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## Philosophy and its History\*

Abstract: Richard Rorty argues that the present state of analytic philosophy is the result of the collapse of the logical empiricist program. But most of the characteristics of analytic philosophy which Rorty ascribes to that collapse predated logical empiricism. The historical explanation of the present state of philosophy must begin not later than with the schism between philosophy and the other disciplines in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. To begin then leads to a different view of how philosophical problems are generated.

Many recent philosophers, especially perhaps those educated in some of the analytic traditions, have treated the history of philosophy either as only having marginal relevance to contemporary philosophical enquiries or as interesting only insofar as historical figures can be presented as contributors to contemporary discussions. On this latter view Descartes for example is still interesting because he provides a position for G.E.M. Anscombe to criticise, Hume because his views on causation are relevant to John Mackie's. It is therefore an occasion worthy of remark and even celebration when analytic philosophy itself is presented as drawing its significance from its place in the overall history of philosophy, as it is in Richard Rorty's Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Rorty 1979) and in a series of articles and papers which he has published before and since. The essay to which I shall be particularly addressing myself is 'Philosophy in America To-Day' (Rorty 1981), a central thesis of which is that the present state of analytical philosophy is to be explained by the disintegration of the neopositivist program of the Vienna Circle and its allies. The consequence of this disintegration, a result of the way in which "all the positivist doctrines ... were deconstructed by Wittgenstein, Quine, Sellars and Kuhn", (Rorty 1981, 4) has been that analytical philosophy has lost any serious intellectual unity. It no longer can identify itself by reference to "a finite number of distinct, specifiable philosophical problems to be resolved - problems which any serious analytic philosopher would agree to be the outstanding problems." (7)

Rorty's thesis about analytic philosophy extends and completes a central thesis of Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. For in

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that book he argued that philosophy as such had dissolved itself by attaining an understanding that the whole set of problems which concern the relationship of mind to realities external to mind had been generated by a false Cartesian conception of mind and the objects of knowledge. Philosophy has in so doing lost its traditional claim to provide a kind of understanding which was specific to its enquiries and which gave it a right to a certain hegemony among the disciplines. Rorty's paper spells out for analytic philosophy the implications of his general thesis about how philosophy as traditionally understood has ended its history by delegitimizing itself. Underlying both the book and the paper is an unargued thesis about the history of philosophy, namely that traditionally 'philosophy' was always the name of one and the same distinct and autonomous discipline which was believed to have a substantial rationale for its distinctiveness and its autonomy. Without that presupposition the kind of contrast that Rorty draws between philosophy and other disciplines would scarcely make sense. And yet it is just that presupposition which only needs to be examined in order to be rejected.

#### 1. Three Possible Worlds, One of Them Actual

Imagine a possible world in which there is no discipline named 'philosophy' within the academic curriculum. The history of this possible world is identical with that of the actual world up to the seventeenth century and therefore in its past as in our own 'philosophy' used to be the name for a very wide range of loosely unified intellectual enquiries and activities. But in that imaginary world when from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century a variety of disciplines seceded from philosophy, and declared their independence as autonomous fields of enquiry, each entitled to its own self-sufficient place in the curriculum, each of these disciplines carried away with it that part of philosophy relevant to its own concerns. In that imaginary world when in the transition from Adam Smith to Ricardo political economy detached itself from moral philosophy, it did not leave moral philosophy behind just as it was, but carried away with it a whole range of enquiries into the moral presuppositions and moral characteristics of economic activity. And when physics in the age after Newton detached itself from natural philosophy, it defined itself so that debate about the status of theoretical entities and the nature of laws was as much a part of physics as thermodynamics or the study of electricity and magnetism. Even those academic disciplines, such as history, which had not been part of philosophy in the older sense, annexed the relevant parts of the philosophy of action, explanation and narrative. And the outcome was that, apart from logic, which became an independent discipline, the whole of philosophy was absorbed into, was divided up between the other subjects, without any part being left over. Hence there were no professional philosophers, no departments of philosophy, no philosophical journals, no American Philosophical Association or Aristotelian Society, and those who pursued philosophical questions always did so in the context of some other academic discipline. Naturally

enough the point and purpose of conceptual enquiries was understood in terms of their place within each specific discipline.

Imagine now a second possible world the history of which once again is identical with that of the actual world up to the seventeenth century, but in which 'philosophy' remains the name of intellectual enquiry. Not only are there no acts of secession by such subjects as physics and political economy, but subjects such as history, which had not been part of philosophy, are absorbed into philosophy. In the first of the imaginary worlds nobody was a professional philosopher, in the second imaginary world everyone engaged in the academic intellectual and educational enterprise is by profession a philosopher. There are indeed many different lines of specialized enquiry in this second world, but these lines are as likely to cross what we in our world take to be disciplinary boundaries as to remain within them. What this second imaginary world shares with the first is that in it there is no separate discipline of philosophy.

What would be the advantage and disadvantages of each of these three modes of intellectual and academic organization, that provided by these two imaginary worlds and that provided by the actual world? The first would suffer from one large disadvantage, as compared both with the second and with the actual world. Not only would what are substantially the same philosophical questions be posed separately in a number of distinct and different disciplinary contexts, but no discipline would have any specific responsibility for those problems which arise precisely at the boundaries of the autonomous disciplines, which arise, for example, when the beliefs about human responsibility which inform the moral and legal practices studied in such disciplines as ethics and the sociology of law are confronted with the beliefs about the causal determination of human action which inform a good deal of psychology, biochemistry and neurophysiology. But both the first and more particularly the second imaginary world would enjoy one outstanding advantage over actuality: the conceptual, philosophical parts of complex intellectual enquiries would not be detached from their context in these enquiries and grouped together contextlessly as 'philosophy', a set of fragments lacking any fundamental unity. Any such characterisation of philosophy in the actual world is of course bound to encounter immediate and strong resistance. For one central preoccupation of philosophical enquiry ever since Kant in Germany and ever since Reid in Scotland has been to identify the unity of philosophical enquiry in some non-trivial way; and we are all of us to some large degree the heirs of both Kant and Reid. Nonetheless one underlying thesis of this paper is that all attempts to identify such a unity have in fact failed. Why I believe this will emerge in part at least later in the argument. For the moment I want to consider a second disadvantage of actuality. The professionalised separation of philosophy from the other disciplines has not only left philosophy without any real unity; it has also systematically concealed from the professional practioners of the other disciplines the extent to which their own enquiries necessarily involve philosophy. Nurtured in the belief that their disciplines long ago achieved independence from philosophy, their responses to the recurrent

discovery that their enquiries are still in part, but in key and essential part, philosophical tends to be of two different and opposed kinds. One type of response is to attempt to complete the expulsion of philosophy, to achieve now and finally what it was hoped and believed had been achieved by the founding fathers of the particular autonomous discipline, some state of empirical purity, free from all philosophical taint. Behaviorism in political science, the ideology of a certain kind of experimental psychology and the New Criticism are examples of this reaction.

A second type of reaction is to recognize the ineliminable character of the philosophical elements and concerns within a particular discipline, but to respond by claiming that part of philosophy for the particular discipline and then developing that particular discipline's own domestic brand of philosophy, one that is characteristically indulgent to the metaphysical foibles of the practitioners of the particular discipline and often largely lacking in respect for the standards of argumentation and relevance established within professional philosophy. Literary structuralism and ethnomethodology are examples of this type of response.

There are of course autonomous disciplines in which the identification of ineliminable philosophical issues has led instead to establishing a fruitful and argumentatively compelling relationship with academic philosophy. Physics and medicine both provide examples. But it is not going too far to suggest that by and large the end-product of the original separation of philosophy from the other disciplines has been not only the kind of professional crisis that now exists within philosophy, but also a series of parallel crises in other disciplines. The conflict between analysts and pluralists in the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association is matched, for example, by the recent equally distressing and mismanaged conflict within the English Faculty at Cambridge University as to the place of theory in the teaching of literature. And where such conflicts have not emerged, it is often because of the political weakness of one of the potentially contending parties: consider for example the tensions in many political science departments between the self-proclaimed empirical political scientists and the political theorists. These tensions are the symptoms of a largely unacknowledged crisis in the discipline. And if what I am arguing is correct, we can expect such crises and conflicts to multiply in academia.

Two preliminary conclusions now emerge. The first is that philosophy is necessarily to some degree deformed in two out of the three possible worlds that I have imagined; it is only in that possible world where 'philosophy' remained or became the name for the whole intellectual enterprise that it could escape such deformation. But that possible world of course is and was an impossible world and for a very obvious reason. The bureaucratic organisation of academic work which the modern university requires and the type of division of labor which it entails are quite incompatible with any state of affairs in which 'philosophy' is not treated as the name of

one discipline among others. Professionalisation with all its drawing of boundary lines and its invocation of sanctions against those who cross them, its conceptions of what is central to 'the' discipline and what is marginal, is the inevitable accompaniment of bureaucratisation. Hence there is at least a tension between the professionalisation of philosophy and its flourishing, except of course as technique and idiom. For professionalisation is always favorable to the flourishing of technique and to making narrowly technical proficiencies the badge of the fully licensed professional; and it is equally favorable to the development of idiosyncratic idiom, an idiom by which professionals recognize one another and for the lack of which they stigmatise outsiders. It is not difficult to find examples of these phenomena in recent and contemporary American philosophy.

A second preliminary conclusion is that the present condition of philosophy and the causes of that condition will be misunderstood if we look for those causes only or primarily in the internal history of philosophy conceived of as a separate and distinct discipline. It is instead from an examination of the nature and influence of the separation of philosophy from the other disciplines that we are likely to draw an understanding of contemporary philosophy. Philosophy today draws a great deal of its vitality from such books as Syntactic Structures, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions and Brainstorms. But what the relationship of philosophy is or ought to be to linguistics, the history of science and the study of artificial intelligence still remains far from clear. And perhaps this is because our conception of 'philosophy' as such, of philosophy as a separate discipline, is itself very unclear. What is clear however is that such unity as philosophy has not only derives from its history, but from that period in its history when the three possible worlds which I have described were indiscernible because they were identical. The identity of philosophy today, that is, is inexplicable, perhaps unintelligible, unless we recognize that we have not - happily have not - been able to avoid reliance on those continuities which derive from the reading and re-reading of Plato and Aristotle. And that is to say any historical account of philosophy's unity which begins, as Rorty effectively does in his book, with Descartes - let alone with Reichenbach, with whom his history of analytical philosophy begins - is likely to be misleading.

How then should we write the history of philosophy? If philosophy as practiced professionally today lacks any systematic unity - and on this at least Rorty and I do agree - this is itself now a central philosophical problem. The next section of my paper is therefore entitled

## 2. The History of What?

We all too often project back on to thinkers of the past modes of classification and distinction which are ours and not theirs. So we teach the history of something that we call 'philosophy', tearing from their contexts works that were never intended to be read in separation from other works that we now call 'science' or 'social science'. Adam Smith never

realized that by publishing both The Theory of Moral Sentiments and The Wealth of Nations he contributed to two different disciplines; Locke in his epistemology wrote only for those who would also be students of Newton; and Descartes who believed that "The whole of philosophy is like a tree, whose roots are metaphysics, whose trunk is physics and whose branches are all the other sciences ..." has been the victim of all those who believe that you can study roots without trunks or branches or vice versa, but to whom the notion that it is the tree that is the proper unity to study is largely unfamiliar. More particularly he has been the victim of those who forget that the Discourse was a preface to the Dioptric, Meteors and Geometry and who ignore the content of most of the Principles of Philosophy.

To forget and ignore in these ways is to be condemned to write a history of philosophy in which the past becomes a mere prolegomenon to the present. 'Philosophy' is what we take it to be now and only that in the past which points towards us here now genuinely belongs to the history of philosophy. To the history of philosophy thus defined it would be quite comprehensible if philosophers themselves were dismissive; why be interested in mere precursors instead of engaging in the contemporary enterprise? The history of philosophy could be safely handed over to a certain sort of intellectual historian without loss to philosophy itself. And this is clearly the attitude that many modern American philosophers have taken from the time of Ralph Barton Perry's insistence upon "the separation of philosophical research from the study of the history of philosophy". What has been lost by reason of this separation and of the tendencies which initially gave rise to it and still sustain it?

First we have lost, or rather we have never acquired, an adequate conception of philosophical theories as themselves historical entities comparable to that which we have at least begun to develop of theories in the natural sciences. The kinetic theory of gases, for example, or the theory of the evolution of species by natural selection have the form that they have now because of the way that they have emerged from a variety of challenges and encounters. The credentials of such theories derive from the degree of their success or failure in surviving such challenges and encounters. But so it is also with philosophical theories such as Kantianism or utilitarianism or logical empiricism. They too are historical entities which confront us in the present in a condition which is the outcome of the challenges and encounters that they have survived or failed to survive. To write the history of a theory is on this view one and the same task as to evaluate it. The gap between philosophy and the history of philosophy disappears. But it is therefore crucial on this view not only to write true history (rather than Lakatosian rational reconstructions), but history which does not begin too late.

For if we begin our history only after the decisive events and encounters which shaped some particular body of theory and determined its future success or failure have already occurred, we shall not know how to characterize, let alone to evaluate what is going on.

Secondly the loss of an adequate view of the relationship of philosophy to its history, and therefore of the consequences of the separation of philosophy from the other disciplines is bound to produce a false view of how philosophical problems are generated. On this false view it is within philosophy itself and by philosophers that the central problems of philosophy are generated. Descartes confronts the generalized challenge of philosophical scepticism and not the particular problems of someone with an Augustinian education who aspires to do optics and geometry. Locke denies the Cartesian epistemology and founds his own, the references to Boyle and Newton being treated as of marginal interest. This is the history of philosophy as founded by Reid, Stewart and their heir Victor Cousin on the one hand, and by Kant in the last four pages of the Critique of Pure Reason and his heir Gottlieb Tennemann on the other. What kind of consideration is it to which this version of the history of philosophy is apt to make us blind?

Consider how the problems that cluster round the issue of modern scientific realism were in fact generated. They have at least three different kinds of source. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the relationship of physics and astronomy to theology cannot be explored in any depth without raising the issue of realism versus instrumentalism, as both Osiander and Bellarmine clearly understood. Even before that the instrumentalism of some late medieval science had raised kindred issues. Secondly the emergence of the distinction between astronomy and astrology (and subsequent conflicts between bad sciences and good ones) posed questions which could not be answered without taking up a position on the issue of realism. And thirdly within various sciences the truth or falsity of particular bodies of theory has turned on whether or not a realistic interpretation was or was not warranted: consider the disputes between energeticists and atomists in late nineteenth century physics, for example. The questions of epistemology are thus not external philosophical questions raised only by those working outside the sciences in philosophy; they are questions which arise primarily and unavoidably within scientific activity itself. And it is just this which Richard Rorty systematically fails to recognize, both in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature and in his present paper.

In the book he does seem to approach some recognition of this at least in his discussion of Galileo and Bellarmine (Rorty 1979, 328-331). That discussion however not only is brief and cryptic, but culminates in what seems very like an emotivist theory of beliefs about science. ("We are the heirs of three hundred years of rhetoric about the importance of distinguishing sharply between science and religion ... But to proclaim our loyalty to these distinctions is not to say that there are 'objective' or 'rational' standards for adopting them." (330-331)). This emotivism is a natural enough sequel to a history of the rise and fall of epistemology recounted earlier in the book in which Descartes and Locke generate epistemology out of a series of philosophical errors and in which none of the three sources of the controversies on realism that I have identified plays any significant part at all.

At perhaps its most fundamental level I can state the disagreement between Rorty and myself in the following way. His dismissal of 'objective' or 'rational' standards emerges from the writing of genealogical history, as do all the most compelling of such dismissals - Nietzsche's for example. But at once the question arises of whether he has written a history that is in fact true; and to investigate that question, so I should want to argue, is to discover that the practice of writing true history requires implicit or explicit references to standards of objectivity and rationality of just the kind that the initial genealogical history was designed to discredit. Indeed when Rorty invites us to assent to the version of the history of philosophy which he has presented both in his book and in his paper he is surely not merely trying to elicit our agreement in the light of presently socially accepted standards of work, within philosophy and history. For he is - as philosophers characteristically are - himself engaged in advancing a philosophical theory about the nature of such standards. And this theory he presumably takes to be true, in the same sense as that in which realists understand that predicate. But fortunately I do not need to engage with this fundamental disagreement in order to criticise the particular theses of "Philosophy in America Today". For that immediate purpose the argument of the first two sections of this paper is sufficient to provide me with premises.

### 3. From Reichenbach to Rorty or When Prophecy Fails

My criticisms of 'Philosophy in America To-Day' fall under four heads. The first is that Rorty has failed to write true history and that this failure partly derives from the fact that his history begins too late. For Rorty seeks to explain the present condition of analytic philosophy as the outcome of the breakdown of the logical positivist or empiricist program. Analytic philosophers are all to be classified together, on his view, as ex-, neo-, or post-positivists. But of course analytic philosophy antedated logical empiricism by quite a number of years and from the outset it exhibited just that variety, heterogeneity and instability which Rorty sees as characteristic only of its present post-positivist state. Consider the range of views expressed at different times by G.E. Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein, F.P. Ramsey, Karl Popper, C.I. Lewis, Henry Sheffer, Ryle and J.L. Austin. Every one of them had a program for philosophy, some of them more than one and these programs were and are to a large degree mutually incompatible. Compared with this variety German neoKantianism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century seems almost intolerably monotone. Yet many of these analytic philosophers were only marginally influenced by logical empiricism or positivism and some of them not at all.

The disunity and heterogeneity of analytical philosophy cannot then be explained as the after-effect of the disintegration of the logical empiricist program. It is much more plausible to see the logical empiricist program as just one more in the by now rather long series of programs which have sprung up among analytic philosophers as an attempt to impose some



systematic unity on the heterogeneity and variety of activities and theories which claim the name 'analytic philosophy'. What Rorty takes to be a cause was in fact an effect.

If we look for what unity there is in analytic philosophy in spite of the heterogeneity and variety, it turns out to be of two different kinds. What makes all the different types of analytic philosophy analytic is their common preoccupation with meanings; what makes them all philosophy is the historical continuity of the way these preoccupations are embodied. Cause, personal identity, the nature of belief, and what goodness is are topics that continually recur in the context of discussions of speech-acts, logical form and extensionality. If we say that David Lewis is a remarkable philosopher - to use one of Rorty's examples - what makes him remarkable is his own, what makes him a philosopher is the relationship of his work to Leibniz's.

Secondly in all these respects what is striking are not the differences - which Rorty stresses - but the resemblances between modern Anglosaxon philosophy on the one hand and, say modern French philosophy on the other. Vincent Descombes's narrative account of that philosophy exhibits the same rapid succession of programmes and the same historical continuity of preoccupations. Cause, personal identity, the nature of belief, and what goodness is are topics that continually recur in the context of discussions of intentionality, structures and perspectives. If we say that Derrida is a remarkable philosopher, what makes him remarkable is his own, what makes him a philosopher is the relationship of his work to Husserl's and beyond that to Descartes's. Of course there are crucial differences in rhetorical mode, but even here the resemblances are perhaps as striking as the differences. Both tend to stress the value of intellectual subversion: "The able philosopher" says Rorty, praising the intellectual style of analytical philosophy, "should be able to spot flaws in any argument he hears". (Rorty 1981, 11) Neither perhaps puts enough emphasis on first being able to hear what argument precisely it is which is being proposed for evaluation. One of the things that makes conversation with some analytic philosophers so engaging is their ability to find the flaws in one's argument before one has actually managed to finish stating it. Hence the fashionable antithesis which Rorty describes - it is not entirely clear whether or not he endorses it - between what he calls "skill at argumentation" and what he calls a liking for reading Plato, Spinoza and Hegel. Yet without an ability to give a close reading of such texts our knowledge of the range of possible arguments and assertions whose inferential connections it is the philosopher's task to evaluate will be severely limited. Argumentative skill without an ability to read texts accurately, that is, historically is likely finally to be valued for much the same kinds of reason that speed-reading is.

It will by now be clear that I take it that the image of continental philosophy projected by many analytic philosophers and the image of analytic philosophy projected by many continental philosophers are part of a mythology even if a

very powerful one. Rorty not only seems to endorse, but even to reinforce this mythology, in 'Philosophy in America Today', although he himself quarrels with it in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Yet in the paper both Rorty's account of the present state of analytic philosophy and his view of the division between analytic philosophy and continental philosophy suffer from the same kind of distortion. He tries to locate the cause of the present state of analytic philosophy within its own internal history and consequently does not see it as what it is, a consequence of the existence of philosophy as a separate discipline. Hence he also does not see that the heterogeneity and variety of continental philosophy are of the same kind and have the same cause. Notice of course that even so good a historian of modern French philosophy as Vincent Descombes writes the history of that philosophy in a parallel way to that which Rorty writes the history of modern American philosophy. That is, he locates the causes of the present state of French philosophy within the internal history of that philosophy and in a parallel way ignores the effects of the initial segregation of philosophy as a separate discipline.

Thirdly it is not surprising therefore that Rorty pays no attention - even less than Descombes does - to the extent to which philosophy's flourishing depends on its active relationship to other disciplines. I mentioned earlier in this respect linguistics, the history of science and the study of artificial intelligence. A number of other items could easily be added to this list. What is crucial is to understand that such relationships are misdescribed if they are characterised as interdisciplinary, except at the level of academic organisation and professional training. A philosopher who works on the issues raised by linguistics or the history of science or artificial intelligence or sociobiology or whatever is not doing philosophy and something else. The destruction of any substantial version of the analytic-synthetic distinction also involves the destruction of the notion that there is some clear line of demarcation which such a philosopher has crossed or partly crossed. And as I noted earlier the history of philosophy too makes it clear that the existence of such a line of demarcation is implausible.

But, as I also noted earlier, such philosophers have to learn and relearn that the "other" disciplines to which they relate always in fact turn out to already have philosophical dimensions. It was this that logical empiricism centrally failed to understand, and Reichenbach, whose interpretation of the history of philosophy Rorty cites in order to praise, provides an excellent example of such a failure. For what is quite absent in Reichenbach's historical account of philosophy's rise to the condition of a discipline able to use "the tools provided by science" in a manner approximating to that of science itself is any sense that the science to which he refers was not science-as-it-is but science-interpreted-in-logical-empiricist-terms. It is scarcely surprising that logical-empiricism turns out to be the philosophy vindicated by science thus interpreted. The mistake underlying this narrow circularity was that of supposing that there is indeed such a thing as science innocent of philosophical preconcep-

tions, an illusion against which Reichenbach's own work on quantum mechanics could be cited. Reichenbach indeed was one of a long line of philosopher-physicists in a succession which includes both Boltzmann and Mach. The history of that line of succession could not be written within a framework imposed by The Rise of Scientific Philosophy, a book to which Rorty in his paper assigns a canonical status in defining the history of analytic philosophy. It is therefore in some sense a secondary and not very important point to remark of Reichenbach's history what bad history it is. The account of Hegel, for example, to which Rorty alludes specifically with apparent approval, has about the same degree of verisimilitude as the account of Trotsky in A Short History of the C.P.S.U. (B) by J.V. Stalin and others. And since Reichenbach, unlike Stalin, was an admirable person with an obvious love of truth, it is perhaps right and certainly charitable to treat the Rise of Scientific Philosophy not as history at all, but as a mythological fable. In so understanding it I reach my final point of disagreement with Rorty.

What The Rise of Scientific Philosophy in fact testifies to is not so much analytic philosophy's manifest relationship to natural science as its latent and unacknowledged relationship to religion. For Reichenbach in that book at least, as Rorty's account well brings out, was an authentic millenarian, announcing that the end was at hand, that the problems of philosophy were now finally soluble. This apocalyptic note was not unique to Reichenbach. It was there at the very beginning of analytic philosophy with G.E. Moore's proclamation in the preface to Principia Ethica, in Wittgenstein's quiet assertion in the preface to the Tractatus that "the truth of the thoughts communicated seems to me unassailable and definitive. I am, therefore, of the opinion that the problems have in essentials been finally solved" and in Schlick's announcement in the first number of Erkenntnis "that an end has come to the fruitless conflict of systems". That an imminent final solution to the problems of philosophy and therefore an imminent end to philosophy has been prophesied almost as often in this century as the imminent end of the world used to be only increases the suggestiveness of the parallel.

The millenarian predecessors of Reichenbach, Moore, Wittgenstein, Schlick, Ayer (in the chapter of Language, Truth and Logic entitled 'Solution of Outstanding Philosophical Disputes') and others are of course Comte and Condorcet. Analytic philosophers often enough are, not at all surprisingly, heirs of the ideology of the Enlightenment, that deeply religious substitute for religion. But this religious strain in their thought ought not to be taken too seriously. In so far of course as some analytic philosophers still take it seriously themselves they are apt by now to be disappointed disillusioned millenarians, anxious to explain what does not in fact need explanation, why the end of philosophy did not after all occur as prophesied. Sociologists and historians of religion have identified a number of strategies characteristic of such disappointed millenarians. One is to explain that the end did indeed occur, but in a way very different from that in which the original hearers of the prophecy had understood. And this

is perhaps the service that Rorty performs for Reichenbach. The end of systematic philosophy has indeed come about - the prophecy did come true - even if not in the way in which it was understood by Reichenbach's original audience. If I am right in interpreting the first section of Rorty's paper in this way, that is as a work of millenarian consolation, then we have one more piece of evidence for the view that the history of analytic philosophy will only be finally demythologised when it is placed in the context of the larger history of philosophy.

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