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978-1-107-03978-0 - Mind, Language, and Metaphilosophy: Early Philosophical Papers

Richard Rorty Edited by Stephen Leach and James Tartaglia

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MIND, LANGUAGE, AND METAPHILOSOPHY

This volume presents a selection of the philosophical essays which Richard Rorty wrote during the first decade of his career, and complements four previous volumes of his papers published by Cambridge University Press. In this long neglected body of work, which many leading philosophers still consider to be his best, Rorty develops his views on the nature and scope of philosophy in a manner which supplements and elucidates his definitive statement on these matters in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. He also develops his ground-breaking version of eliminative materialism and sets out original views on various central topics in the philosophy of language, concerning private language, indeterminacy, and verificationism. A substantial introduction examines Rorty's philosophical development from 1961 to 1972. The volume completes our understanding of Rorty's intellectual trajectory and offers lucid statements of positions which retain their relevance to current debates.

RICHARD RORTY (1931–2007) was Professor of Comparative Literature and Philosophy at Stanford University.

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JAMES TARTAGLIA is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Keele University. He is the author of *Rorty and the Mirror of Nature* (2007) and *Philosophy in a Meaningless Life* (forthcoming), and editor of *Richard Rorty: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers* (2009).

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

<i>Foreword by Daniel C. Dennett</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
Introduction	I
<i>Stephen Leach and James Tartaglia</i>	
1 Pragmatism, categories, and language	16
2 The limits of reductionism	39
3 Realism, categories, and the “linguistic turn”	55
4 The subjectivist principle and the linguistic turn	69
5 Empiricism, extensionalism, and reductionism	96
6 Mind-body identity, privacy, and categories	106
7 Do analysts and metaphysicians disagree?	132
8 Incorrigibility as the mark of the mental	147
9 Wittgenstein, privileged access, and incommunicability	172
10 In defense of eliminative materialism	199
11 Cartesian epistemology and changes in ontology	208
12 Strawson’s objectivity argument	227
13 Verificationism and transcendental arguments	260
14 Indeterminacy of translation and of truth	271

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
15	Dennett on awareness	290
16	Functionalism, machines, and incorrigibility	299
	<i>Index of names</i>	316

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Foreword

The acclaim and controversy that has surrounded Richard Rorty's later work, starting with *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* in 1979, has tended to eclipse the influence of his major contributions to analytic philosophy of mind in the 1960s and 1970s. Like Hilary Putnam, whose papers from that era remain classics in spite of their author's abandonment of them, Rorty shaped the field for subsequent decades with a series of insightful, constructive, imaginative papers harnessing the insights of Sellars and Quine, and developing his own distinctive varieties of pragmatism and naturalism. Rorty's version of eliminative materialism was both the first and the subtlest, and anybody interested in defending any variation today would be well advised to mine his work for insights. The same can be said for his delicate and undoctinaire treatment of functionalism.

I would venture to say that today's combatants in the skirmishes over property dualism, supervenience, mental causation, and their subsidiary issues would find that most of their moves and countermoves were anticipated and preempted by Rorty's discussions more than forty years ago. "Mind-Body Identity, Privacy, and Categories" (1965), "Incorrigibility as the Mark of the Mental" (1970), "In Defense of Eliminative Materialism" (1972), and "Functionalism, Machines, and Incorrigibility" (1972) ought to be required reading for all aspiring philosophers of mind today, as they were for us when they first appeared, and they are only the best known of his works from that period. Fortunately, Rorty wrote admirably clear and vivid philosophy which holds up well at this remove in time, so this volume will be a joy to read, both for those who remember the impact these essays had when they were published and for those who know Rorty only as the lightning rod of the later culture wars.

DANIEL C. DENNETT

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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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"Pragmatism, categories, and language" was published in *Philosophical Review*, 70: 197–223 (1961).

"The limits of reductionism" was published in *Experience, Existence, and the Good: Essays in honour of Paul Weiss*, 100–16, edited by Irwin C. Lieb (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press 1961).

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‘Wittgenstein, privileged access, and incommunicability’ was published by *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 7: 192–205 (1970).

‘In defence of eliminative materialism’ was published in *Review of Metaphysics*, 24: 112–21 (1970).

‘Cartesian epistemology and changes in ontology’ was published in *Contemporary American Philosophy*, 273–92, edited by John E. Smith (London: Allen and Unwin / New York: Humanities Press, 1970). While every effort has been made, it has not been possible to identify the current copyright holder for this chapter. If any omissions are brought to our notice, we will be happy to include the appropriate acknowledgements on reprinting.

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‘Indeterminacy of translation and of truth’ was published in *Synthese*, 23: 443–62 (1972).

‘Dennett on awareness’ was published in *Philosophical Studies*, 23, issue no. 3: 153–62 (1972).

‘Functionalism, machines, and incorrigibility’ was published in *Journal of Philosophy*, 69: 203–20 (1972).