Editorial: How Many Worlds of History Are There?

The focus on the narrative aspects of the writing of history since the 1970s has reinforced constructivist and pluralist assumptions about historiography. Narrativization and narrative features in texts have typically been understood as being dependent on the subject-side, and thus, on the narrator and her culture. Assuming then that narrativity is an essential feature of historical presentation, the conclusion that seems to follow is that there cannot be only one objectively correct narrativization of the past. Instead, there are many possible (literary) worlds of history. But are there other reasons to favor pluralism with respect to the worlds of history?

By contrast, it is often thought that the sciences gradually reveal the secrets of nature and debunk our errors and myths. This form of progress has of course been questioned by Kuhn and other historical philosophers in particular but still captures the imagination of many. Could the past be approached in a similar way? That is, could we think that painstaking study reveals the shape of the real past, which could perhaps also function as a guide to the future? Further, if we think that historical explanations are causal, citing causes and effects of phenomena, does this add force to realism in historiography? Is it conceivable that there is something like one correct and describable causal structure in the past? And can we get to the one true account of the past?

The papers of this issue are united by their concern with the form and philosophical bearing of historical knowledge. Specifically, they discuss narrativity, causality and plurality of historical (re)presentations. Bruce S. Bennett and Moletlanyi Tshipa argue most explicitly for the plurality of historical worlds. Their application of the Many-Worlds Interpretation (MWI), borrowed from physics, strikingly states that all possible histories exist. It may be the case that we, in fact, inhabit a less probable world. The authors also suggest that MWI can help us to think about causation in history.

Georg Gangl likewise studies the nature of causality in his research paper. Gangl argues that historiography shares the same form of explanation, causal narrative explanation, as other historical sciences, such as evolutionary biology and paleontology. According to Gangl, “historians track with their narratives ... ‘causal networks’ that spread through time,” which seems to take us beyond the historian-narrator’s world to the real mechanisms of the past. Yet,

he also suggests that conceptual colligations are central in historians' practice in that they are used to create temporal wholes from the hindsight perspective.

Thodoris Dimitrakos evaluates the tenability of the foundational idea of the history and philosophy of science: that historical evidence, and case studies in particular, can function as a testing ground for philosophical views. Dimitrakos defends this, arguing that objections to the 'confrontation model' are not fatal. This justifies "the idea that the history of science can provide evidence and therefore deeply inform the philosophy of science," and the notion that the relationship between the two, however, should be seen not as confrontational but as iterative.

There are also three review articles and one book review in this issue. First, Frank Ankersmit considers whether we are experiencing a narrative revival, discussing Chiel van den Akker's *The Exemplifying Past* and Paul Roth's *The Philosophical Structure of Historical Explanation together*. Ankersmit suggests that we may be returning to the pre-Whitean emphasis on cognitivist dimension of historical narrative. Further, Paul Roth and Mariana Imaz-Scheinbaum analyze Alex Rosenberg's book *How History Gets Thing Wrong: The Neuroscience of our Addition to Stories*. They argue that Rosenberg is unsuccessful in his effort to establish that narrative histories cannot have any epistemic value and criticize his thesis that we should not use stories to provide accounts of our doings. Juhan Hellerma discusses Zoltán Boldizsár Simon's book *History in Times of Unprecedented Change: A Theory for the 21st Century*, which proposes that our historical horizon is shaped by the expectations of a radical break, an "unprecedented event," which calls into the question the sustainability of human civilization. Hellerma analyzes the notions of unprecedented and temporality and submits that we should engage in the study of "multiple simultaneously effective and variously interacting temporal structures." Finally, João Rodolfo Munhoz Ohara reviews Steven G. Smith's *Full History: On the Meaningfulness of Shared Action*.

I hope you enjoy this excellent second issue of 2021!

Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen
Editor-in-Chief