it is."(71)

Buckley attempts an overview of Jefferson's "political theology." He presents Jefferson's view that conscience is the source of morality. Religion is not a matter of governmental concern, since it is not necessary for peace and society. Jefferson thus split obligation into two realms, that owed to the state and that owed to God.

Banning discusses Madison's important strategic role in defeating general establishment and gaining passage of the statute, Madison's desire to move beyond religious tolerance to recognition of a natural right of religious freedom, and his use of the history of Christianity as an argument against general establishment. And Banning suggests that Madison's experience with general establishment in Virginia helped generate his view in Federalist 10 that republican government needs to enlarge its sphere to prevent violations of private rights by government serving the interests of the majority of its constituents.

Rorty's contribution is an informative exposition of his own position on the relevance of metaphysics to politics. His Jefferson holds that when religious opinions entail actions which cannot be justified to the public at large, they must be abandoned or modified. Yet, Jefferson seems to have held that religious opinions will not conflict with civic duty if we recognize that conscience is the source of morality. So Rorty overlooks the problems the Jeffersonian approach to religion creates through the separation of central personal views from practice.

Despite their different metaphysics, Jefferson and Rorty both appeal to a moral consensus; one metaphysical, the other historical. And the political problems generated by personal opinion seeking meaningful expression in public practice do not go away if we stick to our own vocabulary, or label opponents mad.

The Jefferson who emerges from these essays believed in a personal God, a creator whose presence is evidenced in nature and history. Morality is founded upon a moral sense, so common religious opinion is not needed for public life. But religious practice which would interfere with freedom of belief cannot be tolerated, or at least must not be endorsed by the state. One thing that the contributors agree upon is that it does matter what religion inspired the statute and, through it, the first amendment.

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Most of us are familiar with Francis Fukuyama's use of Hegel
in his article "The End of History," (The National Interest, 16
1989). Fukuyama claims that we are witnessing the end of his­
tory, "... the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution and
the universalization of Western Liberal democracy as the final
form of human government" (4).

In the same issue, Allan Bloom suggests that any historicist
who is also a rationalist must believe in an end of history, "for
otherwise, every frame of reference would be impermanent and
changing, even historicism. The end of history is both a philo­
sophic necessity and a political fulfillment ... " (20). Rorty's book is an attempt to be rationalist and historicist
while rejecting both the end of history thesis and the need for a
historical justification of liberalism. Philosophy and politics
must be satisfied with "historical narratives about the rise of
liberal institutions and customs ... designed to diminish cru­
elty ... " (68).

Sidney Hook saw contingency as the source of the tragic
sense of life. Moral doubt is generated because choice must be
made between apparent goods, our self is altered by these choi­
ces, and alternative possible selves are lost in the process of
choice. Hook recommended pragmatism as "... the theory and
practice of enlarging human freedom in a precarious and tragic
world by the arts of intelligent social control."

Rorty places liberalism within the pragmatic framework pro­
vided by Dewey and Hook, but with a significant departure from
their emphasis on harmonizing interests. He believes that we
must avoid any attempt to harmonize autonomy and a sense of com­
munity. Autonomy is the luxury of the privileged few (68). The
just society lets individuals be "... as privatistic, 'irratio­
nal' and aestheticist as they please so long as they do it on
their own time" (xiv). Rorty is an end of ideology theorist:

My hunch is that Western social and political thought
may have the last conceptual revolution it needs. J.S.
Mill's suggestion that governments devote themselves to
optimizing the balance between leaving people's private
lives alone and preventing suffering seems to me pretty
much the last word. (63)

Rorty labels his historicist, post ideological position
liberal irony. Ironists realize the contingency of their own
central beliefs and no longer seek metaphysical justification for
their way of life. They claim "no noncircular theoretical backup
for the view that cruelty is horrible" (xvi). Solidarity is
extended as we begin to see beyond surface differences to the
ways in which others suffer pain and humiliation. Here is an
essential moral role for literature (69). And Rorty chapters on
Nobokov and Orwell illustrate how their study of cruelty provides
increased understanding and empathy with others. For Rorty,
imagination and felicitous expression are more important to so­
cial change than argument (7).
Rorty uses the abandonment of metaphysics as a means of disallowing difficult questions. Relativism is not a problem, because we do not seek objective moral grounding for liberalism. Rather, we begin where we are as members of western culture and develop methods of description which help answer moral questions, extend our sympathies, and foster "moral progress."

Yet, Rorty does offer arguments for his postideology. One is the feasibility of political allegiance without ideology through a common story, heritage. Another is the appeal to utilitarianism and empathy for others as criteria of an evolving society. His allegiance to Mill's concept of the proper role of government is perhaps the most traditional liberal element in his view (63).

We are left without an answer as to why, if the private and public spheres are equally important, the public gains priority. Perhaps this is a by-product of Rorty's belief in a general consensus about the nature of liberalism. It seems to me that answering this question requires that we decide whether we are primarily members of a community, or bearers of individual rights. While Rorty wants us to keep these two selves in a permanent tension, he seems to emphasize the communal. This, of course, is consistent with his view of the self as social "all the way down" (185). But it is not consistent with his view of a meaningful life as a search for autonomy through redescribing our lives in new vocabularies (42-43). I guess just asking these questions puts one outside the liberal tradition.

This is an interesting book in which Rorty works out his relationship to writers as diverse as Proust, Freud, Davidson, and Loyola. The discussion of Orwell is a particularly good illustration of fiction exhibiting the contingency of human history. And there is no excessive optimism about the future of liberalism.

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In Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Princeton: 1979), Richard Rorty advises us to avoid reading so-called "edifying philosophers" as though they are offering us views "about how things are." This he says would be "just poor taste," but worse yet would be to compliment such alleged views as true. This would further offend: "it shows a lack of tact" (372).

These curious lessons in meta-philosophical etiquette come to mind in trying to assess the present volume which offers us a highly readable and sympathetic account of Rorty's views. It is always regrettable when the effort to give support unintentionally