Andrés Bello as a Prefiguration of Richard Rorty

(Working paper)

1. Introduction

The Venezuelan-Chilean humanist Andrés Bello (1781-1865) has been recognized as one of the most distinguished intellectuals of the 19th century—one of the last polymaths of the stature of figures such as Athanasius Kircher, Gottfried Leibniz or Benjamin Franklin. Indeed, his numerous contributions span fields such as grammar, poetry, civil law, diplomacy, education, political theory, philology and philosophy. However, despite having composed one of the most important philosophical treatises ever written in Spanish (*Filosofia del Entendimiento*, posthumously published in 1881), his philosophical proposals have not been engaged with a substantial way by scholars of the Anglophone world. Only a few scholars such as William Kilgore (1961), Otto Carlos Stoetzer (1983) and Iván Jakšić (2006) have engaged the philosophical ideas articulated by Bello.

However, there is a gap in the scholarship produced about Bello’s philosophical thought. It generally has focused on uncovering the prior influences that shaped his views, exploring how he integrated these various influences into a coherent whole and assessing the impact that his thought had in subsequent developments *within Latin American philosophy*. There has been no work so far that aims to offer a study of Bello’s philosophical thought by situating it within the framework of a broader *Inter-American hemispherical narrative*. Building on the efforts of scholars who have developed Inter-American narrative frameworks,[[1]](#endnote-1) one of the goals of this paper is to articulate an Inter-American hemispherical narrative that will show that Bello’s thought should be included as part of a comprehensive story of the development of philosophy across the Americas.

To be more specific, after articulating and briefly justifying this Inter-American philosophical narrative, I will use it as a framework to argue that the geography of neo-pragmatism needs to be expanded insofar as Richard Rorty’s radical anti-representationalism and his criticisms of traditional epistemological projects (which are two of the key themes that emerge in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*) are prefigured in Andrés Bello’s *Filosofia del Entendimiento*. In addition, I will also use the narrative as a framework to show that, not only are Rorty’s claims about the usefulness of novel metaphors as important heuristic devices anticipated by Bello, but that the stance that both Rorty and Bello adopt can be characterized in terms of an emancipatory Inter-American project. This emancipatory project is aimed at freeing philosophical thinking in the Americas from certain pernicious European philosophical practices. If the interpretation that I offer here is correct, the upshot would be to show that the anti-representationalist and anti-foundationalist strands of Rorty’s thought (which was influenced by figures such as James and Dewey) have been prefigured in the work of Bello, a central figure of the Latin American tradition who should be also included as an important figure in the history of the neo-pragmatist tradition.[[2]](#endnote-2) This could also pave the way for further work in an Inter-American vein (on the footsteps of authors such as Gregory Pappas) to explore potential connections between the philosophy of education of Bello, and the ideas of John Dewey and Jane Addams.

Here is how I will proceed. In section 2, I will present an Inter-American narrative that builds on the work of Latinx and Latin American philosophers, and I will briefly justify its use as a framework to consider the work of certain philosophers across the Americas in order to show the unity underpinning their respective views. In section 3, I will rehearse in some detail two of the main themes that emerge in Rorty’s *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*—namely, Rorty’s observations that traditional epistemological projects (such as those of Descartes, Locke or Kant) are grounded on certain metaphors (e.g., the characterization of the mind as a type of mirror, the characterization of knowledge as an assemblage of representations and the characterization of philosophy as a groundwork or foundation aimed at justifying knowledge) and that these metaphors have been taken literally, which has led to serious problems. In section 4, I present and discuss in detail certain observations that Andrés Bello makes in *Filosofía del entendimiento* where he points out, anticipating Rorty, that many previous philosophers (particularly, those of the Early Modern period) characterized both mental entities and cognitive processes in terms of certain types of metaphors and that these metaphors can be quite troublesome since they give rise to serious difficulties when taken literally. I also argue that Bello prefigures Rorty’s claim that, though metaphors can be problematic in philosophy when they become stale, they can be extremely useful (and are perhaps indispensable) as heuristic devices, and I show that Bello’s views also anticipate Rorty’s pragmatic ethnocentrism. Finally, in section 5, I offer a brief conclusion where I outline some lines for future research.

1. Articulating an Inter-American philosophical narrative

In this section, I want to present an Inter-American narrative that will enable me to show the importance of including Bello in the same neo-pragmatist canon that Rorty belongs to by arguing that, in so doing, we are able to present a more unified and comprehensive story of the development of philosophy across the Americas. To do this, I start with the following question: why should one consider reading together the US-American philosophical tradition as well as the Latin American philosophical tradition? Indeed, given that both traditions exhibit obvious differences (for instance, the US-American tradition has evolved within a primarily Anglophone sphere and the Latin American tradition has evolved within Hispanophone and Lusophone spheres), there has been a tendency to view both traditions as radically distinct. However, despite these differences, some scholars have recently pointed out that, in fact, one can articulate a consistent narrative in which both traditions have a common underpinning and run parallel to each other. For instance, insofar as the Americas were subject to enterprises of conquest and colonization by Europeans, and Europeans typically considered the natives as ‘barbarians’[[3]](#endnote-3) and the descendants of white settlers as mere ‘Western off-shoots’ that imitate slavishly European intellectual models,[[4]](#endnote-4) both the US-American philosophical tradition and the Latin American tradition have a common basis that Alex Stehn describes as follows: “US-American and Latin American philosophy generally (…) have had to prove their status as philosophies different enough from European philosophy to have something ‘original’ to contribute while still being similar enough to European philosophy to merit inclusion in the category ‘philosophy’ to being with.” (2011, 17)

Thus, a plausible way to interpret the development of philosophical enterprises both in the US-American context and in the Latin American one involves considering them through the lens of an ongoing attempt to demarcate themselves from European philosophy. This raises a second important question: granting that this demarcation impulse vis-à-vis European philosophy is common to both the US-American and the Latin American traditions, what is it exactly that they are trying to distance themselves from? In this respect, the work of Carlos Sanchez provides an important piece for the Inter-American narrative that I want to articulate. Indeed, when Sanchez addresses the parallels between the respective perspectives of the Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea (1912-2004) and the US-American philosopher Stanley Cavell (1926-2018), he writes:

Philosophy and medicine must arise and conform to the American circumstance. Just as a disease native to the American frontier would require an antidote capable of curing that particular disease, the idea is that the American existential condition likewise requires a form of thinking capable of addressing that condition. Hence, considering the circumstances when thinking of America’s philosophical, medical or literary future is already the liberating step. American philosophy would thus be a liberating, emancipating philosophy, freeing the American mind from ancient (European) vices: vices that include a preference for the map over the field (place and geography), the novel over its characters (literature and neighborhood), universal structures of experience over what actually experiences (epistemology and eyes), science over practice (anatomy and hands), and abstraction over the everyday (metaphysics and cities). (2011, 188-189)

In virtue of this, one may then view philosophical developments in the US-American and the Latin American traditions as attempting to emancipate us from the shortcomings and vices inherent to European philosophy. This in turn raises a third question: what specific vices does European philosophy exemplify? Building on the idea articulated by Sanchez that European philosophy has preferred epistemology over what one experiences, one may argue that one of the central vices of European philosophy has been devoting its energies to craft philosophical projects that privilege certain alleged universal structures of experience such as that of ‘representation.’ Now, if we conceive US-American philosophy and Latin American philosophy as being jointly engaged in a critical Inter-American endeavor aimed at questioning European philosophical projects that assume a key role for ‘representations,’ Rorty then can be clearly seen as one of the central figures within this Inter-American endeavor, as I argue in the next section where I address some of the central themes of his work.

1. Some Rortyian Themes: Anti-Representationalism and Anti-Foundationalism

As Rorty points in the introduction of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, many philosophers in the European tradition (particularly, from the Early Modern period onward) have traditionally endorsed certain assumptions about the nature and the goal of the philosophical enterprise. The first assumption is that “philosophy’s central concern is to be a general theory of representation, a theory which will divide culture up into areas which represent reality well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it at all” (1979, 3). The second assumption is that philosophy “is the area of culture where one touched bottom, where one found the vocabulary and the convictions which permitted one to explain and justify one’s activity as an intellectual, and thus to discover the significance of one’s life” (1979, 4). According to Rorty, these two assumptions have influenced the shape of philosophical projects undertaken by central figures in the European tradition such as Descartes, Locke and Kant in the following way: they have enabled the development of philosophical proposals that combine the *foundationalist* thesis that philosophy is first and foremost a *grounding* enterprise that aims to provide a justification to all human activities and creations (and, in particular, to knowledge) and the *representationalist* thesis that *knowledge* is best conceived as an assemblage of *representations*, and that the best way to understand how knowledge is obtained involves developing an account of how the representations that we create come to reflect or correspond (in more or less accurate ways) to reality.

After stressing the key role of these two aforementioned assumptions in the development of various philosophical systems, Rorty maintains that, when trying to articulate proposals that integrated both theses, most philosophers attempted to do so by fleshing out or giving substance to the two theses in terms of particular *metaphors*. For instance, the foundationalistthesis was usually fleshed out in terms of *construction* metaphors, which is something that can be clearly appreciated in the first paragraphs of Descartes’ First Meditation. There Descartes maintains that, in order to achieve his enterprise, he does not need to examine each belief he has but only the most basic ones since “once the foundations of a building are undermined, anything built on them collapses of its own accord” (1988, 76). In a parallel fashion, the representationalist thesis was, according to Rorty, fleshed out in terms of *visual* metaphors, which is something that can be appreciated in Descartes’s Third Meditation when he concedes that “it would be easy for [God], if he so decided, to bring it about that I wrong even those matters which I think that I see utterly clearly as possible with my mind’s eye” (1988, 88). Now, for Rorty, the systematic adoption of both theses and the deployment of both sets of metaphors to give them substance in Descartes’ works and in various other European philosophical projects had a key impact since it generated a process that resulted in the emergence of a particular conception of philosophy that combined both foundationalism and representationalism. Rorty describes this process and the notion of philosophy that resulted from it as follows:

… perhaps it helps to think of the original dominating metaphor as being that of having our beliefs determined by being brought face-to-face with the object of the belief (the geometrical figure which proves the theorem, for example). The next stage is to think that to understand how to know better is to understand how to improve the activity of a quasi-visual faculty, the Mirror of Nature, and thus to think of knowledge as an assemblage of accurate representations. Then comes the idea that to have accurate representations is to find, within the Mirror, a special privileged set of representations so compelling that their accuracy cannot be doubted.… Philosophy-as-epistemology will be the search for immutable structures within which knowledge, life and culture must be contained—structures set by the privileged representations that it studies (1979, 163).

Rorty contends that this notion of philosophy is quite problematic because it promotes the view that “philosophy is a discipline which takes as its study the ‘formal’ or ‘structural’ aspects of our beliefs, and that by examining these the philosopher serves the cultural function of keeping other disciplines honest, limiting their claims to what can be properly grounded” (1979, 164). Now, in doing (or, rather, in attempting to do) this, philosophy then presents itself, as some Rorty scholars have remarked (e.g., Tartaglia), as an ahistorical enterprise to the extent that it “attempts to ‘eternalize’ our best current understanding of the world, to ‘ground’ it in something that can never be overturned in the future, namely the objective truth” (Tartaglia 2007, 17). For Rorty, the traditional conception of philosophy-as-epistemology became progressively dominant as many philosophers began to take these metaphors literally and use them systematically in their theorizing. This made them become, in Rorty’s words, “great systematic philosophers [which], like great scientists, build for eternity” (1979, 369), without taking into account the historical and contingent character of the world and of human knowledge. Given that what Rorty labels “systematic philosophy” was created on the basis of certain metaphors that were taken literally and then incorporated unreflectively into our discourse, (thus creating an attractive but unrealistic view of the nature and the goal of the philosophical enterprise), he proposes then an alternative notion of philosophy (which he labels “edifying philosophy”). The basics of edifying philosophy are as follows:

We must get the visual, and in particular the mirroring, metaphors out of our speech altogether. To do that we have to understand speech not as the externalizing of inner representations, but not as a representation at all. We have to drop the notion of correspondence for sentences as well as for thoughts, and see sentences as connected with other sentences rather than with the world. We have to see the term ‘corresponds with how things are’ as an automatic compliment paid to successful normal discourse rather than as a relation to be studied and aspired to throughout the rest of discourse (1979, 371-372).

As we can appreciate in this passage, the notion of edifying philosophy that Rorty puts forth here is both anti-representationalist (since it involves rejecting the view that knowledge consists in a series of representations) and anti-foundationalist (since it involves rejecting the view that our sentences or our thoughts must be grounded on an ultimate foundation, which is the world). What unifies Rorty’s anti-representationalist stance with his anti-foundationalist one is his diagnosis that the failures and limitations of systematic philosophy originate in the uncritical use of some construction and visual metaphors. These metaphors compares the acquisition of knowledge to the erection of an edifice and compares the mind to a mirror or to some other reflecting surface that gives rise (under the right conditions) to images of whatever objects stand in front of it. Now, though Rortyian scholars such as Ramberg (2007) have recognized (quite correctly, in my opinion) that one of Rorty’s greatest contributions in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* consists precisely in arguing vigorously that “philosophy needs to break free from the metaphor of mind as a medium of appearances, appearances that philosophy must help us sort into the mere and the reality corresponding ones”, there are have been no studies on whether there are any antecedents to this proposal that Rorty articulates in places other than Europe and the US. In the next section, I show that we can find in the work of Andrés Bello a prefiguration of Rorty’s views.

1. A Rortyian prefiguration: Andrés Bello’s views on philosophy and metaphor

When we consider Andrés Bello’s philosophical views, as they are presented in *Filosofía del Entendimiento*, we can appreciate that he owes a lot to his predecessors (in particular to figures in the British tradition such as Berkeley, Reid and Hume, but also to continental authors such as Condillac and Destutt de Tracy) in terms of the characterization of philosophy that he proposes, the philosophical concerns that he has and the solutions or proposals that he articulates. For instance, in the opening lines of the introduction to *Filosofía del Entendimiento*, Bello states that “the object of philosophy is the knowledge of the human spirit and the correct guidance of its acts”[[5]](#endnote-5) (Bello 2006, 105). As we can see, this characterization of philosophy as a discipline that is concerned with developing knowledge of the human mind with the goal of steering our actions towards morally correct paths is to a great degree an echo of Hume’s exhortation in Section I of the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* to “indulge your passion for science (…) but let your science be human and such as may have a direct reference to action and society.”[[6]](#endnote-6)

In similar manner, when Bello addresses certain philosophical concerns such as the nature of sensations, we can clearly appreciate the impact of his predecessors on his views. For instance, Bello characterizes sensations as modifications produced in the mind by either the impact of material agents through the mediation of the organism (as in the case of the sensation of the odor of a carnation, which is mediated by our sense of smell) or as modifications produced in the mind directly by the organism itself (as in the case of the sensation of fatigue, which is directly produced in our mind by our organism). Now, when Bello stresses that “in neither case the quality of the state of the object is directly perceived by the consciousness; what the consciousness perceives directly is the sensation, which then becomes a perception or knowledge of some quality or material state”[[7]](#endnote-7) (Bello 2006, 112), he is to a great degree echoing Reid’s views on sensation. Indeed, for Reid, a sensation is the immediate effect that the quality of an object has on us, and that is what our minds perceive. Just as Bello does in the abovementioned passage, Reid maintains that we never have a sensation of the quality itself when he writes: “The quality in the rose is something which occasions the sensation in me; but what that something is, I know not. My senses give me no information upon this point” (Reid, 1827, 123). In fact, the similarity of the examples that both Reid and Bello use (which both rely on distinguishing the particular quality of a flower’s scent and the sensation that it causes in us) provides evidence of the intellectual debt that Bello has vis-à-vis Reid.

Though the philosophical positions that Bello displays in his work manifest at various points the influence that his predecessors had on him, it is important to stress that Bello is not merely a repeater or even an eclectic synthesizer of previous ideas, but rather an original contributor. In particular, my main contention here is that Bello prefigures Rorty in some important respects: not only is he aware of the systematic reliance on metaphors in the philosophical writings of his predecessors, but he diagnoses in a very Rortyian fashion how the use of metaphors produces often errors and confusions in philosophy when they begin to be taken literally (i.e., when they are adopted and become stale).[[8]](#endnote-8) Moreover, he also suggests how our systematic reliance on metaphors is unavoidable but that it can also function, when we are careful enough, as an effective tool to direct our attention to certain features of objects or processes through a process of redescription, thus prompting a renewed interest on them.[[9]](#endnote-9)

Now, at this point, it is important to observe that several authors of the Early Modern period (in particular, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke) had voiced concerns about the use of metaphors as potentially misleading linguistic devices and had also suggested eliminating them altogether from philosophical discourse, though they themselves systematically relied on them in their works.[[10]](#endnote-10) For instance, in chapter IV of the first part of the *Leviathan*, Hobbes contends that one of the most important misuses of language arises “when [men] use words metaphorically; that is, in other sense than they are ordained for, and thereby deceive others.”[[11]](#endnote-11) Echoing Hobbes, Locke states in the *Enquiry on Human Understanding* that “all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness; all the artificial and figurative applications of words eloquence hath invented are for nothing else to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions and thereby mislead the judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheats: and therefore … they are certainly in all discourses that pretend to inform and instruct, wholly to be avoided.” (Locke, 1959 (vol. II), 146 [III, 10, 34]) Following Hobbes and Locke, Bello also acknowledges the dangers of metaphor in philosophy, particularly when he discusses how his predecessors (including Hobbes and Locke) have relied on metaphors to try offer accounts of different faculties of the human mind. For instance, after he cites a passage from the work *On the Relations between the Physical and Moral Aspects of Men* (1802) by the French philosopher Pierre Jean Georges Cabanis (1757-1808) in which Cabanis explains why old people tend to remember well memories from their youth while they readily forget recent events by contending that the brain is initially like a soft mass that receives imprints from our sensations and that gradually hardens as we age (thus becoming incapable of recording recent events), Bello criticizes Cabanis in the following terms:

If we accept as purely metaphorical the material that can be found in this account, we could see it as a veridical story of human intelligence; but, if we want to give it another sense; if our impressions are sensations and perceptions; if our organs are senses and our memory is a soft pulp that gradually hardens until it is unable to admit any deep and lasting imprints, what are we doing if not abusing the metaphor and confusing the sign with its meaning?[[12]](#endnote-12) (Bello 2006, 353)

Now, as this passage clearly shows, Bello is well aware of the perils that the use of metaphors poses to philosophical discourse. However, unlike his predecessors such as Locke, he does not advocate the elimination of all uses of metaphors in philosophy. The main reason he offers to defend this stance is that human beings find virtually impossible to refrain from using metaphors when we try to talk about and distinguish the operations of the human mind:

One of the most curious phenomena is the spontaneity and the frequency with which the idea-signs that we use occur in the soul, when it pauses to observe itself. The names that we give to mental operations have all been originally metaphorical, and it is almost impossible to talk about them without using the words and phrases with which we tend to denote the reciprocal actions of the bodies.[[13]](#endnote-13) (Bello 2006, 350)

As this passage shows, Bello does not reject altogether all metaphorical uses of language to talk about mental operations since he believes that dispensing with all metaphors is impossible. Rather, his complaint seems to be that some metaphors have been taken literally by European philosophers (i.e., they have become stale) to the point that that they have forgotten that they do not express literal truths. Now, Bello thinks that the use of metaphors is useful in philosophical and scientific discourses as long as we keep in mind that the role of the metaphors that we create and deploy is not to express cognitive content (since what metaphors state is literally false) but rather to operate as heuristic tools to facilitate communication with others and to allow us to understand certain relations. As Bello writes in the following passage:

The same thing happens when we say that a skillful minister is the column of the State. In the same way that a column supports a building, the skill of the minister provides firmness and consistency to the State. We maintain this similarity calling the minister column but, to do so, we strip the idea of the column from most of the partial ideas that compose it. We make use of this type of signs [i.e., metaphors], not only to communicate our ideas to others, but also to realize what we think ourselves, and to help us in some way to understand our thought.[[14]](#endnote-14) (Bello 2006, 350)

The characterization of metaphor that Bello offers in this passage is important as a historical antecedent since it prefigures some important elements of Rorty’s view in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* and in later works. Indeed, although Rorty wants to purge our philosophical discourse from visual and construction metaphors (since he believes they have become entirely stale), he does not want to eliminate all uses of metaphor given that he agrees with Mary Hesse when she asserts that metaphors are ‘indispensable instruments of moral and intellectual progress’ (1987, 226). Rather, what Rorty maintains is that philosophers should seek to articulate novel metaphors rather than relying on stale ones since these novel metaphors operate as anomalous natural phenomena in the sense that, though they do not carry cognitive content themselves (a point where he is in full agreement with Davidson), they prompt us to engage in cognitive activities by redescribing things or processes in novel ways, and thus renew our interest in these things or processes (1987, 290).

For Bello, one clear instance of this heuristic use of metaphors is the one that Newton deployed in the *Principia* when he characterized the motions of celestial objects in terms of the notion of gravity. Indeed, for Bello, when Newton contended that objects are subject to gravity, he did not intend to convey initially a truth about a universal force, but rather just to direct our attention to the fact all objects seem to be dragged by their weight (*gravitas*). In virtue of this, the use of the metaphor consists in making us notice that the fall of a stone and the revolution of the Moon around the Earth have likely the same type of underlying cause since, just as we naturally say that the fall of a stone is due its weight dragging it downward, using weight as a metaphor enables us to suggest that the motion of the Moon around the Earth is likely due to its weight (*gravita*s) pulling it in a certain direction. Thus, for Bello, the weight metaphor that Newton deployed in the *Principia* did not carry (at least initially) any cognitive content, but was created as a heuristic device intended to make him better understand the nature of celestial motions, thus expanding the possibilities of his world by transcending the Aristotelian vocabulary and conceptual framework.[[15]](#endnote-15) As this example reveals, Bello’s views on metaphor seem to clearly prefigure those put forth by Rorty in his later works.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Finally, another point that I want to stress is that Bello prefigures Rorty in the sense that Rorty contends that the development of novel metaphors should be oriented, not towards the realization of the Enlightenment ideal of “a world polity whose citizens share common aspirations and a common culture” (1986, 534), but rather towards a type of pragmatic ethnocentrism in which “the ultimate political synthesis of love and justice may thus turn out to be an intricately-textured collage of private narcissism and public pragmatism” (Ibid.). Indeed, Bello clearly adopts a position that prefigures that of Rorty in the sense that Bello was pragmatically open, when he founded the University of Chile, to adopt the best tools that Europe had to offer (in terms of pedagogical institutions, scientific methods or political ideologies) as long as these tools were useful to strengthen his specific national group (1997, 132).

In light of this evidence, I believe it is clear that my proposal to read Bello and Rorty together, through the framework of the Inter-American philosophical narrative, is vindicated by the fact that it enables us to see both of them as developing and defending different forms of an Inter-American pragmatic enthnocentrism that aim to address the pitfalls and the shortcomings of the Enlightenment ideals defended by European liberal philosophers.

1. Conclusion

I have argued here that the philosophical work of Andrés Bello is important not only as an elaborate synthesis of the thought of many of his well-known predecessors during the Early Modern Period, but also as a prefiguration of some important ideas articulated by prominent members of the American neo-pragmatist tradition (in particular, Richard Rorty). If this is the case, one can read jointly Bello and Rorty as belonging to a common Inter-American philosophical project aimed at emancipating American philosophies from European assumptions (such as representationalism). If what I have argued here is correct, it raises the following question: since Bello seems to be quite clearly a neglected forerunner of views articulated by Rorty, can he be properly considered as a forerunner of other neo-pragmatists? In particular, do some of Bello’s views also prefigure ideas articulated in the works of figures such as Hilary Putnam, Robert Brandom or Huw Price within the framework of an Inter-American philosophical narrative? I intend to address these questions in future work.

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1. In particular, I have in mind here the work of scholars such as Carlos Alberto Sanchez (2011) and Alex Stehn (2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Indeed, for scholars such as Abrams (2002, 228), “Rorty set up the entire history of philosophy in terms of foundationalists and anti-foundationalists…. In the second group are William James, John Dewey, Martin Heidegger, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, all of whom saw past the mirror paradigm and into a more subjective and relational universe of language.” Part of my project consists in showing that anti-foundationalism and anti-representationalism are not only limited to US authors and that the intellectual geography of neo-pragmatism is broader than previously thought. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Sepúlveda, [1550] 1987. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Bondy, 1969. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. In the original: ‘El objeto de la filosofía es el conocimiento del espíritu humano y la acertada dirección de sus actos.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Hume, 1975, 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. In the original: ‘Pero ni en uno ni en otro la cualidad o estado es directamente percibido por la conciencia; lo que la conciencia percibe directamente es la sensación, la cual se convierte así en una percepción o conocimiento de cierta cualidad o estado material.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. On this issue, I agree with José Gaos that Bello’s philosophical interest for the role of metaphors (and part of his originality as a philosopher) depends on his formation as grammarian and philologist. In particular, Gaos (2006 writes in the introduction to the edition of *Filosofía del Entendimiento*: “Una de las fuentes de su originalidad son sus dotes, formación y cultura de filólogo, en el más amplio sentido de este término …” (86). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Rorty’s view on the role of metaphor, which owes a large debt to Davidson, is captured in the following passage : “Tossing a metaphor into a conversation is like suddenly breaking off the conversation long enough to make a face, or pulling a photograph out of your pocket and displaying it, or pointing at a feature of the surroundings, or slapping your interlocutor’s face, or kissing him” (1989, 16). [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Part of the reason for this, I believe, is that, as Susan Haack acknowledges, “metaphors are sometimes cognitively vital” (1994, 4). [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Hobbes, 1996, 21. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. In the original: “Aceptando como puramente metafórico lo que hay de material en esta exposición, pudiéramos verla como una historia verídica de la inteligencia humana; pero si queremos darle otro sentido; si las impresiones son sensaciones o percepciones; los órganos, sentidos, y la memoria, una blanda pulpa, que se consolida gradualmente hasta que al fin es incapaz de admitir estampas profundas y duraderas, ¿qué se hace sino abusar de la metáfora y confundir el signo con el significado?” [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. In the original: “Uno de los fenómenos más curiosos es la espontaneidad y la frecuencia con que las ideas-signos de que hablamos ocurren en el alma, cuando se detiene a observarse en ci misma. Los nombres que damos a las operaciones mentales han sido todos originalmente metafóricos, y es casi imposible hablar de ellas si no es valiéndonos de las palabras y frases con que solemos indicar las acciones recíprocas de los cuerpos.” [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. In the original: ‘Sucede exactamente lo mismo que cuando decimos que un ministro hábil es la columna del Estado. A la manera que la columna sostiene el edificio, la habilidad del ministro da firmeza y consistencia al Estado. Declaramos esta semejanza llamando al ministro columna; mas, para ello despojamos a la idea de la columna de la mayoría de las ideas parciales que la componen. Hacemos uso de esta especie de signos, no sólo para comunicar nuestras ideas a otros, sino también para darnos cuenta a nosotros mismos de lo que pensamos, y para ayudarnos en cierto modo a comprenderlo.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. In this respect, Bello would thoroughly agree with Christopher Voparil’s take on the importance of novel metaphors for Rorty: “The new metaphors produced through the process of ‘poetic achievement’, when woven into the narratives use to describe ourselves, can bring about changes in our behavior and in the possibilities of our world” (2004, 229). [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. In fact, Rorty (1989) himself mentions and discusses briefly the metaphorical use by Newton of *gravitas*, pointing out that it functioned by creating a new vocabulary for people, “thereby equipping them with tools for doing things which could not have been envisaged before these tools were available” (17). [↑](#endnote-ref-16)