

**Mediterranean Pragmatism:
Eugenio d'Ors and the Italian Pragmatists**

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[Oral Text]

"El Glosador és també, en la mida de les seves forces,
un «pragmatista», i la mateixa palpitació dels temps
que mou als pensadors nord-americans l'empeny."
E. d'Ors, "Pragmatisme", 20-XII-1907

0. Introduction

When in the year 1992 I started to study Peirce and pragmatism, I was able to stay at Harvard as a visiting scholar for two summers having the late Hilary Putnam —I loved him!— as my advisor. In those times it was allowed for the scholars to go into the stacks of the huge Widener Library to explore directly the books, since the electronic catalogue was still in its first steps. I love libraries and I used to go to the hidden and obscure shelves where there were kept the philosophy books of the end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth. I remember as if it were yesterday the day when I opened an impersonal thick book with the title "Formal Logic" and it was from Charles S. Peirce's library and it contained 31 offprints of different authors bounded together in a single volume². Amongst those papers there were two texts from Vailati with a dedication to Peirce:

30. "Per un analisi pragmatistica della nomenclatura filosofica", estratto dal *Leonardo*, April-May 1907. Handwritten: *M. Ch. Peirce homage from the author*.

31. "Pragmatismo e Logica Matematica", estratto dal *Leonardo*, February 1906. Handwritten: *M. Ch. Peirce homage from the author*.³

¹ I am extremely grateful to Giovanni Maddalena for his kind invitation to attend this conference. I want to express also my gratitude to Izaskun Martínez and Marta Torregrosa for their help with the text.

² Phil 5005.4 [Logic: Pamphlet vol.] 31 pieces in 1 vol. Hollis 007637931

³ It seems that none of these two offprints is the one referred by Peirce in his letter of 23 of July 1905 to William James (CP 8.260): "To begin with I want to emphasize my particular gratitude for your papers, as well as for the copies of *Leonardo* and a paper from Prof. Vailati no doubt sent at your prompting." In the Houghton Library where Peirce's papers are kept, under the heading of Vailati's correspondence (L 449) "Vailati, Giovanni" there is only an empty envelope.

I found also in the Widener Library [Phil 140.22] a copy of Papini's *Le Pragmatisme* with a dedication "With the best compliments" sent probably by Calderoni to Charles S. Peirce. Vailati and Calderoni also are listed in *MS 1639* with their addresses.

Since the beginning of my study of American pragmatism I tried to discover the relations between pragmatism and Spain⁴ and by extension with the Mediterranean countries. Here in the cases of Vailati, Calderoni and Papini there were evidences of a personal relation, besides what William James wrote in his paper of 1906 on "G. Papini and the Pragmatist Movement in Italy"⁵. James vividly describes the enthusiasm for pragmatism of Giovanni Papini and the group associated with the journal *Leonardo*: "The Italian pragmatists —James concludes the paper— are an extraordinarily well-informed and gifted, and above all an extraordinarily free and spirited and unpedantic, group of writers". [Today we could say the same!]. A bit later I came across to the well-known Peirce's letter to *signor* Calderoni of 1905⁶, to his references to Papini⁷ and to a lot of information about Peirce and Italy and Italian philosophers⁸.

Soon I learned that the Catalan philosopher Eugenio d'Ors in his stay in Paris from 1906 until 1910 discovered pragmatism mainly through the teaching of Boutroux; d'Ors met at least once with James in Paris⁹ and had a great admiration for Papini and the journal *Leonardo*. D'Ors was one of the few Spaniards who attended the Heidelberg International Congress of Philosophy in 1908 where American pragmatism was in the center of the debate. Vailati and Calderoni were there too.

In those years the professor Rosa Maria Calcaterra invited me to launch with her an "Integrated Action" between the Italian and the Spanish Governments to study the connections between all these authors, the reality of what I liked to call the *Mediterranean Pragmatism*. Rosa did a wonderful work filling all the papers required by the bureaucracy of both countries and we got the funding at the second attempt for the years 1995 and 1996. The best academic fruit of that action —besides all what the doctoral students and the professors learnt— was the wonderful volume *I Pragmatisti italiani. Tra alleati e nemici*, edited by Giovanni Maddalena and Giovanni Tuzet, including papers by my doctoral students Antonino González, Izaskun Martínez and Marta Torregrosa¹⁰. On my presentation of today I will be relying heavily upon what I have learnt from all of them.

I would like to say a lot of things, but I have to concentrate my attention in a few topics. I will arrange my paper in four sections after this already rather long introduction: 1) A presentation of Eugenio d'Ors and his meeting with Italian pragmatism; 2) A summary of the

⁴ J. Nubiola y F. Zalamea: *Peirce y el mundo hispánico. Lo que C. S. Peirce dijo sobre España y lo que el mundo hispánico ha dicho sobre Peirce*, Eunsu, 2006.

⁵ W. James, "G. Papini and the Pragmatist Movement in Italy", *Journal of Philosophy*, 3 (1906), 337-341.

⁶ L 67, "Draft of a letter to Mario Calderoni" (c.1905); partially published CP 8.205-213. There is a Spanish translation of the complete manuscript by Luis Ramírez available online at <<http://www.unav.es/gep/LetterCalderoni.html>>. Other references to Calderoni in Peirce's writings: *W1*: xxvi; *CN3*: 234; *EP2*: 541n10, 546n1.

⁷ "In the main, I much admire Papini's presentation of the subject", CP 5.495, c.1907; 6.482 and 6.490, 1908; *EP2*: xxxvi, 398, 546n1; his pragmatism, 420, 448; *ILS*: 233.

⁸ Cf. Ch. Kloesel, "Scattered Remarks on Peirce and Italy", *Versus* 55-56 (1990), 3-12; included and M. Bonfantini and A. Martone, (eds.), *Peirce in Italia*, Liguore, Napoli, 1993, 87-99.

⁹ A. González and J. Nubiola: "William James en Eugenio d'Ors", *Anuario Filosófico* 40 (2007), 413-433. Available at <<http://www.unav.es/gep/PragHispGonzalezNubiola.html>>. See also J. Varela, *Eugenio d'Ors (1881-1954)*, RBA, Barcelona, 2017, 44-47.

¹⁰ G. Maddalena and G. Tuzet (eds.), *I Pragmatisti italiani. Tra alleati e nemici*, Albo Versorio, Milano, 2007.

battle of German-oriented philosophers against American pragmatism in the Heidelberg conference of 1908; 3) A summary description of some connections between Unamuno, d'Ors and Papini; and by way of conclusion, 4) A more general presentation of the Mediterranean Pragmatism.

1. Eugenio d'Ors and his meeting with Italian pragmatism

Eugenio d'Ors was born in Barcelona on the 28th of September of 1881. His father was a physician and his mother was from Cuba, but also with Catalan ascendancy. D'Ors studied law and literary studies in the University of Barcelona. In those years the young d'Ors was introduced in the modernist trend of a regeneration of Catalan culture. D'Ors and the young people around him had always an aesthetic orientation, rejecting the positivism and traditional folklore defense of the previous generation. In 1903 d'Ors starts his doctoral studies in Madrid and gets in touch with the intellectual milieu of the place, in particular with Unamuno. As it happens with a lot of other intellectuals of the beginning of the twentieth century, d'Ors lives his intellectual work as a mission, as an answer to a call of renovating the culture and conforming the public opinion. His project was called "*Noucentisme*" in line with the Italian historiography. D'Ors was a leading ideologue of the Catalan cultural renaissance of the early 20th century. He proposed a coming back to the aesthetic ideals of classic art of Greece and Rome and a deep transformation of the society through education and institutions. As all of you realize, those are in some sense the same ideals of the journal *Leonardo*, launched by Papini at the same time.

The year 1906 is decisive in d'Ors' life. He moves to Paris as correspondent of the journal *La Veu de Catalunya*. In Paris, d'Ors —as his biographer wrote— was seduced by the doctrines of Charles S. Peirce and William James, which were starting to be known in Paris at the beginning of the century¹¹. It was in those years when American pragmatism burst into Europe becoming the center of many philosophical debates and controversies. The reception of pragmatism in Italy, Germany or France was surrounded by new interpretations, propitiating a whole set of different developments from the original ideas¹². A curious mixture, filled with misunderstandings, was spread throughout Europe: some regarded pragmatism as a new theory of truth that defended the coincidence between truth and usefulness, and others as a theory of science capable of clarifying the meaning through action¹³.

In Paris d'Ors discovers experimental science, biology, experimental psychology; he attends the lectures of Emile Boutroux and Henri Bergson, knows Henri Poincaré and Madame Curie. Of all of this —that is so contrasting with the Spanish science of the time— provides information in the articles that he sends almost daily from the French capital. On

¹¹ E. Jardí, *Eugenio d'Ors*, Aymá, Barcelona, 1967, 344. On this issue J. Nubiola and M. Torregrosa: "Eugenio d'Ors y el pragmatismo", in P. Russi (ed.), *Eugenio d'Ors e Charles S. Peirce: jogo e pragmatismo em ação*, OJM, Sarapuí, Brazil, 2016, 18-46.

¹² Already in 1908, Arthur Lovejoy detected thirteen different forms of pragmatism Cf. A. O. Lovejoy, "The Thirteen Pragmatisms", *Journal of Philosophy*, 5 (1918) 5-12 and 29-29. A superb analysis of the misunderstandings in Germany has been done by Hans Joas in *Pragmatism and Social Theory*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1993. For the reception in Italy A. Santucci, "Peirce, il pragmatismo e la filosofia italiana", en M. A. Bonfantini y A. Martone, *Peirce in Italia*, 276-316 and E. P. Colella, "Philosophy in the Piazza: Giovanni Papini's Pragmatism and Italians Politics", *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 2, XI (1997), 125-142. For the reception of pragmatism in France, D. G. Schultenover, (ed.), *The Reception of Pragmatism in France & The Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC, 2009.

¹³ Cf. H. Joas, *Pragmatism and Social Theory*, 111-115.

December of 1907 in an article under the title "Pragmatisme" he will define himself as a pragmatist, moved by the same zeal of American thinkers, which he aspires to overcome by recognizing an aesthetic dimension of human action not reducible to the merely usefulness¹⁴:

The whole world and especially the Anglo-Saxon world is thrilled by the new school, or better said, the new philosophical view that «Pragmatism», initiated by the North Americans Charles Sanders Peirce and William James, represents. This doctrine revolves around the wish that obeys the necessities already set out here concerning the need to integrate Sophia in Life. Its main principle lies in considering truth as an instrument of action and that, therefore, if on the one hand, every thing that does not have an adequate relation with human practice is not «interesting» and must be abandoned, on the other hand, «all that is useful must be true»...

And in early 1908, defining his philosophical position, he would draw attention to his connection with American pragmatism and with the European representatives of this movement:

This philosophy of free will, this *arbitrarism*, as we have called, represents a moral ideal of intervention and not of abstention, this is to say, an *imperialist* ethics and politics; an aesthetic ideal of norm and measure, that is, a *classicism*; a scientific ideal in which action is the test of truth, that is to say a *pragmatic* philosophy, with a great relation to that which, preached by Peirce, by William James, by Schiller, nowadays shakes the conscience of the Saxon world and has already its Latin representation in the isolated efforts of some great contemporary French thinkers, like my master Bergson, and in *Leonardo*, the small intellectual group from Florence...¹⁵.

In fact, it might be said that d'Ors misunderstood pragmatism. He thought that pragmatism regarded science as the result of the effects of action in a utilitarian key and he tried to overcome pragmatism enhancing the aesthetic dimension in action not reducible to the effects. With this aim he prepared his papers "The residue in the measure of science by the action" and "*Religio est libertas*" for the congress of Heidelberg, in which the main subject was the controversy on the pragmatism. In the publication in Spain of one the papers of Heidelberg d'Ors adds some explanatory notes that reveal his good knowledge of pragmatism and its more representative philosophers at the turn of the century:

To the reader who is not a specialist, it would suffice to remember today that, firstly the theses named pragmatist or pragmaticist, maintained with impact and success during recent years, link science to action in such a way that in the latter they want always to find the reason and measure of the former. (Bibliography: C. S. Peirce: *Illustrations of the Logic of Science* (*Popular Science Monthly*, 1870); *How to Make our Ideas Clear*, 1878, id. id. 1878, published in the *Revue Philosophique* of the time); entry "Pragmatism", in Baldwin's *Dictionary*, 1902. W. James: *The Will to Believe*, 1897; *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (translated into several languages), *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, 1907. J. Dewey: *Studies in Logical Theory*, 1903. Baldwin: *The Limits of Pragmatism* (*Psychol. Review*, 1904). F. C. S. Schiller: *Personal Idealism*, 1902; *Humanism*, 1907; *Studies of Humanism*, 1907 (French translation). *Leonardo* journal, from Florence (between 1903 and

¹⁴ E. d'Ors, *Glosari 1906-1907*, X. Pla (ed.), Quaderns Crema, Barcelona, 1996, 729-730.

¹⁵ E. d'Ors, "Habla Eugenio d'Ors", *La Catalunya*, 8 February 1908, 93. From 1907 and 1908 the most detailed information about the reception of pragmatism in the thought of d'Ors can be extracted from the reports he wrote between 1908 and 1910 in Paris to justify the scholarship that the Council of Barcelona had given him in order to study the methods of higher education in Europe. With my colleague Ramon Serra we are preparing an edition of those almost unknown documents. For instance, in the memoir corresponding to the second semester, signed in July 1909 in Genève, d'Ors includes the Italian translation of his paper in Heidelberg: "*Religio est libertas. Saggio di un nuovo metodo nello studio dei rapporti tra la religione e la scienza*" (*Rivista di filosofia*, 1, n° 2, 1909, Formiggini editore, Bologna - Modena).

1907 directed by G. Papini). Contributions of Papini, Vailati and Calderoni to the Second Philosophy Conference (Genève, 1904). The (exceptionally important) discussion on Pragmatism in the Third Philosophy Conference (Proceedings of the Conference, in print). Works that also may be consulted: Carlos Vaz Ferreira, *Conocimiento y acción*, Montevideo, 1908, and my *Glosari*, 1907. Without being able to mention exact places and dates here, other authors on Pragmatism that must be mentioned are Unamuno, whose *Tres Ensayos*, due to their Carlylean affiliation, have at times a strong pragmatist flavor, and other Spanish and South American writers¹⁶.

When d'Ors returns to Barcelona in 1911, —as Torregrosa writes— "he published the key concepts of his 'postpragmatic intellectualism' in his *Glosario* under the title "*The Philosophy of the Man who Works and Plays*". These glosses constitute the index to the issues that would occupy him throughout all his life"¹⁷. In fact his allusions to pragmatism usually have the same content: or they are to give reason of the starting point of his thought and sometimes to manifest his debt with it, or it is a brief commentary on William James and the Italian pragmatism gathered around Papini and the journal *Leonardo*.

2. Pragmatism in the Heidelberg conference of 1908

The year 1908 is particularly relevant in the process of reception of pragmatism in Europe, due to the 3rd International Congress of Philosophy held in Heidelberg in September: at that international event the "new philosophy" coming from America was at the center of the European stage. It seems to me that this congress was a milestone in the process of the reception of pragmatism in Europe and that its real importance has not been sufficiently highlighted until now¹⁸.

Although in 1907 William James's influential work *Pragmatism* had appeared, it is fair to say that prior to the Heidelberg Congress, only isolated thinkers —most prominently F. C. S. Schiller in England and Bergson and Boutroux in France— and the small group of the Italian pragmatists were actively involved in the spreading of pragmatist ideas in Europe. More over, "while James's book was thus by no means uncontroversial in the United States, in Germany it unleashed a veritable storm of protest". For this reason —Joas writes— "the controversy over pragmatism was the main subject of debate at the 1908 World Philosophical Congress"¹⁹.

Émile Boutroux, Mario Calderoni, Wilhelm Jerusalem, Christine Ladd-Franklin, Hugo Münsterberg, Eugenio d'Ors, Josiah Royce, Ferdinand C. S. Schiller, Giovanni Vailati and many others attended the conference²⁰. It has been said that Giovanni Vailati, member of the International Committee of the Congress, was instrumental for establishing the agenda of the Heidelberg Congress: "In fact, —it has been asserted²¹— this third conference was largely a

¹⁶ E. d'Ors, "El residuo en la medida de la ciencia por la acción", *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, XXXIII, 591, 1909, 188.

¹⁷ M. Torregrosa, "The Pragmatism of Eugenio d'Ors", en G. Pappas, *Pragmatism in the Americas*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2011, 102.

¹⁸ See my "Pragmatism in the European Scene: The Heidelberg International Congress of Philosophy, 1908", *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*, LXXII (2017), 339-355. In this section I am following that paper.

¹⁹ H. Joas, *Pragmatism and Social Theory*, 96.

²⁰ T. Elsenhans (ed.), *Bericht über den III. Internationalen Kongress für Philosophie zu Heidelberg 1. bis 5. September 1908*, Kraus reprint, Neldeln/Liechtenstein 1974.

²¹ J. J. O'Connor and E. F. Robertson, *Giovanni Vailati*, MacTutor Archive, University of St Andrews, <<http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Vailati.html>>.

discussion of pragmatism, and this is almost certainly due to Vailati's influence on the committee". Up to now, however, I have not found any evidence supporting this claim²². Vailati was a member, with Calderoni and Peano, of the *Italianische Sprache* group appointed to the permanent international commission at the previous Geneva Congress, but it is not clear what his role was in the program of the Heidelberg Congress. In fact, in the printed program the term «pragmatism» only appears in the title of two papers:

- Kristian Birch-Reichenwald Aars (Christiania): «*Energie-Lehre und Pragmatismus*», in the section II of General Philosophy, Metaphysics, and Natural Philosophy, and
- Andrew C. Armstrong (Wesleyan University): «The Evolution of Pragmatism», in the section IV on Logic and Epistemology, after F. C. S. Schiller's presentation «*Der Rationalistische Wahrheitsbegriff*».

What seems much clearer is the decisive role of the opening lecture by Josiah Royce, «The Problem of Truth in the Light of Recent Discussion»²³, since it set the tone for further debate on pragmatism and truth. In fact, Josiah Royce proposed a deep theory of truth he called «Absolute Pragmatism», which cannot be reduced to mere instrumentalism and can never be expressed in terms of individualism. In spite of Royce's good will, in the discussion that followed the lecture F. C. S. Schiller from Oxford argued bitterly against Royce's "division of Pragmatists into instrumentalists and individualists. There was no incompatibility between them", and concluded that "in its most important sense Truth was a social product"²⁴. In spite of his conciliatory approach, Royce put before the Congress the contemporary *problem* of pragmatism. Delacroix writes in his report that "it was an excellent introduction for a deep discussion. It was followed, in the other sessions, by pragmatist and anti-pragmatist communications, by which the battle was each time constantly renewed"²⁵.

As mentioned, Schiller's paper was delivered during the September 2 session, followed by Andrew C. Armstrong's paper on «The Evolution of Pragmatism». The lively discussion that followed the two papers was by far the most extensive of the Congress²⁶. The proceedings published a total of 25 expositions, in an abridged version from 19 different attendees of the Congress. Schiller had the last word, not only in the official discussion in the second day, but also at the unofficial session two days later²⁷. In the extensive report published in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, it is said that "the communication of professor Schiller (from Oxford) set fire to the powder [*mit le feu aux poudres*]. Mr. Schiller tried, with the aid of a tight and sharp dialectic, to corner, to reduce to absurdity the rationalist conception of truth"²⁸. Since Schiller's paper received a lot of objections, "the discussion that followed this exposition was extremely lively and animated". In that report there are seven

²² I have not found any trail of correspondence with the organizers of the Congress. The names of W. Windelband, T. Elsenhans or A. Ruge do not appear in the "Inventario dell'Archivio Giovanni Vailati". See Lucia di Ronchetti (a cura di), *L'Archivio Giovanni Vailati*, Quaderni di ACME, n° 34, Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, Milano, 1998.

²³ T. Elsenhans (ed.), *Bericht über den III. Internationalen Kongress für Philosophie zu Heidelberg*, 62-90.

²⁴ T. Elsenhans (ed.), *Bericht über den III. Internationalen Kongress für Philosophie zu Heidelberg*, 92.

²⁵ H. Delacroix, "Le IIIe Congrès International de Philosophie. (Septembre 1908)", *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*, 66 (1908), 530.

²⁶ T. Elsenhans (ed.), *Bericht über den III. Internationalen Kongress für Philosophie zu Heidelberg*, 711-740.

²⁷ Both discussions are registered in abridged form in the proceedings: T. Elsenhans (ed.), *Bericht über den III. Internationalen Kongress für Philosophie zu Heidelberg*, 726-740.

²⁸ M. Alexandre et al, "IIIe Congrès International de Philosophie (Heidelberg, 31 août, 5 septembre 1908). Compte Rendu des Séances", *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, XVI (1908), 943.

pages dedicated to describing in some detail the bitter discussion between the German intellectualist tradition and the new Anglo-American philosophy²⁹.

Giovanni Vailati in his letter of the 9th of September to Papini—who did not attend the congress although he was listed in it—highlights the role of the German mathematician and philosopher Leonard Nelson (1882-1927) from the Neo-Friesian school of Göttingen. I partially transcribe Vailati's letter here in order to give a sense of the feeling during the aftermath of the Congress³⁰:

Partendo stamattina da Heidelberg mi sono trovato in treno col Windelband, che andava colla moglie a Baden a riposare dalle fatiche della presidenza e a curarsi dai reumatismi. Anche lui, come tutti gli altri tedeschi, è stato alquanto sconcertato dalla intonazione pragmatistica assunta dal Congresso, a cominciare dalla conferenza inaugurale di Royce, fino alle ultime sedute (extraufficiali) promosse dallo Schiller per discutere di tale argomento. In esse non si portò alcun contributo; la parte più interessante fu la resistenza che si manifestò nel gruppo della *Fries'sche Schule*; Nelson specialmente si distinse. Dei campioni pro pragmatismo i più notevoli furono Jerusalem e Pikler.

On this vein, I want to recall what Christine Ladd-Franklin, former student of C. S. Peirce, who attended the Heidelberg congress, wrote as final words of her remembrance in the *Journal of Philosophy* after Charles S. Peirce's death:

At the meeting of the Philosophical Congress in 1908, Peirce had two warm defenders of his views, as against the James form of pragmatism, in the Italian philosophers, Calderoni and Vailati. Vailati, a man of most acute intellect, is no longer living; Calderoni would no doubt be able to throw much illumination—more perhaps than any other living writer—upon the real bearing of the philosophical views of Mr. Peirce³¹.

Many of the defenders of pragmatism were surprised by the bitterness of the reaction of the neo-Kantian German philosophers. I believe that at least some of the hostility against pragmatism was likely sparked by the personal character of F. C. S. Schiller, who had a talent for turning his audience against him. I think it not unfair to say that if William James had been able to attend the Heidelberg Congress—instead of F. C. S. Schiller—the *entourage* would have been more comfortable for all and the conclusion of the debate would not have been the conviction of its sterility³². For instance, the young Eugenio d'Ors writes with astonishment in his reports on the conference about "the resistance of the old German idealism against pragmatism, the new stage of British empiricism", and few pages later, "by the German resistance, of high absolutist inspiration, to the voluntarist tendencies of modern Logic"³³. Another Spaniard, Ugarte de Ercilla, writes in his report³⁴:

²⁹ M. Alexandre et al, "IIIe Congrès International de Philosophie", 946-950.

³⁰ M. Ferrari, "Heidelberg 1908. Giovanni Vailati, Wilhelm Jerusalem e il pragmatismo americano", *Giornale Critico Della Filosofia Italiana*, 28 (2010), 9; Massimo Ferrari has studied with attention those interrelations between Giovanni Vailati, Wilhelm Jerusalem (from Vienna), and Julius Pikler (from Budapest), on the occasion of the Heidelberg Congress.

³¹ C. Ladd-Franklin, "Charles S. Peirce at the Johns Hopkins", *Journal of Philosophy*, 13 (1916), 722. Surprisingly Ladd-Franklin wrote Göttingen instead of Heidelberg.

³² «Dans ces conditions, la discussion devait rester assez stérile». M. Alexandre et al, "IIIe Congrès International de Philosophie", 945.

³³ E. d'Ors, *Obra catalana completa. Glosari 1906-1910*, Barcelona, Selecta, 1950, 809 and 813; J. Albertí, "Eugeni d'Ors i el Congrés de Heidelberg de 1908", *Revista de Catalunya*, 236 (2008), 99; M. Torregrosa and J. Nubiola, *Eugenio d'Ors y el pragmatismo*.

³⁴ E. Ugarte de Ercilla, "Tercer Congreso Internacional de Filosofía", *Razón y fe*, 22 (1908), 213.

The echoes of pragmatism, brought from overseas, let them hear, with verve, yes, but also with spirited opposition, the British and Americans. The German spirits, generally hovering in the high regions of idealism and speculative metaphysics, do not seem a soil prepared for planting with the seeds of practical utilitarianism.

For the reader of today, the language of war and conflict that appears in all the reports of the Heidelberg International Congress is a dark omen of the forthcoming World War. As we know, the First World War changed the entire intellectual European stage, and both pragmatism and idealism soon became things of the past.

3. Some connections between Unamuno, d'Ors and Papini

As Giovanni Maddalena and Maria Luisi have written³⁵,

Il coraggio di unire davvero teoria e pratica può essere considerata la cifra distintiva dei pragmatisti europei, il loro miraggio e la causa della loro rapida scomparsa in un mondo eccessivamente polarizzato tra intellettualismo razionalista e prassi violenta, che si sarebbe trovato di lì a poco nella tragedia della Prima guerra mondiale.

This is true not only about the Italian pragmatists, but also about the Spanish thinkers whose affinities with pragmatism have been only highlighted in very recent years. A surprising fact in the historiography of 20th century Hispanic philosophy is its almost total opacity towards the American tradition. This deep rift between the two traditions is even more striking when one realizes the almost total neglect in the Hispanic world of such an outstanding Hispanic-American thinker as George Santayana—who lived his last 30 years in Rome—or the real affinity between the central questions of American pragmatism and the topics and problems addressed by the most relevant Spanish thinkers of the last century: Miguel de Unamuno, José Ortega y Gasset and Eugenio d'Ors.

Pragmatism is a response, on the basis of both scientific and lived experience, to the problem typical of modern Cartesianism concerning the rift between rational thought and creative vitality. The Spanish philosophers Unamuno, Ortega and d'Ors, in a manner entirely analogous to that of the Italians Papini, Vailati and Calderoni, were responding to this shared problem in a strikingly similar way to that of the Americans. Nevertheless, the recognition of this “community” has come quite late, perhaps due to the permanent pretension to originality that is typical of the Hispanic tradition, and due to the provincialism that is characteristic of the American tradition.

In 1961 Pelayo H. Fernández studied in detail how Miguel de Unamuno read William James, his frequent quotations of James and his marginal notes in the works by James in his library. Fernández's conclusion was that Unamuno's pragmatism was "original with respect to that of the American, from whom he absorbed only complementary features"³⁶. However, the abundance of facts that Pelayo Fernández lists bears witness to a great influence, and a great similarity between the two thinkers on many issues and problems. Izaskun Martínez has highlighted the role of *Leonardo* and Papini in this pragmatist orientation of Unamuno. She

³⁵ G. Maddalena and M. Luisi, "I pragmatisti europei", in R. M. Calcaterra, G. Maddalena and G. Marchetti (eds.), *Il pragmatismo. Dalle origini agli sviluppi contemporanei*, Carocci, Roma, 2015, 172.

³⁶ P. H. Fernández: *Miguel de Unamuno y William James. Un paralelo pragmático*. Salamanca, CIADA, 1961, 13.

studied the correspondence between Unamuno, James and Papini and the close affinities amongst them. I will bring only a quotation from the article of Papini "Miguel de Unamuno" in *Leonardo*³⁷:

Io sento per lui una simpatia istintiva che è dovuta, probabilmente, alle somiglianze delle nostre anime e dei nostri scopi. Egli vuol fare per la Spagna ciò ch'io vorrei fare per l'Italia e riconosco pure come mio principale patrono l'immortale Don Chisciotte il quale non è mai veramente morto nel mondo, perché se morisse davvero la vita diverrebbe qualcosa di orribile, una specie di sotterraneo senza luce, abitato da bestie sodisfatte³⁸.

In the case of José Ortega y Gasset, John Graham published a careful study in which, after noting Ortega's hostility to American pragmatism, he reveals "many basic connections, similarities and points of identity, so that concrete influence and dependence seem more plausible than 'coincidence' between Ortega and James"³⁹. Graham gives evidence that Ortega read James early in his career, and that Ortega was aware of James's radical empiricism as having anticipated the central notion in his own "rational-vitalism"⁴⁰. His evidence of James's impact on Ortega by German sources, themselves influenced by James, is specially convincing⁴¹.

In contrast with Ortega, as we have seen, Eugenio d'Ors is perhaps the Hispanic philosopher most conscious of his personal connection with American pragmatism. For establishing this affiliation the Italian connection seems extremely important. In this sense, it might be said that the connection with the Italian pragmatists was *essential* for those Spanish thinkers, and —as I will highlight in a moment— *it is still essential today*.

4. Mediterranean Pragmatism

Let us come to the final section of my lecture. You have heard a lot of names and dates. What I want to add now is an idea: Europe needs us; Europe needs new philosophers working creatively in a pragmatist frame of mind. In order to explain that, I want to start quoting what Rosa Maria Calcaterra and myself wrote in our proposal of an Integrated Action between the Italian and Spanish governments more than ten years ago:

The aim of the integrated action is to reconstruct the impact of the classics of American Pragmatism on Italian and Spanish philosophy, in view of a more extensive analysis of the influence of this philosophical movement on European culture. Pragmatism is currently studied in various countries not only for its attention to the methodology of knowledge but also for its possible contribution to the theory of intercultural and interpersonal communication.

³⁷ G. Papini, "Miguel de Unamuno", *Leonardo*, LIV/4, October-December 1906: 365-366; I. Martínez, "Giovanni Papini e Miguel de Unamuno: due prospettive comuni", in G. Maddalena and G. Tuzet (eds.), *I Pragmatisti italiani. Tra alleati e nemici*, 173.

³⁸ On Unamuno's quixotism in Italy, it is interesting the paper of S. Borzoni, "El quijotismo de Unamuno en Italia: Filosofía de la acción, irracionalismo y fascismo", *Historia Contemporánea* 44 (2012), 271-305.

³⁹ J. T. Graham: *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Life in Ortega y Gasset*. Columbia, MI, University of Missouri Press, 1994, 145.

⁴⁰ J. T. Graham: *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Life in Ortega y Gasset*, 147-152.

⁴¹ A. Donoso: "Review of Graham's *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Life in Ortega y Gasset*," *Hispania* 78 (1995), 499.

In fact, pragmatism played a vital role in the democratic political set up of the USA during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Just at that time pragmatist thought was introduced into Italy and Spain by eminent scholars such as Vailati, Calderoni, Papini, Prezzolini and Unamuno, Ortega, d'Ors. They considered the new American philosophy as a novel form of culture, centered on the actual and potential capability of knowledge activities of modifying the human condition, including ethical and political positions.

But, in a few years' time pragmatism was darkened all over the Europe, mainly for ideological reasons. In fact some of the Spanish and Italian thinkers involved in the elaboration of pragmatism maintained an ambiguous attitude in relation to the political regimes that took power in their own countries. Consequently, up to now, the historiographic reconstruction of the connections between 'classic' American philosophy and the above mentioned group of Italian and Spanish scholars has never been adequately undertaken.

Twelve years have passed and a lot of work has been done in Italy and Spain, but it seems to me that it is not enough. I do not know why these words bring to my memory the emphatic closing words of Edmund Husserl in his Vienna lecture of 1935:

The crisis of European existence can end in only one of two ways: in the ruin of a Europe alienated from its rational sense of life, fallen into a barbarian hatred of spirit; or in the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy, through a heroism of reason that will definitively overcome naturalism⁴².

The intellectual history of the last century is really complex. It may be affirmed that the rise of logical positivism in America after the Second World War almost eliminated pragmatism from the philosophical scene. Scientism, as held by the Circle of Vienna and its positivist heirs, became from the 1950's the dominant culture, converting itself into a materialist realism which sought to explain everything *right now*, or which trusted blindly in the progress of human reason and its ability to explain, in a definitive way and in the immediate future, all problems. In contrast with this optimism, post-modern thought, widely spread in the last decades, oscillated between a presentation of science as a mere power structure or as just another form of literature. The presence of both approaches is detected clearly in many levels of our culture that present a curious amalgam of vulgar pragmatism, scientific foundationalism, and literary skepticism.

It seems to me that it is not an overstatement to affirm that reason is in danger nowadays. Reasonableness is not the hallmark of our politicians or businessmen all over the world, and it seems also that it is far away from the real practices of our scientific colleagues. We philosophers, who —in Husserl's expression— feel ourselves to be "civil servants of humankind," have a serious responsibility about our fellow citizens, like Socrates with Athens. With our work we are not only transmitting philosophical knowledge to new generations, we are keeping alive the flame of rigorous thinking in freedom, the flame of being in plenitude human beings. I bring a quotation from my admired Hilary Putnam, which I have had during years as a guideline for my work in philosophy [He sometimes used to call me "the Catholic pragmatist"]:

⁴² The lecture ends with: "Europe's greatest danger is weariness. Let us as 'good Europeans' do battle with this danger of dangers with the sort of courage that does not shirk even the endless battle. If we do, then from the annihilating conflagration of disbelief, from the fiery torrent of despair regarding the West's mission to humanity, from the ashes of the great weariness, the phoenix of a new inner life of the spirit will arise as the underpinning of a great and distant human future, for the spirit alone is immortal." E. Husserl, "Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man", 10th May 1935. Text available at < http://www.users.cloud9.net/~bradmcc/husserl_philcris.html >

I try to defend the idea that the theoretical and practical aspects of philosophy depend on each other. Dewey wrote in *The Need of a Recovery in Philosophy* that 'Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men.' I think that the problems of philosophers and the problems of men and women are connected, and that it is part of the task of a responsible philosophy to bring out the connection⁴³.

Philosophy is not —and cannot be— only an academic exercise, but is an instrument to progressive critical and rational reconstruction of everyday living. In a world in which daily living is frequently found removed from an intelligent examination of oneself and of the fruits of human activity, a philosophy that separates itself from genuine human problems, would be a luxury that we cannot afford.

The revival of pragmatism —that this meeting in Chieti also credits— draws attention to the growing evolution of a new sensibility disillusioned with the vain promises of scientistic progressivism, but anxious at the same time, in accordance with the best philosophical tradition, to forge a future which might be different from the past⁴⁴. In fact, a feature of this new sensibility is the preferred attention it gives to our communicative practices, to the human ability to build bridges between both individual and cultural differences. According to that it seems to me that inspired young thinkers from Italy, Spain, and other countries, well trained on this pragmatist tradition, may be essential to overcome the poverty of most of the (almost dying for multiple reasons) analytical and continental philosophies which still have a dominant position in Europe. The task is in our hands. In this is in what Rosa Maria and myself were thinking when we suggested that tag of *Mediterranean Pragmatism*. Mediterranean pragmatism is what Europe needs today!

Thanks a lot for your attention.

⁴³ J. Harlan, "Interview with Hilary Putnam", *The Harvard Review of Philosophy*, Spring (1992), 22.

⁴⁴ R. Rorty, "Philosophy & The Future", in H. J. Saatkamp, (ed.), *Rorty and Pragmatism*, Vanderbilt University Press, Nashville, 1995, 198.