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Category: Publication

Title: Call for Papers: EJPAP Issue on 'Pragmatism and the Writing of History'

Description: Guest Editors: Roberto Gronda and Tullio Viola

Since its birth, pragmatism has held a more intimate relation to the empirical study of the past than almost any other philosophical school. In part because of their reevaluation and reconstruction of the nature of empirical observation, pragmatists have been particularly sensitive to the epistemic dimension of historical inquiry. Professional historians have also recognized this, and have often drawn upon pragmatism when they had to reflect on their own methodologies. Despite the richness of the interactions between pragmatists and historians, however, it is still necessary for these various scholars to locate common areas of interest. Doing this would also shed light on the central role history has already played in the work of the classical pragmatists.

A good example of the latter point is C. S. Peirce, whose writings on the history of science, although never published in his lifetime, exerted a decisive influence on his philosophy. A bit later, G. H. Mead and J. Dewey explicitly reflected on the scope and methods of historical writing. The specifically historical dimension of human affairs played for them a fundamental role – as evidenced by their insistence on process and temporality, as well as their naturalized conception of action-as-interaction, temporally connecting subjects and environments. Over the decades, their views have prodded subsequent scholars to conceive of practices and institutions as emerging from processes developing over time, in a way that required careful consideration of the tools of narrative and diachronic explanation.

The interest of pragmatist philosophers in history is accompanied by a complementary interest of professional historians in pragmatism, one which begun back in the 1920s (C. Beard, M. Curty, J. H. Randall are some notable examples) and endures today (for instance in the work of T. Kloppenberg, T. Haskell, D. Hollinger). Some contemporary historians have greeted the advent of a new “pragmatist” or “pragmatic” turn in their discipline. By doing so, they join a larger debate that is taking place among social scientists interested in the spatial and temporal situatedness of human action. Also, some historians of art and culture (such as Edgar Wind) have seized upon pragmatist ideas to shape their cultural inquiries.

The 2016/2 issue of the *European Journal of Pragmatism and American

Philosophy* will explore this broad spectrum of ideas. We invite contributions from historians, philosophers, literary scholars, and social scientists. Submissions may deal with the general relevance of pragmatism to history, by addressing questions such as the nature of historical knowledge, its relation to normativity, and the ontological status of historical concepts. But they may also focus on the relevance of pragmatism to concrete historical practice, exploring, for instance, the role played by pragmatist ideas in the process of historical research, or the potential advantages and drawbacks of a pragmatist approach to history. Finally, we encourage contributions that describe the pragmatist philosophers' takes on basic notions such as history, temporality or narrative; or submissions which present figures who have been particularly instrumental in the development of a pragmatist perspective on history.

Papers should be sent to roberto1gronda [at] gmail.com and tullio.viola [at] gmail.com by July 31st, 2016. They should not exceed 12.000 words and must include an abstract of 150-400 words and a list of works cited. Papers will be selected on the basis of a process of blind review. They will be published in December 2016.

Deadline: 31/07/2016

Link: European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy

Keywords: Pragmatism, History