Richard Rorty (1931–2007) remains one of the contemporary world’s most influential thinkers. He has been a major figure in philosophy ever since the publication of his first important paper, ‘Mind-Body Identity, Privacy, and Categories’ in 1965, but it was the release of his seminal Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (1979) that caused the literature on his work to expand exponentially, a process which has accelerated since his death in 2007; scores of new articles and books about Rorty appear every year, and even his biography has proved to be an academic bestseller. Rorty’s enduring appeal has a number of sources. One is the scope and urgency of his views, for he was never shy about presenting his call for the abandonment of objective truth against the grand backdrop of the cultural progress of the West. Another is that his views were highly controversial, and yet could not be easily dismissed, since Rorty was able to claim with some plausibility that he was simply drawing out the consequences of positions developed by his more conventionally respectable peers. And another is that Rorty applied his views to a wide range of topical concerns outside of academic philosophy. For these and many other reasons, philosophers to this day line up to refute him, students read Rorty before the philosophers he discusses, and non-philosophy academics produce a continuous stream of articles applying his views to their own interests.

The daunting quantity (and variable quality) of literature available on Rorty makes it difficult to discriminate the useful from the tendentious, superficial, and otiose. That is why this new title in the highly regarded Routledge series, Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers, is so urgently needed. Edited by James Tartaglia, the author of Rorty and the Mirror of Nature (Routledge, 2007), one of the most popular and straightforward books available on Rorty, this new Routledge Major Work is a four-volume collection of the best scholarship from the 1960s to the present day; the collected materials have been carefully selected from a wide range of academic journals, edited collections, and research monographs, many of which are hard to obtain in their original source. The first of the four volumes (‘Mind, Language, and Truth’) covers Rorty’s eliminative materialism in the philosophy of mind, his Davidsonian rejection of conceptual schemes in the philosophy of language, and his rejection of objective truth. Volume II (‘Metaphilosophy and Pragmatism’), meanwhile, assembles the best assessments of his pessimistic metaphilosophy, and his distinctive conception of pragmatism. The third volume (‘Philosophers’) brings together the key scholarly work on Rorty’s highly original—but endlessly disputed—interpretations of other philosophers, while the final volume in the collection (Volume IV: ‘Themes’) explores Rorty’s views as applied to a diverse range of topics, from feminism to environmentalism and bioethics.

The tightly focused organization of this collection will allow scholars quickly and easily to access both established and up-to-date assessments of Rorty’s central positions, and will also make for irresistible browsing. With comprehensive introductions to each volume, providing essential background information and relating the various articles to each other, Richard Rorty is destined to be an indispensable resource for research and study.
Richard Rorty CRITICAL ASSESSMENTS OF LEADING PHILOSOPHERS

VOLUME I
Mind, Language, and Truth

Richard Rorty


VOLUME II
Metaphilosophy and Pragmatism

Richard Rorty


