

Hilary Putnam on Richard Rorty*:

[I]n the same period [*sc.* the 1970s and 1980s] Richard Rorty broke with scientific realism and moved in a direction that he associated first with Derrida's 'deconstruction' and later with American pragmatism. Like Quine, Rorty rejects the idea that there is any determinate reference relation between words and things, but (unlike Quine) he holds that statements of science have no greater right to be called 'true' than statements that give us satisfaction in any one of a variety of other ways. 'True,' for Rorty is simply an adjective we use to 'commend' beliefs we like.

Although . . . Rorty seemed to me perilously close to giving up the idea that there is a world out there at all, I was pleased that [he] saw some of the same difficulties with what had become the standard realist metaphysics in analytic philosophy that I was seeing.

*"A Half Century of Philosophy, Viewed from Within," *Daedalus*, 126, 1 [Winter 1997]: 199.