

The First Rortians in Argentina: Eduardo Rabossi and Alicia Páez

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English Abstract

The history of the reception of Richard Rorty's work in Argentina can not be told without referring to Eduardo Rabossi and Alicia Páez, who must be considered as the first Argentine Rortians. Rabossi was one of the most important analytical philosophers in Latin America. Páez was a philosopher primarily educated in French thought who prematurely died at the beginning of the Nineties. I will show that the fact that it is possible to tell a story with two so different leading characters is part of what I will call "the Rortian Effect," which is the opening to the possibility for a critical dialogue between philosophical traditions.

Resumen en español

La historia de la recepción de la obra de Richard Rorty en la Argentina no puede contarse sin hacer referencia a Eduardo Rabossi y Alicia Páez, quienes deben ser considerados como los primeros Rortianos en dicho país. Rabossi fue uno de los más importantes filósofos analíticos de Latinoamérica. Páez fue una filósofa principalmente formada en el pensamiento francés que falleció prematuramente a principios de los '90. Argumentaré que el que sea posible contar una historia que tenga a estas figuras tan dispares como protagonistas es parte de lo que llamaré "Efecto Rorty," esto es, la apertura de la posibilidad de un diálogo crítico entre tradiciones filosóficas.

Resumo em português

Não se pode contar a história da recepção da obra de Richard Rorty na Argentina sem fazer referência a Eduardo Rabossi e Alicia Páez, que devem ser considerados como os primeiros rortyanos desse país. Rabossi foi um dos mais importantes filósofos analíticos da América Latina. Páez foi uma filósofa que se formou principalmente no pensamento francês, tendo falecido prematuramente no começo dos anos 90. Argumentarei que o fato de que se pode contar uma história que tem essas figuras tão díspares como protagonistas é parte do que chamarei "Efeito Rorty," isto é, a abertura da possibilidade de um diálogo crítico entre tradições filosóficas.

When I took the decision of writing about the reception of Rorty's work in Argentina, I feared that my paper might simply develop into an exercise of unchained narcissism. My first reaction was to think that I had to expose some considerations about my own philosophical development, and about the texts of two friends of mine,

Daniel Kalpokas and Eduardo Mattio. The reasons for that reaction were that I wrote the first Argentine Bachelor's Thesis on Rorty[1] and that Kalpokas, Mattio, and I were the authors of three of the four doctoral dissertations that have been written in our country about the neopragmatist philosopher.[2]

However, an effort of historical memory made me realize that another and prior story must be told, a story beyond my friends and myself, a story about the truly first Argentine Rortians. Besides that, I realized that story would make me able to dramatically illustrate what I will call "the Rortian Effect" within the field of the academic philosophy in Argentina.

That tale, the tale about the first signs of the reception of Rorty in Argentina, has two very different leading characters. One of them is Eduardo Rabossi. He was one of the most well-known Argentine philosophers, not only because of his theoretical production, which belongs to the analytical tradition, but also because of his political influence. Rabossi was Undersecretary for Human Rights during the first democratic government after the end of the 1976-1983 military dictatorship, and he was co-author of the *Nunca Más*, the famous official report on the atrocities of the military terrorist Estate. But his influence was also decisive in the post-dictatorship conformation of the academic philosophical field in our country. The other leading character of our story is Alicia Páez, a philosopher primarily educated in French thought, politically close to a moderate leftist peronism, who prematurely died at the beginning of the Nineties just when she was developing a deep research on Rortian neopragmatism. Unfortunately, she left unpublished some remarkable texts on Rorty. The possibility of putting together these two philosophically diverse figures is one of the most notable signs of the "Rortian Effect."

The first thing I would like to say about the origin of Argentine study of Rorty's thought, with Rabossi and Páez as pioneers of the movement, is that it began without the benefit of any academic tradition of Classical American Pragmatism. It is true that it is possible to find a set of papers on James and Dewey, most of them hypercritical, which were written by philosophers, educators, and psychologists during the first third of the 20th century.[3] It is also possible to remember the enthusiastic Macedonian-Borgesian readings of James, and the impact of Dewey's works on the Argentine pedagogical field thanks to the promotional work done by Lorenzo Luzuriaga, the Spanish and Republican pedagogue that adopted residency at Buenos Aires after the Civil War. However, none of those Pragmatist readings had any consequence for the development of Argentine philosophy, especially on its academic side, with the exception, as Gregg Pappas taught us, of the Argentine thinker Risieri Frondizi, who was, between 1957 and 1962, President of the University of Buenos Aires, and whose writings show the presence of a Pragmatist spirit. However, Frondizi generated neither a tradition nor a research program; the proof of this is that the rescue that Pappas made of his figure as a Pragmatist was entirely unexpected in Argentina. It is easy to verify

that, at least between 1940 and 1990; there were no papers on Pragmatist philosophy published in any of the most important Argentine philosophical journals.[4]

So, the first Argentine readings of Rorty's work were possible not because of any previous familiarity of our philosophers with Classical Pragmatist texts but thanks to the presence of an important tradition of analytical philosophy in our country. That tradition had begun in the Fifties, thanks to Mario Bunge and Gregorio Klimovsky. During the Eighties, it consolidated its position by virtue of conquering an important place in Argentine philosophy departments, especially within the universities of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and La Plata.

At this moment we can point out an important difference between Rabossi and Páez. On the one hand, Rabossi, who had a typical Oxonian education (with Wittgenstein, Austin, and Strawson as intellectual heroes), was from the Sixties one of the most important promoters of analytical philosophy in our country. He was one of the founders in 1972, and long time president of Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Filosófico (SADAF), an institution that was the only place where Argentine analytical philosophers could meet each other during the dictatorship days, because during those years they could not work at the public universities. When democracy arrived in 1983, Rabossi became the leader of the renewal of the Philosophy Department at the University of Buenos Aires. That renewal implied, among other things, the landing and definitive establishment of the analytical philosophers in Argentina.

On the other hand, Páez had developed her philosophical career as a scholar of French structuralism, close to the Lacanian intellectual Oscar Masotta. Beginning in the Eighties she was a member of Colegio Argentino de Filosofía, a philosophical group that was coordinated by Tomás Abraham and played a crucial role in spreading post-structuralism, especially the thought of Foucault, with whom Abraham had studied in Paris. During the first years of the Eighties, she worked as Assistant Professor in "Philosophy of Language" at UBA. When Rabossi became Head of Philosophy Department in 1983, Páez and Alberto Moretti were promoted to Associate Professor. So, during the next three years (in 1986 Moretti got a permanent position for assuming alone the course) Moretti and Páez were in charge of that course, adopting a division of labor: Moretti taught Anglo-Saxon philosophy of language and Páez taught Husserl, structuralism, and post-structuralism. However, the arrival of Páez to Rorty's texts could only occur through her prior analytical readings. Those readings must have been possible, on the one hand, because of Páez's intellectual curiosity, and, on the other hand, because during the pre-Rabossian times, in the Philosophy of Language course, she, in spite of her non-analytical background, had to teach Frege, Russell, Strawson, Wittgenstein, Quine, etc. She taught these figures because of the influence (present still for any introductory course on the subject at Argentina) of Thomas Moro Simpson's *Formas lógicas, realidad y significado*, which is the first book on philosophical semantics written in Spanish (its first edition was published at Buenos Aires in 1964).

So, in spite of the fact that there were important differences between Rabossi and Páez, regarding not only their philosophical backgrounds but also, perhaps, their opinions about the hegemonic will that the analytics showed at the philosophical departments in Argentina, it is notable how both became Rortian readers thanks to their familiarity to the analytical tradition.

The second thing I would like to say in order to make the story I am telling understandable to those unfamiliar with the history of academic philosophy in Argentina, is that reading Rorty empathically in Argentina at this time necessarily put one in a risky position. It must have been especially risky for Rabossi and Páez to introduce Rorty to our Manichaeism philosophical audience. This Manichaeism increased in Argentina during the Seventies, and involved the fight between “analytics” and “continentals” to conquer symbolic and material capital. The analytics-continentals mutual suspicion is still in force till now, but was stronger at the end of the Eighties, when Rabossi and Páez began to read Rorty. For the analytics, Rorty exemplified the figure of Judas who betrays his fellows to embrace the nonsense of Heidegger, Foucault, and Derrida. Furthermore, during those years, most Argentine analytical philosophers adopted a realistic thesis in semantics, metaphysics, and epistemology, so the anti-representationalist overcoming of the realist/antirealist dichotomy was seen as no more than a vulgarized version of Kuhn’s mistakes. For continental philosophers, Rorty was an unknown writer who did not deserve to be read, as no analytical philosopher (with Wittgenstein as perhaps the exception) deserves to be read because they represent a notably superficial way of doing philosophy. That diagnosed superficiality was also seen as another symptom of the American Way of Life and, in virtue of that, a disposition to reject all American philosophical developments was encouraged, especially within the ranks of Argentine structuralists and poststructuralists who usually adopt leftist and anti-imperialist political commitments. What is more, if the seductive Yankee introduced himself dressed with a Nietzschean-Heideggerian-Foucauldian-Derridean discourse, that dress was seen as a sign of another banal tergiversation that must be ignored.

Nevertheless, despite this hostile context, Rabossi and Páez began to disclose Rorty’s thought to the Argentine philosophical community. Let’s see how each of them did it.

The first thing to emphasize regarding Rabossi’s link with Rorty is that it wouldn’t be fair to introduce Rabossi as a scholar on Rortian themes. His relationship with the American philosopher was one of two colleagues who shared some philosophical and meta-philosophical ideas. I do not know the details of how the first contact between them occurred, but it was Rabossi who made possible Rorty’s first visit to Argentina on the occasion of the Inter-American Philosophical Congress that was organized in Buenos Aires in 1989.[5] That was Rabossi’s first movement to introduce Rorty to Argentine philosophical audience. His other important movement was the translation of three Rortian papers (“Truth without Correspondence to Reality,” “A World without Substances or Essences” and “Ethics without Principles”) that were published in 1997

as a book with the title *¿Esperanza o conocimiento? Una introducción al pragmatismo*. [6] Also during 1997, Rabossi gave a lecture called “Repulsion or Establishment? A Reading of the Rorty Case” at the classical *Jornadas de Espistemología e Historia de la Ciencia* that are organized each year by the University of Córdoba. That text is very important because there Rabossi is principally interested in using Rorty to produce in Argentine Academy what I called above, but have not yet defined, to be the Rortian Effect. At the end of this paper I will return to that paper written by Rabossi.

It is not a circumstantial fact that, among the Argentine analytical philosophers, Rabossi, the one that was theoretically closer to Rorty, the one who was occupied in the spreading of Rorty’s texts, the one who used to defend Rorty against the virulent critics of his fellows of SADF, was the one who could be seen as sustaining in our country the legacy of Wittgenstein’s ideas from *Philosophical Investigations*. Despite the fact that there is an important Quinean tradition in Argentina that resulted in Davidson’s work being profoundly studied, I think that it was the inheritance of the second Wittgenstein that generated the elective affinities that made possible the appropriation of Rorty in the Argentine analytical field. Rabossi was the paradigm of that intellectual development, but at this point we can also mention Páez, who early in the Seventies got closer to Oxonian philosophy with her “El lugar de la verdad: un comentario sobre Austin” (“The Place of Truth: a Commentary on Austin”).[7]

But the most important thing about the relation between Rabossi and Rorty was not that the Argentine paid attention to the American, but, on the contrary, that Rorty paid attention to some of Rabossi’s theses on practical philosophy. At “Human Rights, Rationality and Sentimentality,” a lecture given by Rorty at the 1993 *Oxford Amnesty Lectures*, he referred to “La teoría de los derechos humanos naturalizada” (“Human Rights Theory Naturalized”), a paper published by Rabossi in 1990.[8] Besides George Santayana and a couple mentions of José Ortega y Gasset, the few Hispano-American philosophers who were quoted by Rorty are three Argentines and two Brazilians: Rabossi, Ernesto Laclau, María Lugones, Roberto Mangabeira Unger and Luis Eduardo Soares. However, Rabossi’s text that was cited by Rorty is especially important. Laclau, Lugones and Unger developed their main work originally in English, and those were the texts that were quoted by Rorty in the debates with those Hispano-American philosophers. The paper where Rorty quotes Soares was published in a book that was edited by Soares and published in English in Brasil.[9] In his paper, Rorty did not quote any text of Soares that had been written in Portuguese by the Brazilian philosopher. In fact, Rabossi’s text is the only one that Rorty quotes that was originally published in Spanish. Within this context, this linguistic asymmetry produces deep difficulties for Hispano-Americans to impose an intellectual agenda as part of Inter-American relationship. The presence of this Spanish quote in Rorty’s paper is, besides a gesture of Rorty’s openness, a triumph of Rabossi’s decision to not abandon the Spanish language in order to publish his better texts.

In that paper, the Argentine philosopher defends a historicist “foundation” of Human Rights, pointing out that the politico-juridical effects of World War II and the Holocaust (especially the birth of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) constitute the factum of the culture of Human Rights, which does not require any moral foundation. So, Rorty quotes and celebrates the following words of Rabossi: “the human rights phenomenon renders human rights foundationalism outmoded and irrelevant.” An important fact to mention is that in 2000 Marcelo Sabatés and Linda Alcoff organized an APA session in honor of Rabossi for the Pacific Division, with the participation of Diana Perez and Eduardo Rivera López from Argentina, Fernando Broncano from Spain, and Donald Davidson and Richard Rorty from the US. At that event Rorty elaborated on Rabossi’s historicist position as the best way of validation of Human Rights in the contemporary world, qualifying Rabossi’s thesis as belonging to the radical Pragmatist stream in philosophy. Rabossi admitted the qualification and also recognized that his position had been conceived under the influence of Rorty’s thought. Thus the link between Rorty and Rabossi was publicly proclaimed by them as a case of reciprocal influence.

During his final years, Rabossi worked strongly on a book of metaphilosophy, which was posthumously published in 2008, three years after his death, with the title *En el comienzo Dios creó el canon. Biblia berolinensis (At the Beginning God created the Canon. Biblia Berolinensis)*. In this book, Rabossi devotes an entire section to presenting his intellectual empathy with the Rortian metaphilosophical conception. Diana Pérez, one of Rabossi’s disciples, told me that Rorty sent her a letter showing his interest in encouraging an English publication of his Argentine friend’s book. His own illness frustrated that purpose.[10]

In contrast with the history of Rorty’s reception by Rabossi, the link between Páez and the thought of the neopragmatist philosopher was, unfortunately, very much shorter in time. Besides that, it is very difficult to reconstruct this history, because her work with Rorty’s texts was restricted to her undergraduate classes and the writing of some papers that remain unpublished. However, there are two facts that make her a leading character of this story: first, she gave the first college classes on Rorty in Argentina; second, she wrote and publicly presented the first Argentine papers on the work of the American philosopher.

I can testify about the first of these facts. I attended her classes on Pragmatism during 1991 while completing the course of Contemporary Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy at UBA. In this course, she paid attention to Peirce, James, Dewey, and Rorty. Two years later, Professor Marta López Gil gave a seminar on *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, but we students of UBA had the first news about Rorty thanks to Páez’s course.

However, it is the second of these facts that is most important for this story. Páez was not only the first writer on Rorty, but also the first one to publicly present the results

of research about that author.[11] As a brand-new philosophy student at UBA, I witnessed Páez's first lecture on Rorty, at the 2nd Conference of the Asociación Filosófica de la República Argentina (AFRA), the most important philosophy conference in our country. The paper by Páez was called "Horizonte posfilosófico, pragmatismo y conversación" ("Post-philosophical Horizon, Pragmatism and Conversation"); it is still unpublished. It is notable that this paper demonstrates the broad research that Páez had achieved, including an integral analysis of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, and *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*. Páez's main point in that paper is to show a possible tension in Rorty's thought. Specifically that the proposal, in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, of the maxim of dissociation between private and public fields could imply a dangerous moderation of the characterization of the concept of "conversation" presented in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. It is interesting to point out that Páez's diagnosis was parallel to some ideas being developed at the same time by Nancy Fraser.[12]

It must have been especially risky for Páez to present a text on Rorty at the AFRA Conference because of the fact that she, a non-analytical philosopher, was exhibiting her ideas on an author coming from that field for an audience that would be composed by a majority of pro-Anglo-Saxon-philosophy philosophers. The climax for this story is that Rabossi, who was among the audience, expressed support for the paper. He asked Páez some questions, but his principal speech act was to praise his colleague's paper. That night, at dinner, I could hear Páez saying that she had enjoyed being philosophically and metaphilosophically in tune with Rabossi.

In that same year, 1991, Páez gave another lecture on Rorty, but this time at a conference organized by the above mentioned CAF, the pro-French philosophical group coordinated by the Foucauldian Tomás Abraham. If at the AFRA Conference, Páez had assumed the risk of being an outsider, now, at CAF, she was assuming the risk of becoming a traitor.

The lecture is called "¿Quién es Richard Rorty?" ("Who is Richard Rorty?") and there Páez makes a notable rhetorical effort to make Rorty at least legible for her friends. Páez shows in this paper the links between Rorty and several continental philosophers, without hiding his analytical origin and the fact that he belonged to the Classical American Pragmatist tradition and to the Sellars-Quine-Davidson line. She also presents her objections to the Rortian defense of a Post-Modern Bourgeois Liberalism, objections that could be approved by pro-French philosophers who were usually anti-American. But Páez does not present those objections to imply an immediate rejection of the kind of defense of liberalism offered by Rorty. Páez presents Rorty's position clearly and develops her criticisms of it not as refutations but as a way of pointing out the actual difficulties for defending democratic institutions in a post-Philosophical culture.

As part of her rhetorical effort, Páez carries out a lovely discursive operation in order to undermine her leftist colleagues' anti-Americanism, an undermining that was a necessary condition for making Rorty acceptable. She says :

Rorty produces in me a global impression, a background effect, which is pronounced at some of his texts: the effect of remembering that there is an American culture, not only the one that we have learned to receive as caused by imperialism and cultural industry, but also the one that we love. I am referring to cinema (which for some of us is obviously American), jazz [...], and some peculiar fiction literature that at many times I prefer. Although it can seem excessive, Rorty evokes to me the presence of that culture.[13]

The presentation of Rorty as the occasion for recognizing that love was the perfect spell used by Páez to make it possible for her fellow Argentine post-structuralists to listen to the analytical Yankee. As if that were not enough, Páez relates this acknowledgment to the need to recover an unfairly forgotten part of the American culture: Pragmatist philosophy. Thus, discovering Rorty is also recognizing a love and remembering something ignored.

Among Páez's unpublished papers on Rorty, there is a text called "Filosofía profesionalizada y devaluación de la teoría social: el caso Rorty" ("Professional Philosophy and Devaluation of Social Theory: Rorty's case").[14] The main subject of this text is to study Rorty's refusal of theory in order to think about political and social change. Contrary to Rorty's own interpretation, which thinks of the separation of public and private spheres as motivated by the liberal need to avoid humiliation and cruelty, Páez notices that the authentic motivation is the protection of the ironist impulse. In her words, "the defense of the public field [...] would be conceived for encouraging the possibility of free self-creation." The diagnosis is very attractive and presents Rorty as a much more romantic philosopher than the one usually presented by his most smart readers and by Rorty himself. This line of argument would be developed by Páez in her text, "Justicia y autoinvención" ("Justice and Self-creation"), that was published in her posthumous book.[15]

Unfortunately, Páez's early death in 1993 prevented her from disclosing all her intuitions and completing the original and rigorous research on Rortian philosophy that she was developing during the last years of her life. However, her work had an immediate effect that can be taken as evidence of her success in persuading post-structuralists to read Rorty. Two years after Páez's death, Tomás Abraham published *Batallas éticas* (Ethical Battles)[16] that included translations of an essay by Alain Badiou and two essays of Rorty. This volume presents three important elements for this story. First, the book includes a text written by Abraham in which he presents a very interesting analysis of Rorty's work, putting it together with Badiou's ideas. Second, Abraham dedicated that text to Páez, as a signal of the fact that the reading of Rorty was something his friend had passed on to him. Third, one of Rorty's papers that was translated and published in that book is "Human Rights, Rationality and Sentimentality,"

precisely the one in which Rorty said that Rabossi was one of his intellectual fellows. So, we can say that that book is the first testimony we have of “the Rortian Effect” in Argentina. By “Rortian Effect” I mean the opening of the possibility for a genuine dialogue between philosophical traditions. It is this dialogue that the prevailing Manichaeism in Argentine philosophy always wants to prevent. So, the Rortian Effect is essentially a shock of critical pluralism, which could be the occasion for the development of an Anti-Manichaeism movement.

I think that no philosopher other than Rorty could produce that shock. Only Rorty has enough seductive power and rigor for doing that. This was precisely the idea defended by Rabossi in his first text on Rorty that I mentioned above. In that paper he says:

... that a sufficiently reshaped and elaborated neopragmatism (Rortian or not) can serve to our way of doing philosophy; that, besides how healthy is the practice of philosophical analysis, it is important to avoid the inclination that analytical philosophy has to scholasticism; that we shouldn't stop considering the goal of associating philosophy to actual community problems. But there is something more. Philosophical world is broad and diverse, and perhaps we are in a privileged situation to compose positions which the unavoidable ethnocentrism that characterizes the philosophical practice (North countries are not the exception in that respect) makes appear as conceptual and ideological incommensurable.[17]

After these words, Rabossi emphasizes that Rorty himself “give us a clue” about how to march in that direction.

It is notable that both Rabossi's and Páez's posthumous books can be read as clear testimonies of the “Rortian Effect.” Páez's book was concerned not only with Rorty, but also with Frege, Austin, Grice, Davidson, Derrida, and Habermas. Rabossi's text included reflections on Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Quine, Derrida, Nozick, Wittgenstein, etc. It is not surprising that the four Argentine philosophers who elaborated their doctoral dissertations on Rorty can be seen as new cases of the Rortian Effect: Rorty has been the occasion for the appearance of intellectual bridges in the philosophical development of them: for Daniel Kalpokas from Nietzsche to McDowell; for Jugo Beltran from Husserl to Davidson; for Eduardo Mattio from Augustine to Judith Butler; for myself from Carnap to Heidegger.[18]

Our memory then of Páez and Rabossi, first Argentine promoters of the Rortian Effect, is perhaps no more than the last stage in the road to the freedom of thought because it involves the overcoming of the two hardest chains that remain in contemporary academic institutions around the world: the fear for leaving that secure place called “specialization” and the shame of being seen as a dilettante.[19]

Notes

[1] The first two Argentine Bachelor Theses on Rorty were written by Federico Pailos (University of Buenos Aires) and Jazmín Acosta (University of Córdoba).

[2] See D. Kalpokas, *Richard Rorty y la superación pragmatista de la epistemología*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones del Signo, 2005; E. Mattio, *Richard Rorty: la construcción pragmatista del sujeto y de la comunidad moral*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones del Signo, 2009; F. Penelas, *Una defensa del conversacionalismo epistémico*, Buenos Aires, 2008, unpublished. María Clemencia Jugo Beltrán is the other author on a Rortian Doctoral Thesis (See M. C. Jugo Beltrán, *La contingencia de la racionalidad en Richard Rorty. Crítica a la fundamentación racional de la solidaridad y la justicia social*, Río Cuarto, Ediciones del ICALA, 2007).

[3] See H. Biagini, *Filosofía americana e identidad. El conflictivo caso argentino*, Buenos Aires, EUDEBA, 1989, pp. 230-239.

[4] Surprisingly, this absence happened in a country that translated and published lots of Classical Pragmatist texts, especially by James and Dewey.

[5] Rorty's second visit to Argentina was in 1997. At this time he gave a lecture for a considerable audience at Faculty of Philosophy and Literature of UBA.

[6] See R. Rorty, *¿Esperanza o conocimiento? Una introducción al pragmatismo*, Buenos Aires, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997.

[7] See A. Páez, "El lugar de la verdad: un comentario sobre Austin", *LENGUAjes*, N° 4, Buenos Aires, 1980.

[8] See E. Rabossi, "La teoría de los derechos humanos naturalizada", *Revista del Centro de Estudios Constitucionales (Madrid)*, N° 5, 1990, pp. 159-179.

[9] See L. E. Soares (ed.), *Cultural Pluralism, Identity and Globalization*, Río de Janeiro, UNESCO/ISSC/EDUCAM, 1996.

[10] Eduardo Mendieta confirmed that Rorty wanted to publish an English translation of Rabossi's book. He also told me how sad Rorty was upon hearing the news of Rabossi's unexpected death.

[11] This does not imply that she was the first to publish texts about Rorty in Argentina, because she did not publish her *Políticas del lenguaje (Politics of Language)* until 1995 (Buenos Aires, Atuel, 1995) that was edited posthumously by Oscar Steinberg and Oscar Traversa. This book includes several pages on Rorty. The first Argentine publications on Rorty were, in chronological order: M. P. Brito, "Review on R. Rorty, *Contingencia, ironía y solidaridad*", *Cuadernos de Etica*, 1992; F. Penelas, "Review de R. Rorty, *Philosophical Papers Vols. 1 & II*", *Adef. Revista de Filosofía*, Vol. VIII, 1993; H. Banega, "Review de R. Rorty, *Ensayos sobre Heidegger y otros*", *Análisis Filosófico*, Vol. XIV, 1994.

[12] The argument for this conclusion is that the conversational-social level would stay, after the dissociation, linked to the public-argumentative level. This movement has two consequences: the first one is that conversation loses the original meaning of a

space where poiesis develops its potentiality; the second consequence is that poiesis comes down to the exclusive, elitist, and individualistic space of the genius.

[13] A. Páez, “¿Quién es Richard Rorty?”, unpublished.

[14] It is interesting that both Rabossi and Páez have used the expression “Rorty’s case” for titling papers. Even I, not consciously thinking of these papers, have used the same expression in another title (see F. Penelas, “El caso Rorty. Relativismo, etnocentrismo e cambio socio-político”, *Ragion Pratica*, N° 26, 2006, pp. 209-225). The repetition of these Sherlock Holmesian titles is noteworthy. It seems that Rorty was, is, and will be an extravagance, an enigma.

[15] A. Páez, “Justicia y autoinvención”, en A. Páez, *Políticas del lenguaje*, pp. 109-120.

[16] T. Abraham, A. Badiou, R. Rorty, *Batallas éticas*, Buenos Aires, Nueva Visión, 1995.

[17] Rabossi, E. (2003), p. 102.

[18] It is not a surprise that one of the first publications of Horacio Banega (another Argentine philosopher who moves alongside all the philosophical space, from Achille Varzi’s mereology to a philosophical reading of Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology) was a review of the Spanish translation of *Essays on Heidegger and Others*. See, H. Banega, “Review on R. Rorty, *Ensayos sobre Heidegger y otros pensadores contemporáneos*”, *Análisis Filosófico*, Vol. XIV, 1994.

[19] I am in debt to Gregory Pappas and Greg Gilson. Pappas challenged me to write about the reception of Rorty’s work in Argentina and Gilson’s reading of the first version of this paper helped me to make it better. Also, I could not have written this paper without the help from the following people: Tomás Abraham, Mónica Cabrera, Cecilia Köpfl, Alberto Moretti, Diana Pérez, Marcelo Sabatés y Verónica Tozzi. A special acknowledgment to Mónica and Marcelo who answered my challenge to make an effort of memory. All my gratitude to Cecilia for allowing me to know the unpublished texts of her mother Alicia Páez.

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