does concede the existence of Los Angeles and San Francisco. That view of the scene appears to ignore the immense teaching effort in the large American public universities and colleges to relate to and make sense to American college students. In this effort there is little, if any, premium placed upon cleverness as such and a large premium placed upon the unification, if not the unity, of culture. The American educational establishment's demands for "relevance", "innovation" and "interdisciplinary" research and teaching, distressing as they have often been, have provoked more serious thought about the bases of cultural unity than Rorty recognizes. But these comments are not strictly germane to the main purpose of this paper. They are rather more a caveat with regard to some of the cynicism of Rorty's paper. I shall return to these matters in the concluding section.

Prefatory Comment

I am much more *in* than *out of* sympathy with the main claims and critiques of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* and therefore find much in it to endorse and commend. Even so, almost from the moment of reading its introduction, I was and continue to be uneasy about it - not so much about details of its claims and arguments as about something which pervades the whole book. It took some time to locate the source of that uneasiness and, even now, though I think I have it clearly enough, I find it difficult to articulate in a few sentences. At the risk of being obscure, I shall, nevertheless, try to do just that, hoping that the remainder of the paper will supply some necessary clarification.

Let it be agreed that a linguistic or conceptual scheme (system, pattern, "paradigm") is properly understood as having a social origin, a social history, and (if it persists) continued social support. Let it also be agreed that for *us* who operate within or by means of that conceptual or linguistic scheme it determines our "world", i.e., what is observed, what is or may be inferred from what, what should be done or refrained from, what is to be admired and encouraged or what is to be found ugly and discouraged, and so on. Finally, let it be agreed that attempts to "ground" *our* conceptual or linguistic scheme either in some form of conceptual "illumination" (rationalism) or in some sort of "given" (empiricism) are *in principle* bound to fail (i.e., are, when properly stated, incoherent).

I believe that all of these are contentions of Rorty in the book, though he does not state them in just this fashion. My uneasiness does not come from them; indeed, I agree with them. It comes rather in the drawing of conclusions from these contentions. Rorty seems to claim that, because our conceptual or linguistic scheme is socially determined, "accuracy of representation" is an empty and honorific phrase and "truth" an honorific concept (Rorty 1979, 6, 9, 12, 300 (fn), 318, 371-2

among others). I think that drawing these conclusions is a mistake and a mistake which does considerable damage. It is a mistake which one may well make who, recognizing the incoherence of "grounding" a linguistic or conceptual scheme on a "given", nevertheless thinks of representation and truth as requiring conformity to the "given" and forthwith abandons both for the standard pragmatist reasons. Some such line of thought informs Rorty's book, and it rather naturally leads to his dependence upon Kuhn in assessing philosophy's history and prospects and to his respect for the "edifying" works of Dewey, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger (Rorty 1979, 170-88 among others). Needless to say, I do not find that the contentions of the last paragraph and thus the abandonment of the "given" provide reasons for abandoning accuracy of representation or truth.

I. American Philosophy since World War II

Though Rorty did it for some years prior to the publication of Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, he was, nevertheless, late in proclaiming the death of "epistemology". He includes as "epistemology" virtually all of that portion of modern philosophy which has sought or professed to find some sort of certain foundation of human knowledge - in particular, but not exclusively, human scientific knowledge. He uses the term so as to include primarily the empiricist tradition, i.e., the British empiricists and the (logical) positivists of the twentieth century, though he exempts neither Descartes nor Kant from the charge of "epistemology". And I think that he wishes as well to include at least some "analytic" philosophers who cannot easily be classed as "foundationalists", on the ground that they continue their work in the "epistemological" style and attend to science somewhat to the neglect of the remainder of culture (Rorty 1979, 4-5, 319-20). I say that his proclamation came rather late, for, to a discerning eye, the approaching death was apparent as early as the circulation of illicit Wittgenstein materials and the seminars of Wilfrid Sellars in the late 1940's - to speak only my personal experience.[1] Many others in America and England received the Wittgenstein materials (and some were, of course, actually on the scene in Cambridge), and they were profoundly affected. Tales of the Saturday morning sessions of the Austin group in Oxford were widespread, and soon articles and papers circulated. Strawson published an early article. Ryle's Concept of Mind, Dilemmas, and such articles as "If, So and Because" were shortly to be published (Ryle 1949; Ryle 1954). There was excitement in the air, and the center of that excitement was surely England, in particular, Cambridge and Oxford.

The activity at Oxford and Cambridge was, of course, a vigorous challenge to the then-dominant "epistemology" of Moore, Russell, and the positivists. The challenge was formidable. The standard "epistemological" accounts of concept formation, sense-data (sensibilia, sensa), mind, (causal) laws, (scientific) explanation, truth, "meaning", morality, and more all came under fire. The general nature of the critique, whether

from Wittgenstein's Cambridge or Ryle's and Austin's Oxford, was much the same. Pay attention to the language we speak and write! Pay attention to what it authorizes, what it forbids, the skills of which it is part, the moral and political life which it fosters. It was not so much, if at all, a study of language which was encouraged. It was rather a focusing of attention upon linguistic uses. Though the Wittgenstein materials were somewhat known and thought to be somehow influential upon the Oxford philosophers, it was not until Wittgenstein's death and their publication by his executors that they dominated the scene. The American scene of the '50's was greatly affected by what was variously called "Oxford Analysis", "Ordinary Language Philosophy", or simply "Linguistic Analysis". Ryle's writings were intensely studied, imitated, and criticized. Strawson's "on Referring" (Strawson 1950), attacking the centerpiece of Russell's philosophy, namely, the theory of descriptions, was probably the most worked-over, heatedly discussed, and influential article in recent Anglo-American philosophical history. Though the dimensions of the controversy over Strawson's article were not fully clear at the time, enough philosophers found its challenge sufficiently compelling to transform the philosophical scene. After that controversy, no one could take for granted the Russellian, Moorean, or positivist account of proper names, descriptions, or "acquaintance".

Though there was considerable overlap, the '50's period of "Oxford Analysis" was followed by a '60's period of Wittgenstein influence. The overlap was, of course, both in time and in content. The major focus of both was on linguistic uses, and both emphasized linguistic uses in other than fact-stating or theory-stating contexts. But all of this is well-known, and vast detail is available in the philosophical journals and books of the period. My point in alluding to the Oxford-Cambridge influence on Anglo-American philosophy is simply to note its radical departure from the accepted "epistemology" of Moore, Russell, and the positivists.

Rorty notes in his book his own dependence upon the thought of Wilfrid Sellars (Rorty 1979, 7, 170-88 among others), especially Sellars' attack on the "given", an attack begun in the late '40's and continued into the '50's in a series of brilliant, if difficult, articles. For the present purpose, the purport of those articles can be summarized as the following: (a) that thought is to be understood on the model of language use; (b) that a language exists as a system of norms and roles, exhibited or played by conventional linguistic tokens; (c) that the "observation" linkage between a language - and hence thought - and "the world" is to be found in the possibility of a linguistic token's being at once a conditioned response (to stimulation) and a player of a linguistic role; (d) that reasoning is to be understood on the model of intra-linguistic moves made in conformity to linguistic roles and norms; (e) that rational or intentional intervention in "the world", i.e., action, is to be understood on the model of norm-guided linguistic "exits"; (f) that the key to understanding "aboutness" or intentionality is to be found in construing "means"

or "stands for" in such formulae as "'X' stands for X (or X-ness)", as "'X's in L play the X-role" or "'X's in L (a natural language) are ·X·s" (see, e.g., Sellars 1947a; 1947b; 1948; 1950a; 1950b; 1956); (g) that semantic sentences of the form "'P' is true if and only if P" are to be understood as assertion-authorizing, i.e., authorizing the removal of the inverted commas for values of 'P'. Though this is at best only a cursory, unguarded, and "hintish" summary, it should be enough to make quite clear Sellars' radical departure from what Rorty calls "epistemology". By the '60's this general line of Sellars was very influential in American philosophy, and it has been increasingly so in the '70's.

In the '50's W.V.O. Quine delivered his presidential address to the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association and, not long after, published Word and Object (Quine 1958; Quine 1960). The general approach, in structure at least, is very similar to Sellars'. The connection between a word and "the world" in "observation" is furnished by conditioning to stimuli and neurological processes; what Sellars calls "intra-linguistic" moves are determined conventionally, by what *we* say. But I need hardly go on; the Quine doctrines are familiar enough. The point is that, making these moves, we are no longer in an "epistemological" ambiance.

I think that I have in this section been writing about the mainstream of American philosophy and correctly characterizing it as, since the late '40's, by way of the Oxford and Cambridge influence and certain indigenous developments, notably, the work of Sellars and Quine, moving quite out of the ambiance of classical "epistemology" and foundationalism. Though rather late in pronouncing the death of "epistemology", Rorty is nevertheless, right in pointing to the mainstream's emphasis upon perception, science, and knowledge to the relative neglect of culture as a whole. I think that this is due, in part, to the continuing fascination of bright young Americans with science and technology, in part, to continuity of interest in attacking problems in "epistemological" style, and, in part, to American university organization which encourages "specialization" and has commonly left broader cultural matters to history, the languages, comparative literature, art, music, and some of the social sciences.

Despite some thirty years of intense concern with Communism, its spread and attraction for underdeveloped countries, and much attention to the societies of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, there has been relatively little study of Marxism in the United States and even less political and intellectual influence. Partly because of an immigrant population which wished to cast aside history as an encumbrance, partly because of the extraordinary opportunity of the frontier and undeveloped America, partly because of the Enlightenment ideology of the American constitution and writings of the forefathers, Marxism has had little or no appeal to the American sense of history and, *a fortiori*, to an American sense of the mesh of history and culture. Indeed, it has long been a commonplace of European intellectuals that Americans lack a

sense of history and its cultural role. It is therefore not at all surprising that American philosophers have had relatively little interest in historicism, whether that of Marx or Croce or some other. And it is slightly amusing that Hegel's chief legacy in America should be the ahistorical pragmatism of John Dewey. Insofar therefore as philosophic concern with the whole of culture is mediated by historicism there has been a relative neglect of culture as such in the mainstream of American philosophy. And that relative neglect did not begin with "the rise of scientific philosophy".

II. History of Philosophy and History of Science since World War II

A. History of Philosophy

During the early '50's there were very few American graduate departments of philosophy which took pride in having distinguished scholars who offered courses, seminars, and dissertation direction in the various parts of the history of philosophy. And it was uncommon for major philosophy departments to recruit specialists in the several recognized areas of philosophy's history. In the past ten or fifteen years or so, however, the situation is quite reversed. Experts in ancient Greek philosophy, medieval philosophy, early modern, 18th century, and 19th century philosophy are very much in demand. And there is hardly a major department which does not take pride in its expert historians of philosophy. Accompanying this change, of course, there has been a large output of significant scholarly work in the history of philosophy, work which, incidentally, has produced significant scholarly contact between Anglo-American and Continental scholars.

The growth in Anglo-American scholarship in Greek philosophy has been incredible. Hundreds of articles and scores of books devoted primarily to text exegesis, attending carefully to primary sources and both ancient and modern secondary sources, written by philosophical scholars who think of themselves as an intellectual community have appeared in the past twenty years. Inspiring and presiding over much of this activity has been the highly respected figure of Gregory Vlastos - former colleague and friend of Richard Rorty. Journals, new and old, have had difficulty keeping up with the scholarly output. Virtually every divisional meeting of the American Philosophical Association has a session devoted to papers in Greek philosophy, and the Society of Ancient Greek Philosophy has crowded meetings at which it is an honor to be invited to present a paper. Almost every serious department of philosophy in America has vied for the services of at least one scholar in Greek philosophy.[2]

Given impetus from a number of sources, serious philosophical scholarly work in medieval philosophy proceeds apace. Etienne Gilson, working tirelessly both as a scholar and organizer through the medium of Toronto's Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, was a major force, though he must share credit

with a number of other Catholic scholars in America, Canada, and Europe in generating genuine interest in medieval philosophical texts. Marshall Clagett and his associates and students at the University of Wisconsin virtually founded the history of medieval science as a serious field of study and thereby widened the vision of historians of medieval philosophy.[3] Rather surprisingly, associates of Wittgenstein, notably Elizabeth Anscombe and Peter Geach, have assisted materially in generating study of medieval texts and found them useful in illuminating current philosophical issues, notably intentionality. Historians of medieval logic have excited the interest of contemporary logicians, particularly in the "terminist" logic of the 13th and 14th centuries. As in the case of scholarship in ancient Greek philosophy, almost every serious philosophy department in America has or seeks the services of a competent scholar in medieval philosophy.

Despite the efforts of P.O. Kristeller and his associates at Columbia, interest and competence in Renaissance philosophy has not been intense or widespread, though the recent and current work of historians of science may make it so. But serious attempts to understand the medieval and Renaissance sources of early modern philosophy and science abound. Descartes, e.g., is being placed in historical context, his neo-Platonist outlook taken seriously, his work in optics, mathematics, and the new physics studied and related to his "epistemology", and his relationship to the intellectual scene attended to. Similar work has been and continues to be done on other 17th and 18th century major and minor figures. Bibliographies of secondary literature for every major modern philosopher and most of the minor figures have become very extensive indeed. Lectures, conferences, symposia, and special sessions of general philosophical meetings on topics in modern philosophy abound. Several new (since World War II) journals devoted to general or special topics in modern philosophy have been founded. Again, much of the scholarly work in the history of modern philosophy is linked with work in the history of science and with more general work in intellectual history.

Rorty notes that Reichenbach's claim that "philosophy has proceeded from speculation to science" could hardly be written now "in the terms in which he wrote it, since he took for granted all the positivistic doctrines which, in the intervening thirty years, were deconstructed by Wittgenstein, Quine, Sellars, and Kuhn". Though I think this is true, in the sense that "epistemology" as understood in I. above is defunct, it is <u>also</u> true, in the sense that Reichenbach's grasp of the history of philosophy as well as the history of science was, by current standards, less than firm. Though more carefully written, his book is more or less of a piece with Bertrand Russell's <u>History of Western Philosophy</u> (Russell 1945), which, even at the time when it appeared, had value as a source of Russellian <u>obiter dicta</u> but relatively little merit as history of philosophy.

Since most of the work in the history of philosophy to which I have alluded has been done by professors of philosophy, and

much of it has grown out of research for and writing of Ph.D. dissertations in philosophy departments, it is hard to escape the conclusion that a rather large number of scholars have taken their researches into history of philosophy to be relevant to their work as philosophers. And I think it a simple truth that virtually all of the American philosophers who do serious work in the history of philosophy think that, _as philosophers_, they are uniquely qualified to work in the history of philosophy. Many have training in the exact and exacting procedures of modern logic and "analytic" philosophy and have discovered that their demands for rigor are satisfied by many historical texts and, often when they are not, produce pattern and insight previously unnoticed in historical texts. Most are impatient with the hasty and anachronistic generalization which they find in much of earlier writing in the history of philosophy.

A good deal of recent and current work in the history of philosophy treats historical texts virtually as current philosophical work treats contemporary philosophical writing. An effort is made to understand a text - the terms used, the setting of the claims or arguments, and so on. And then some effort is made to assess the plausibility of the text, whether in its historical setting or generally. This sort of imaginative effort has, for example, engendered considerable respect for Plato's theory of forms and made Plato scholars equally dubious concerning the anachronistic "Platonism" of 20th century realists like Moore and Russell and concerning the Plato of Heidegger's speculations. And it is not at all uncommon to include historians of philosophy on the program of conferences devoted to current philosophical topics in the belief that interchange with historical figures assists the discussion of the topics.

What I am suggesting is, of course, that Rorty's claim that cleverness and sophistry are the hallmarks of post-positivistic philosophy in America needs correction in the light of this remarkable increase in research and publication in history of philosophy. The needed correction is suggested by Wilfrid Sellars' pithy comment to the effect that "philosophy without the history of philosophy is, if not blind, certainly dumb". And I think it true that most philosophers find philosophical interchange with figures in philosophy's history valuable. They may find it valuable as helping to explain the aetiology of concepts or terms they find useful. They may even think that they have the conceptual means of sketching a problem space in which historical answers may figure as alternatives in their own philosophical questioning. They may find historical conceptions of the role of philosophy in the culture useful in answering their own metaphilosophical questions. They may simply find history of philosophy a valuable source of insight and unsystematized suggestion for their own philosophizing. An interesting and, perhaps, problematic explanation of the intelligible philosophical interchange (with historical figures) assumption has it that we can work with the idea of a language common to ourselves and historical figures, a language by reflecting upon which and by means of which philo-

sophical problem solving may occur and insight may be achieved. With increasing attention to the aetiology of natural language(s), artificial intelligence, biological evolution and the development of the human nervous system, and functional explanatory patterns, this idea has considerable appeal. And I shall attend to it at some length in part III of what follows.

Whatever accounts for the vast increase in work in the history of philosophy during the past twenty or thirty years, its effect on the American scene is considerable. Almost everyone takes history of philosophy seriously and is prepared to attend carefully to historical figures. Though these people may not, for all their attention to the history of philosophy, be wise (as Rorty says an earlier generation was thought to be), it is unlikely that they would be content to be cast in the role of sophists or clever intellectual lawyers.

B. History of Science

A major factor in the eclipse of positivism in America was surely the inability of serious students of the physical sciences and the history of those sciences to fit the actual procedures of successful scientists into the procrustean bed of positivist strictures concerning observation, theory, explanation, predication, verification, confirmation, induction, and the like. And, increasingly, philosophers of science have attended closely to the practice and publication of physical scientists themselves. Indeed, philosophers of science in America are usually closely allied with colleagues in the sciences, and few pretend to competence in philosophy of science who are not conversant with the literature und practice of at least one of the sciences.

I mentioned earlier the remarkable activity in the development of history of science, notably medieval science, at the University of Wisconsin under the leadership of Marshall Clagett. Some of the impetus for that work came from the attempt to understand the medieval background for the new science of the 17th century. The results of the work of Clagett and his colleagues and students have often been spectacular - as in the medieval development of mathematical means of expressing motion (especially "uniformly difform" motion and the 1-3-5 law of uniform acceleration (Clagett 1961, ch. 5) - and commonly illumination - as in the tracing of Hellenistic and medieval attempts to understand projectile motion. The work on medieval optics, illuminating as it is for medieval doctrines of perception, has straightforward philosophical relevance (see, e.g., Lindberg 1970). The work of Neugebauer and his group on ancient mathematics and astronomy has been equally spectacular (Neugebauer 1957). History of science is by now a significant portion of the American university scene, with several full-scale university departments, several history and philosophy of science departments, and a very large number of individual historians of science as members of history, philosophy, or science departments.

One of the effects of this remarkable activity has been the destruction of simplistic conceptions of the origins of modern science and concomitant respect for an early science once thought unworthy as not conforming to empiricistic expectations. The astronomy of Ptolemy and his Platonistic predecessors, for example, with its assumptions of uniform velocity, circular motion, and complex apparatus of epicycles and equant points, is very good astronomy and supportive of much of the Hellenic and Hellenistic world - to say nothing of the medieval world. Babylonian base-sixty mathematics - used by Ptolemy among others - was very sophisticated indeed, using a full range of computational algorithms. Ancient medicine, culminating in the work of Galen, perhaps *because of* its reliance on teleological assumptions and explanations, reached a level unsurpassed until comparatively recent times. But I need not multiply examples.

Another, for our purposes, important effect of the work in the history of science has been the illumination of the linkage between philosophy and science at various historical periods. It is virtually impossible now to do serious work on Plato without recognition of his mathematics and astronomy, on Aristotle without recognition of his association with Eudoxus and his place in the development of biology, on Proclus without recognition of his commentary on Euclid, on 13th century philosophers without recognition of the recovery of ancient and Islamic mathematical and scientific writings, on Descartes without recognition of his work (and association with others) in optics, mathematics, and the new mechanics, or on Kant without attention to Newtonian mechanics. Glib generalization in the history of philosophy and simple appropriation of ideas out of scientific historical context have become, if not impossible, at least disreputable.

But, of course, Rorty in his book acknowledges a considerable debt to Kuhn, whose work grows as much out of scholarship in the history of science as it does out of the ambiance of Sellars, Quine, Feyerabend, and Wittgenstein. Whatever the controversy generated by Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1962) may come to, Kuhn has laid to rest simple empiricistic ("epistemological"?) conceptions of the history of science. And this is widely, if not universally, recognized in America. As to some association of "normal" and "abnormal" (periods of) science in Kuhn with language and with Rorty's defense of "hermeneutics" in his book I shall have something to say in III below. Here I wish merely to express some surprise that Rorty, in his essay of the philosophical scene in America, gave no attention to the role of history of science in the formation of that scene.

III. Language

The language which Europeans and Americans speak, write, and read and by means of which they think and perceive is the result of at least four thousand years of experience and reflection. It has been used in guiding action in the hunt, in

raising crops, in tool construction, in workshops, in families, in warfare, in ceremonies, in public affairs, in navigation, in preparing food, in calculation and measuring, in planning and deciding, in learning and training, in husbandry, in theory construction and use - indeed, in every human activity. Increasing sophistication and complexity in these many activities has, of course, gone hand in hand with language change and often been aided by language change as well as adaptation of linguistic practice in one activity to a different activity. I speak of "the language" which Europeans and Americans speak simply to suggest that, for the purposes at hand, we do speak the same language, i.e., several languages which have somewhat similar histories, political institutions, scientific traditions and enterprises, and a more or less common literature. Put in the terms I invoked earlier from Wilfrid Sellars, there is an almost complete set of linguistic "roles" common to these languages, however different the sign-design "actors" may be.

I think that there has been increasing recognition in American philosophy of the language we speak (if you please, the *natural* language) as the norm of intelligibility at any given *time* for whatever theorizing we may attempt. Though that language changes (and, historically, it has changed a great deal), it is *at any given time*, our base of operations. We depart from it *only* at risk of unintelligibility. Even so, playfulness with and distortion of that language is not only possible; it is a major source of linguistic change. With a changing social order, one may stretch an old vocabulary (and the lingustic roles played by that vocabulary) to make new situations and human relationships intelligible while hardly aware that linguistic change is occurring - as many of the linguistic roles and terms of Roman law became those of the developing Roman church. One may use the metaphorical possibilities of language to understand new situations and experiences, and what begins as metaphor may harden into standard usage. Self-conscious efforts - some by philosophers - have often been made at consistency, whether of fact-stating or of normative vocabulary, and, where proving useful, have stuck. All the while, however, the language itself is used as providing the intelligible frame for such unconscious and conscious change.

It is not that our language is sancrosanct and some sort of unchanging arbiter of the sort invoked by some "ordinary language" philosophers of the '50's. It is, rather, all we have to go on at any given time (though this is not commonly felt to be a lack or disadvantage). Commonly we set about to understand the world around us or describe a procedure and find that we have stretched "standard" usage in the very attempt. Nor is it the case that science makes up one language and our ordinary, "unregimented" language yet another. But one of the vexing problems of our time, indeed, modern times, has been the accommodation of science within our language, a problem which may be put in Sellarsian terms by speaking of the accommodation of the "manifest" and the "scientific" images (Sellars 1962).

Rorty writes in his book that "conversation" of some sort is important in coping with or ushering in periods of what, following Kuhn's vocabulary, he speaks of as periods of "abnormal" philosophy, periods when some sort of "paradigm" has broken down or a new one is being developed. He is remarkably vague and unspecific about the nature of such "conversation" - what it might be about, how it might be carried on, and what might be accomplished by its means. He writes, e.g.,

> "The product of abnormal discourse can be anything from nonsense to intellectual revolution, and there is no discipline which describes it, any more than there is a discipline devoted to the study of the unpredictable, or of "creativity". But hermeneutics is the study of an abnormal discourse from the point of view of some normal discourse - the attempt to make some sense of what is going on at a stage where we are still too unsure about it to describe it, and thereby to begin an epistemological account of it." (Rorty 1979, 320-1)

From the point of view of the account of the language _we_ speak which I have sketched about, something akin to Rorty's "abnormal discourse" can be made out; and I think it would make "abnormal discourse" somewhat more intelligible to me at least. It would not be, however, a matter of using a language "normally" to study or talk about another as yet inchoate language. It would rather be an attempt, within the resources of _our_ language, to talk about something for which there are _not routine_ linguistic resources.

Here, of course, one makes the standard case for metaphor and simile and the kind of change of _our_ language which extended linguistic usage, hardening into _standard_ usage, produces in the language. Plato, taking '_eidos_' and '_idea_' out of their standard Attic Greek contexts _by metaphorical_ extension and sommentary, constructed the theory of forms and participation. Galileo, inviting the treatment of motion, rest, and direction of motion as undiminishing features of things, providing some (mathematical) systematization and experimentation to support this (at the time) highly unintuitive doctrine, set modern mechanics going. Using the regularities noted by Kepler, Newton formulated the law of inverse squares, thereby creatively changing the standard usage(s) of 'mass'. Again, one could multiply examples, but the point is, I trust, tolerably clear. And it is not a point with which Rorty would have reason to disagree, though his talk of "the study of an abnormal discourse from the point of view of some normal discourse" suggests rather more formal metalinguistic activity than I have contemplated in this section. The best I can imagine at the stage under consideration is some sort of heuristic activity which may be followed, when the "abnormal" usage has clear status in normal usage, by the formal activity suggested by Rorty in the phrase, "an epistemological account of it".

Given my account of American philosophy in I. above, it should be clear that I take the failure of "epistemology" as making the general account of _our_ language sketched in the present section attractive, if _not_ compelling. Unrepentant foundationalists excepted, I have found some such general account of _our_ language congenial to most American philosophers with whom I

have talked in recent years where the talk has gotten beyond philosophical differences which lie on the surface. There is, I think, rather more agreement on some basic matters among American philosophers than Rorty seems prepared to recognize in his article. Talk with process philosophers, possible world semanticists, realists, nominalists, Husserlians, Heideggerians, etc. leads me to think it obvious that virtually all of them believe that there is a rationale in our language which supports each of their several contentions. They are thus prepared to recognize that there may well be support in our language for philosophical claims which are different from (if not in disagreement with) their own. One interesting symptom of this recognition is the revival of the use of the term 'intuition' on the part of philosophers with quite divergent views. The use of the term was anathematized during the heyday of positivism and even during the period of Oxford linguistic analysis and Wittgensteinism, for its use suggested something extraordinary and slightly mystifying - a peek at REALITY. In recent years, 'intuition' is again a commonly used term, but it is now generally taken as evincing some feature of our language which must be taken into account or for which the user of the expression has some explanation.

Against the backdrop of some such general account of our language as I have sketched and against the backdrop of scholarly work in history of philosophy sketched in II. above, there is a tendency in American philosophy to find rationales for alternative current and historical philosophical positions in our language (or in predecessor versions of our language). This is emphatically not a Hegelian tendency to find alternative positions as historical phases in the grand development of the all-inclusive system, though the accommodation of insights of alternative positions into what is taken to be rather more perspicuous does invite the intellectual patronizing of those alternatives. It is rather the more modest tendency to credit insight where it is found, given the difficulty of discerning and exposing pattern in our language, the more so as that language is used in the very discernment and exposition.

It is tempting to enlarge upon this last paragraph both for its own sake and for the purpose of illustration from the practice of several American philosophers. To do so would, however, be to write another and more lengthy paper. Let me therefore complete this section with a couple of brief comments. First, I think that enough has been said to cast doubt upon Rorty's rather unrevealing picture of American philosophy as a chaotic arena for the exhibition of mere cleverness and sophistry. Second, I think it worth noting that this general picture of our language exhibits American philosophy as rather closer to developments in continental philosophy than it is generally thought to be. At the conclusion of a very useful and insightful book on German philosophy which illustrates this point (and which details many interesting connections between German und American philosophy), Rüdiger Bubner writes,

"The unity of philosophy is thus a corrective to onesidedness and a stimulant to the business of philosophy. Anyone who is concerning about philo-

sophy must, as it were, from the very beginning share this conviction. And he ought to the best of his ability to help make sure that this fiction does not remain a fiction." (Bubner 1981, 22)

Concluding Comments

My reason for comparing Rorty's assessment of the American scene with the New Yorker's map of the United States (in the introduction) is that he overestimates the influence of a small number of clever people on the deep structure of American philosophy. The comparison is especially apt if the clever people are thought of as resident in a few locations on the east and west coasts of the United States. Yes, some people may hold centerstage for a time if they really are clever and have influential auspices. But the time will be brief indeed if there is neither fundamental insight nor trenchant critique. The term 'careerist' is an academic term of opprobrium in America. It is used to refer to a person who is capable of clever critique or slight development of another person's work but who never proves capable of sustained and consistent development of an insight, point of view, or theory. Careerism may succeed briefly and attract wide attention, but what I have called the "deep structure" of American philosophy is untouched by it. Let me conclude this paper by listing some developments in American philosophy which might reasonably be thought to have influence upon present and future deep structure. These are not listed in order of importance.

First, there is quite a bit of philosophical activity which is associated with developments in biology, in particular with neuro-physiology and evolutionary biology. This activity includes relevant change in philosophy of science to accommodate both the practice and the findings of biological scientists. It includes as well the efforts of philosophers of mind to accommodate to and draw insight from the recent developments in biology - including, of course, functionalists of various kinds. Second, philosophers have recently worked rather closely with and attended to the literature of cognitive psychologists, often attending to work in neurology, almost always attending to work in so-called "artificial intelligence", i.e., computer modelings of cognitive processes. This new or, perhaps, renewed association with psychology is likely, I think, to be determinative of several ways in which, in the terms of II. above, science is accommodated to other parts of our language. Third, despite Rorty's claim that there is nothing peculiarly philosophical about the influential work of John Rawls, moral, political, and legal philosophers have been attending quite closely to the work of economists, decision theorists, jurists, and political theorists in what I take to be an effort to link their philosophical activity to genuine practical issues in the world around them. They have been aided in this by the demise of "epistemology" and consequent restoration of normative language to respectability. If there is a common feature of their work (and I think there is), it has been the finding and exposure of rational pattern in the major features of practical human life. Along with this pre-

occupation has gone a great deal of attention to the nature of action, motive, intention, and the like as well as attention to human emotional-affective life. Fourth, serious work in history of philosophy and history of (and philosophy of) science continues mor or less unabated. Fifth, there has been an immense activity in America in what has been called "applied philosophy", including medical ethics, bio-ethics, business ethics, engineering ethics, and the like. I think it is impossible to say at this moment what effect, if any, that activity may have on what I have called "deep structure". Some of it may have long term significance, but much of it, useful as it may be in a variety of situations, is not likely to change the character of American philosophy.

Rorty notes, I think correctly, that by and large American philosophy since World War II has been relatively little concerned with cultural critique as such. Aesthetics with its many-faceted connection with literature, the arts, architecture, cuisine, what Americans call "life styles", and the like has been relatively neglected, though a number of philosophers are well-known and respected for their work in aesthetics. However much the arbiters of taste in America may have been influenced by philosophers (and I do not think the influence to have been very great), philosophers are not themselves the arbiters. And the general critique of culture in America has been carried on mainly by literary critics, historians, journalists, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, and occasional political figures. Rorty is quite right that, since John Dewey, very few philosophers have secured any serious public recognition as cultural critics.

Notes

1 I was a graduate student at the University of Minnesota in the late 1940's and in several seminars of Wilfrid Sellars during which it was obvious that the general lines of Sellars' philosophy were taking shape. Friends at Oxford sent me carbon copies of laboriously typed versions of the Blue Book, the Brown Book, and the Mathematical Notes. An astonishingly large number of such copies circulated in America in that period, given that there were then no copying machines.

2 Of the forty or fifty philosophy departments in America with reasonably productive Ph.D. programs I cannot think of one which does not have at least one publishing scholar in Greek philosophy. Recent issues of "Jobs in Philosophy", the standard advertising medium of positions in philosophy (published by the American Philosophical Association) contain notices of from three to ten positions available to specialists in Greek philosophy.

3 Publications in Medieval Science, easily the most extensive series of its kind (published by the University of Wisconsin Press), has had Clagett as its editor-in-chief. Clagett, who has been for many years a permanent member of the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, generously acknowledges in the early volumes of the series his debt to a number of older scholars, notably, Alexandre Koyre and his teacher, Lynn Thorndike.

Bibliography

Bubner, R. (1981), Modern German Philosophy, Cambridge

Clagett, M. (1961), The Science of Mechanics in the Middle Ages, Madison, Wisc.

Kuhn, T.S. (1962), The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago (enlarged second edition 1970)

Lindberg, D.C. (1970), John Pecham and the Science of Optics, Madison, Wisc.

Neugebauer, O. (1957), The Exact Sciences in Antiquity, sec. ed., Providence

Quine, W.V.O. (1958), Speaking of Objects. In: Proceedings and Addresses of the Am. Phil. Ass. 31, 5-22

- (1960), Word and Object, Cambridge, Mass.

Rorty, R. (1979), Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Princeton

- (1981), Die Lage der Gegenwartsphilosophie in den USA. In: Analyse & Kritik 3, 3-22

Russell, B. (1945), A History of Western Philosophy, New York

Ryle, G. (1949), The Concept of Mind, London

- (1954), Dilemmas, Cambridge

Sellars, W. (1947a), Pure Pragmatics and Epistemology. In: Philosophy of Science 14, 181-202

- (1947b), Epistemology and the New Way of Words. In: The Journal of Philosophy 44, 645-660

- (1948), Realism and the New Way of Words. In: Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 8, 601-34

- (1950a), The Identity of Linguistic Expressions and the Paradox of Analysis. In: Philosophical Studies 1, 24-31

- (1950b), Quotation Marks, Sentences, and Propositions. In: Philosophy an Phenomenological Research 10, 515-25

- (1956), Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind. In: Minnesota Studies in Philosophy of Science, Vol. 1 (ed. H.Feigl/M.Scriven), Minneapolis, 253-329

- (1962), Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man. In: W. Sellars, Science, Perception and Reality, London, ch. 1

Strawson, P. (1950), On Referring. In: Mind 59, 320-344