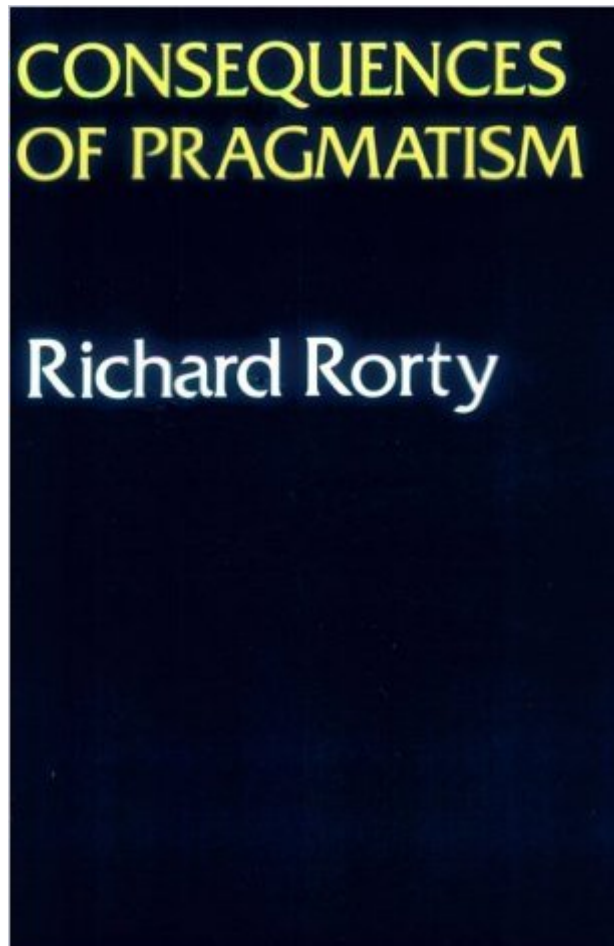


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Consequences Of Pragmatism: Essays 1972-1980



Synopsis

Book by Rorty, Richard

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Customer Reviews

Rorty has collected a selection from his vast number of essays under the title "Consequences of Pragmatism". Spanning the time range of his work from the early 1970s to the early 1980s, they represent Rorty's development and exposition of his views after he made the sudden turn from analytic philosophy to his anti-essentialist pragmatism. Many of the essays are meant to explain how his view contrasts with the tradition in philosophy he is arguing against, which he identifies as the Cartesian-Kantian one, as well as the analytic philosophical tradition he used to belong to. However, some of the later essays also serve to defend his views against some common criticisms. Also included are essays which compare his views with those of people working or having worked along similar 'counter-tradition' lines, such as of course his inspiration Dewey, but also Heidegger, Foucault, and Cavell. The essays are well-written and generally not too difficult, so they should be an accessible summary of his philosophical views for the intellectual reader. Despite the sometimes rather dry subject-matter, such as reviewing the developments in 20th Century philosophy of language, Rorty applies humor and optimism to skilfully polemicize against this tradition. This leads to witty phrases and interesting observations such as: "taking how and what one does in bed as definitive of one's being seems a specifically masculine trait", "granted that Derrida is the latest and largest flower on the dialectical kudzu vine of which the 'Phenomenology of Spirit' was the first

tendrils, does that not merely show the need to uproot this creeping menace? Can we not all see (...)

Richard McKay Rorty (1931-2007) was an American philosopher, who taught at Princeton, the University of Virginia, Stanford University, etc. He wrote many other books such as *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical Papers, Volume 1*, *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers, Volume 2*, etc. He wrote in the Preface to this 1982 collection, "This volume contains essays written during the period 1972-1980... I no longer agree with everything said in these essays... nor are they entirely consistent with each one another. I reprint them nevertheless because... the general drift of what they say still seems right." He states in the Introduction, "the ONLY debating point which the realist has is his conviction that the raising of the good old metaphysical problems (are there REALLY universals?...) served some good purpose... was important. What the pragmatist wants to debate is just this point. He ... [wants] to discuss ... WHETHER the practice which hopes to find a Philosophical way of isolating the essence of Truth has, in fact, paid off..."

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