

Chapter 1

American Women Philosophers: Institutions, Background and Thought



Joel Katzav, Dorothy Rogers, and Krist Vaesen

1 **Abstract** This chapter provides the background to the American women philoso-
2 phers' works that are introduced and collected in *Knowledge, Mind and Reality:*
3 *An Introduction by Early Twentieth-Century American Women Philosophers*. We
4 describe the institutional context which made these works possible and their
5 methodological and theoretical background. We also provide biographies for their
6 authors.

7 1.1 Introduction

8 Attention to women in philosophy since the publication of Mary Ellen Waithe's four-
9 volume *History of Women Philosophers* in the 1980s has led to a large number of
10 recovery projects. Recent scholarship includes the current work; a special issue in
11 *Australasian Philosophical Review*; Springer's new book series on women in philoso-
12 phy and the sciences; forthcoming Oxford handbooks on women philosophers; a
13 series of articles on women in the history of philosophy initiated by the American
14 Philosophical Association (APA); and an academic journal dedicated to research on

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women in the history of philosophy.¹ In addition, a number of institutional initiatives are in place to enhance and examine women's role in philosophy. In recent years, the APA has introduced programs and grant funding to support gender representation in the discipline. The British Philosophical Association collaborated with the Society of Women in Philosophy to conduct a study about the status of women in the profession—a ten-year follow-up to the organization's research in 2011. Similarly, the Canadian Philosophical Association recently examined the representation of women in philosophy programs, which remain relatively low at all levels, from undergraduate enrolments to senior faculty positions (20–30%). Both the British and Canadian studies recognize the recent expansion of research on women philosophers as a positive development that may help advance gender inclusion in the discipline in the future.² Yet the women-in-philosophy movement has also contributed to the development of a parallel track, as it were, in the discipline, with women's contributions running alongside the work of canonical male figures. This phenomenon has led to others: women are considered only auxiliary figures who had little impact in the discipline, during their own time or in our own; women's ideas are often validated in and through their similarities to masculine philosophers' thought; canonical male figures continue to be at the center of philosophy and their work taken as the starting point for the majority of our discussions. In the American context, these tendencies coincide with a long-held myth that in the twentieth century analytic methods and claims emerged to challenge and ultimately to undermine philosophical idealism and speculative traditions, both of which had been dominant in the U.S.A. and Canada for decades.

With this volume, we aim to continue to contribute to recognising the place of women in twentieth century philosophy. We aim, to begin with, to do so by offering a resource for diversifying the curriculum. The work—mostly articles but also some book chapters—collected here is on topics standardly covered in knowledge and reality courses and is by more or less forgotten American women philosophers who were active from at least the early decades of the twentieth century. We also aim to offer a resource for the history of philosophy. We are providing materials for a history of philosophy that includes women as originators of what turned out later to be historically important philosophy as well as explorers of significant but relatively neglected avenues of thought. To some extent, this counters the parallel track

¹ The *Australasian Philosophical Review* edition includes articles on Grace Andrus de Laguna, co-curated by Krist Vaesen and Dorothy Rogers <https://aap.org.au/APR>; the Springer series is *Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences*, edited by Marie Ellen Waithe, Ruth Hagen-gruber, and Gianni Paganini <https://www.springer.com/series/15896>; the Oxford handbooks include Lydia Moland and Alison Stone's edited collection (2021) on nineteenth-century American and British women philosophers, and Kristin Gjesdal and Dalia Nassar's edited collection (2021) on nineteenth-century women philosophers in the German tradition; the series of articles on women in the history of philosophy is published by *The Journal of the American Philosophical Association* <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-the-american-philosophical-association/women-in-the-history-of-philosophy>; the new journal is *Journal of the History of Women Philosophers and Scientists* (Brill) <https://brill.com/view/journals/jhwp/jhwp-overview.xml>.

² For a synopsis and links to each study, see Weinberg (2021). See also, Rogers (2009).

narrative and enables a women-first narrative. Finally, we aim to contribute to a more complex perspective on the development of American philosophy. On this perspective, positions and methods associated with analytic philosophy were developed not primarily as a critical reaction to idealism in America and Britain but by idealists and those expanding the idealist tradition under the umbrella of speculative philosophy. The distinctiveness of the tradition of analytic philosophy was not really novelty on matters of substance but in its narrowing down of philosophy solely to its analytic side (Katzav, 2018; Katzav & Vaesen, 2022). Pragmatism also emerged, largely within the speculative wing of philosophy and, with philosophy more broadly, intersected with other fields of thought, science, education and moral/religious discourse in particular. Fields that were once under the purview of philosophy, such as psychology and anthropology, were established as new disciplines, largely because their leaders embraced empirical research. The recovery of the contributions of women philosophers is central to this project of correcting the narrative. Most of the authors covered here were developing the idealist tradition even while, as already indicated, some of them were contributing ideas that later became part of analytic philosophy. Given the goals of this book, our hope is that it will be of use to scholars and students in philosophy, intellectual history, American studies, and gender studies.

Within each of this volume's parts, readers will find an introduction, followed by selections from the writings of some of the women who contributed to the philosophical questions covered in the part. Each part's introduction offers a framing of the content of the subsequent selections in the part using terminology familiar within contemporary analytic philosophy. Further, each introduction uses this framework to situate the subsequent work in relation to some key debates, mostly within the analytic tradition. While some might find our approach anachronistic in places, we hope it will facilitate the integration of the work collected here into exiting courses in philosophy, the development of women-first narratives and a better understanding of who developed analytic ideas and arguments.

In Parts II and III (Knowledge and Perception and The Objectivity of Scientific Knowledge, respectively), the introductions and subsequent material primarily illustrate key positions and arguments that precede prominent equivalents in the analytic tradition. In Part I (The Nature of Philosophy), the introduction and subsequent material primarily illustrate relatively unfamiliar positions and arguments. The same is the case with regard to Parts V and VI (Time and Freedom and the Individual, respectively). Part IV (Mind and Matter) mixes positions that became familiar in later philosophy with relatively unfamiliar positions.

Thus, in Knowledge, we find Grace Andrus de Laguna and Mary Collins Swabey critiquing the idea of sense data and supporting aspects of coherentism about knowledge, much as analytic philosophers would later critique the sense-data based foundationalism of some early analytic figures, including of Bertrand Russell. In The Objectivity of Scientific Knowledge, we find the same women, as well as Thelma Zeno Lavine and Dorothy Walsh, developing sophisticated treatments of science that, despite belonging to the early decades of the twentieth century, fit well into post-logical empiricist philosophy of science. By contrast, in The Nature of Philosophy,

the views of philosophy offered by key analytic figures are contrasted with the speculative view of philosophy Mary Whiton Calkins presents as well as with Marjorie Silliman Harris' related, metaphysics-driven approach to ethics. Marjorie Glicksman Grene's contribution to the same part neatly illustrates the methodological pluralism of the time in American speculative philosophy. Similarly, in *Time*, the views on time covered by Calkins, Ellen Bliss Talbot and Grace Neal Dolson do not comfortably fit more recent, familiar categorisations of views about time. In *Freedom and the Individual*, we present the distinction between compatibilist and libertarian views of freedom and find Talbot, Harris and de Laguna developing relatively unfamiliar versions of libertarianism. In *Mind and Matter*, we find Margaret Floy Washburn and de Laguna engaging in an exchange which juxtaposes, in a way familiar from later philosophy of mind, dualism with functionalist treatments of the mental. Yet, in the same part, Calkins offers us an absolute idealist position, a kind of position that never became prominent within the analytic tradition.

We emphasise that the work included in this volume is by no means an exhaustive collection of the significant work by our contributors. Additional, though still incomplete, information about their work is provided below. So too, there are other early twentieth century American women philosophers who, partly because of our focus on providing a resource for teaching about knowledge and reality, do not have work in this volume. Such women include, among others, Christine Ladd-Franklin, Katherine Gilbert, Helen Huss Parkhurst and Isabelle Stearns.

The end of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth centuries saw American philosophy changing rapidly. During this period, academic philosophy underwent a wave of professionalisation. This stage of professionalisation encompassed institutional, methodological and theoretical developments. Institutional developments included (a) the creation of standardised graduate programs from the 1890s, (b) the creation of dedicated professional journals, including *The Philosophical Review* in 1892 and *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* in 1904, and (c) the creation of an association for academic philosophers, the APA, in 1900 (Auxier, 2005; Katzav & Vaesen, 2022). Further discussion of the institutional background to the work of women philosophers collected here is provided in Sect. 1.2 of this introduction. The methodological and theoretical developments included the development of widely shared frameworks that delineated the methodological approaches and theoretical tasks of academic philosophers, frameworks that helped to differentiate philosophy from related academic fields, especially from theology and psychology, which were also professionalising in similar ways (Auxier, 2005; Katzav & Vaesen, 2022). Further discussion of the methodological and theoretical developments during the period under consideration is found in Sect. 1.3. Section 1.4 provides a brief summary of the work of each of the authors collected in this volume.

1.2 Institutional Background

133 Women began entering academia at the end of the nineteenth century, and their careers
 134 and scholarly work were simultaneously facilitated and constrained by this. Women
 135 began earning doctorates in philosophy at progressive institutions: Cornell (1880),
 136 Smith College (1888), University of Michigan (1891), Yale (1896), and University
 137 of Chicago (1900). They also flourished as scholars by contributing to academic
 138 journals, by all accounts on an equal footing with men. Egalitarian male colleagues
 139 deserve credit in this regard. Cornell and the University of Chicago were founded
 140 with the intention of being institutions that were open to all, and faculty were hired
 141 with the understanding that this would be the case.

142 The University of Michigan began accepting women in 1870 and was among
 143 the first to provide women with opportunities for graduate study—significantly
 144 while John Dewey taught philosophy there along with George Sylvester Morris.
 145 Yale allowed women to earn degrees in some graduate programs at this early
 146 period, although it remained closed to female undergraduates until the late 1960s.
 147 Yale’s philosophy department chair, George T. Ladd appears to have had egalitarian
 148 views, corresponding with early (1896) doctoral degree earner, Anna Alice Cutler.
 149 Particularly important for what follows, Jacob Gould Schurmann and James Edwin
 150 Creighton developed the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell University in the
 151 1890s. Both adopted the egalitarian goals of the Cornell family in founding the
 152 University, something reflected in the fact that the School was more successful than
 153 other schools at the time in training and subsequently placing women philosophers in
 154 academic positions. Creighton supervised five of the women whose work is included
 155 in this volume.

156 Schurmann and Creighton (*The Philosophical Review*) and James Eugene Wood-
 157 bridge and James McKeen Cattell (*The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and*
 158 *Scientific Methods*) set new standards for scholarship in philosophy, and by including
 159 women, they followed a precedent set by William Torrey Harris a generation earlier
 160 in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (1867–1893). Finally, regarding the new
 161 academic networks that developed at this time, women were charter members of both
 162 the western and eastern branches of the APA. This is at a time when membership
 163 in the APA was by nomination. In the Western Division, we see two women among
 164 forty-six men on the earliest membership lists. In the Eastern Division, there were
 165 eight women and fifty-seven men at the organization’s first meeting. Correspondence
 166 of Harry Norman Gardiner, one of the APA’s founders and leading figures, demon-
 167 strates that he was genuinely a champion of women’s participation in philosophy,
 168 and in 1920, we see his fellow faculty member at Smith College, namely Alice Anna
 169 Cutler, serving on the Eastern APA’s executive committee—the first woman to serve
 170 in that capacity.

171 Yet barriers continued to exist. Although universities were becoming more open
 172 to women, many elite institutions maintained men-only admissions policies. For
 173 instance, Johns Hopkins and Harvard gained notoriety by withholding doctorates
 174 from Christine Ladd-Franklin (1882) and Mary Whiton Calkins (1895), respectively.

175 And even the most egalitarian men often passed over women as teaching assistants in
 176 graduate programs or for faculty positions at co-educational colleges and universities.
 177 They simply assumed that men were more suited for leadership positions in their own
 178 institution and that women belonged at women’s colleges—or a “petticoat regime”
 179 as William James once put it. Working at women’s colleges, in turn, likely restricted
 180 opportunities for research and publication (James, 1986).³ The first woman on record
 181 to earn a doctorate in philosophy and hold a full-time position at a co-educational
 182 college was Marietta Kies (Michigan Ph.D., 1891; Butler College Faculty, 1896–
 183 1899). Finally, women often gravitated toward areas of study within philosophy that
 184 were branching off into independent disciplines. These fields included education,
 185 religion, and—notably for our purposes, psychology and anthropology.

186 1.3 Theoretical Background

187 One of the key theoretical goals that helped shape the field of philosophy, including
 188 that of the philosophers whose work is collected here, was that of engaging
 189 closely with the established special sciences—including the natural sciences but
 190 also psychology, sociology and humanistic fields such as history—in order to illumi-
 191 nate and learn from them (Cohen, 1910; Creighton, 1902, 1912; Katzav & Vaesen,
 192 2022; Morris, 1935). For many working in, or in the wake of, the idealist tradition,
 193 such engagement should include a critique of the sciences that brings out some of
 194 their limitations (de Laguna, 1951; Katzav & Vaesen, 2022). The tradition that grew
 195 through such philosophical engagement with science that aimed to go beyond science
 196 is the speculative tradition. Moreover, it was the function of reflecting on science in
 197 a systematic way which partly helped to differentiate philosophy from the sciences.

198 The requirement that philosophy engage with science broadly construed is clearly
 199 realised in the articles collected in the present volume. Calkins’ ‘The Nature, Types
 200 and Value of Philosophy’ (1907, pp. 6–13, this volume), included in *The Nature of*
 201 *Philosophy*, tells us that philosophy should always start its investigations by reflecting
 202 on available scientific information. The two main pieces in *Knowledge and Percep-*
 203 *tion* are parts of broader projects that reflect on science. One of these, ‘Pragmatism
 204 and the Form of Thought’ (this volume), by de Laguna and her husband, Theodore,
 205 is a chapter from the book *Dogmatism and Evolution: Studies in Modern Philosophy*
 206 (1910). This chapter provides a general understanding of knowledge that is part of
 207 the book’s empirical investigation of scientific knowledge. Swabey’s ‘The General
 208 Nature of Reason’ (this volume) is from her book *Logic and Nature* (1930) and is a
 209 general account of knowledge that fits into the book’s rationalist account of scientific
 210 knowledge. All the pieces in *The Objectivity of Scientific Knowledge* focus specifi-
 211 cally on investigating scientific knowledge. (Grace) de Laguna’s ‘Dualism in Animal
 212 Psychology’ (1918a, this volume) and Washburn’s ‘The Evidence of Mind’ (1917,
 213 pp. 27–37, this volume), both in *Mind and Matter*, present opposed perspectives on

³ See also Rogers (2020).

214 how psychology should investigate mental phenomena. These pieces also explore the
215 nature of mental phenomena, partly in light of what the sciences teach us about these.
216 Such exploration is further found, in the same part, in de Laguna's 'The Empirical
217 Correlation of Mental and Bodily Phenomena' (1918b, this volume) and Calkins'
218 'The Personalistic Conception of Nature' (1919, this volume).

219 While engagement with the special sciences was generally important to philos-
220 ophy, engagement with evolutionary ideas was particularly important. This was so
221 partly because of Hegel's idealist, evolutionary account of the development of ideas,
222 according to which thought's evolution is driven by logical tensions between ideas
223 and the goal of developing a coherent system of ideas. So too, the idea of evolu-
224 tion was important because of Charles Darwin's subsequently developed theory of
225 evolution, according to which biological evolution is driven by variation and natural
226 selection (de Laguna & de Laguna, 1910). In light of these evolutionary views, Amer-
227 ican philosophers developed a variety of views of the nature of evolution as well as
228 of how knowledge evolved. De Laguna's already mentioned empirical treatment of
229 knowledge, to which Swabey objects, was an evolutionary one. A common theme
230 of evolutionary theories of knowledge was that they took understanding types of
231 cognitive states such as, e.g., belief or perception, to be a matter of understanding the
232 type of function for which they had evolved (de Laguna & de Laguna, 1910; Pearce,
233 2020). De Laguna's theory of mind treats mental states as functional states, while
234 Washburn and Calkins object to such treatments.

235 Philosophical engagement with science aimed not only to illuminate the nature
236 and limits of scientific knowledge but also to illuminate what science tells us about
237 reality as well as reality itself. In some cases, the immediate goal was to better
238 understand what kinds of entities a special science was committed to as well as
239 what it presupposed about how these interact and change. Here, the philosopher
240 engaged in what might be called regional ontology. This goal is exemplified by the
241 discussion of the nature of mental states noted in the previous paragraph but also in
242 Walsh's 'Philosophical Implications of the Historical Enterprise' (1937, this volume).
243 Further, these regional ontologies were to be imaginatively fit together to develop
244 a more systematic metaphysics or vision of reality that finds a place for human
245 beings in it and goes beyond established opinion. This search for a vision of reality is
246 illustrated in the already mentioned discussions in *Mind and Matter*. In these studies,
247 a key question is how material, mental and other phenomena fit together. Similarly,
248 figuring out how humans fit in with an overall vision of reality drives the articles
249 in *Freedom and Time*, where the question is what the human individual is and how
250 human freedom might be reconciled with our being subject to historical, social and
251 physical causation. The articles in *Time and the Individual* consider the nature of
252 time but do so in relation to humans and their experience of time.

253 Thus far, we have looked at some of the methodological aspects of American
254 academic philosophy during our period of interest. There were, however, also specific
255 visions of reality which were particularly influential at the time and which helped
256 to shape philosophical discussion. Most important was the influence of absolute
257 or Hegelian idealism. Idealism is most commonly understood to be the view that
258 everything is, ultimately or fundamentally, mental or psychological. There is, on

259 this view, nothing independent of mind. One variant of idealism thus construed
 260 identifies the mental with experience. One understanding of what it means to say
 261 that, fundamentally, everything is mental is that it is to say that everything either is a
 262 mental phenomenon, e.g., a self or experience, or is an abstraction from the mental.
 263 Alternatively, saying that, fundamentally, everything is mental can be thought of as
 264 saying that everything either is mental or is what it is/exists in virtue of the mental.

265 Absolute idealism is sometimes presented as adding to the kind of idealism just
 266 discussed, the claim that all things are ultimately one. Thus understood, absolute
 267 idealism is the view that all things are ultimately the mental or psychological states
 268 of one experience or mind-like being, the Absolute (Connelly & D'Oro, 2019;
 269 Creighton, 1917). The Absolute is called 'the Absolute' because everything suppos-
 270 edly depends on it, while it depends on nothing. This version of absolute idealism
 271 can be termed psychological absolute idealism. Calkins was a proponent of psycho-
 272 logical absolute idealism. On Calkins' view, reality comprises a single person, of
 273 which all other things, including ourselves, are parts (1907; McDaniel, 2017).

274 A second version of absolute idealism, non-psychological absolute idealism, tends
 275 to accept that experience is fundamental but denies that experience is ultimately to be
 276 understood in mental or psychological terms. On this view, all experience essentially
 277 involves a subjective or psychological as well as a material pole, and neither is more
 278 fundamental than the other. Indeed, for some advocates of this form of absolute
 279 idealism, experience is also essentially social. Objective experience is possible only
 280 for a subject experiencing a material object within a broader social setting. Further,
 281 according to non-psychological absolute idealism, what makes any phenomenon
 282 revealed in experience real, and indeed what makes it what it is, is its function, that
 283 is, its meaning, value or aim. Finally, the value of phenomena comprises being a part
 284 of the total, coherent system of meaning. The Absolute, here, is the concrete, unified
 285 system of meaning (Creighton, 1917; Sabine, 1925; Swabey, 1920). Creighton was
 286 a proponent of non-psychological absolute idealism. (Marjorie) Harris, Swabey and
 287 Talbot, all Creighton's students, were also absolute idealists of this kind.

288 Absolute idealists agree that everything, including the human individual or self, is
 289 to be understood in terms of its dependence on the Absolute. This supposed depen-
 290 dence meant that not only, for the reasons given above, did philosophers need to
 291 address the question of what the sciences imply about the self and its freedom but
 292 also what absolute idealism implied about these. How could our choices be free if,
 293 ultimately, what we are is fully dependent on the Absolute? Similarly, the concern
 294 with time reflects absolute idealist concerns. Since all phenomena depend on the
 295 Absolute, time too must do so. But how can time be explained by something else,
 296 something that, since it explains time, cannot itself be temporal and thus cannot
 297 change? More broadly, in taking all phenomena to be dependent on the Absolute,
 298 absolute idealists were pressed to explain what this dependence amounts to.

299 One challenge posed by history is of particular concern for absolute idealism in
 300 its non-psychological variety. If aspects of reality are real by virtue of having some
 301 function in the total scheme of things, there should be nothing in history that does
 302 not have some broader function. History, however, suggests that not everything that
 303 happens makes sense, as part of a broader scheme of things.

304 The challenges within absolute idealism led to its further development as well
305 as to the development of rival visions of reality. Thus, while some, like Calkins,
306 Harris, Swabey and Talbot, continued to defend absolute idealism, others, such as
307 de Laguna and her student, Walsh, shared the speculative approach to philosophy
308 with the absolute idealists but did not endorse an absolute idealist vision of reality.
309 Dolson, though arguing in a way that is suggestive of an absolute idealist position,
310 does not leave enough work to determine her vision of reality. Washburn was largely a
311 psychologist and does not offer an overall philosophical vision, so it is hard to situate
312 her in a philosophical context beyond noting that her psychology incorporates a form
313 of mind-body dualism.

314 The most prominent rival to absolute idealism in America was (classical) prag-
315 matism, which was made prominent at the end of the nineteenth and the start of
316 the twentieth centuries by William James and John Dewey. Pragmatists shared with
317 absolute idealists the view that philosophy needs to engage with science, and espe-
318 cially the theory of evolution, to learn about ourselves and reality. Pragmatists also
319 agreed that reality, ultimately, is to be identified with experience. However, pragma-
320 tists denied that experience is a single unified system. Rather, on their view, expe-
321 rience comprises relatively fragmentary episodes in which tensions arise between
322 the elements of experience, e.g., between expectations and events, and conscious-
323 ness and reason are activated to resolve these tensions. Success at doing so amounts
324 to making a judgement that guides future behaviour in a way that does not give
325 rise to further tensions within experience. Here, it is the success of an individual
326 judgement in guiding behaviour that is the criterion for its truth rather than its func-
327 tion in the entire system of experience. Moreover, a successful judgement is thus
328 just a successful adaptation to a local, problematic situation. Pragmatists took them-
329 selves to be taking their cue from evolutionary theory here. On their view, judgments
330 were adaptations to specific circumstances in the same way as evolved behaviours
331 generally were such adaptations (Pearce, 2020).

332 The pragmatist view of experience does not imply that all aspects of experience
333 have some function within broader experience. Experience is, for them, evolving
334 and potentially unpredictable. This led pragmatists to different views of scientific
335 knowledge, of the self and of other phenomena than absolute idealist ones. Scientific
336 knowledge can, for example, more easily be viewed primarily as a tool for managing
337 what is experienced rather than as a theoretical system that aims to fit all of experience
338 together. Nor, given that judgement does not ultimately aim at a systematisation
339 of all experience, is there a need to assume that everything can be explained in
340 psychological, or other, terms. From amongst our authors, Thelma Zeno Lavine was
341 a pragmatist. Calkins, de Laguna and Talbot were critics of pragmatism, though de
342 Laguna was also influenced by pragmatism.

343 Some pragmatists, it is important to emphasise, not only rejected absolute idealism
344 but also the speculative approach to philosophy that came with it. For them, prag-
345 matism did not come with a metaphysics but focused on a view of knowledge and
346 problem resolution (Katzav & Vaesen, 2022). A similar rejection of speculation was
347 part of the realist, analytic response to the issues with absolute idealism, a response

348 developed by, for example, Edwin Bissett Holt, George Edward Moore, Emily Eliz-
 349 abeth Constance Jones, Ralph Barton Perry and Bertrand Russell. This response
 350 was primarily characterised by a rejection of the speculative tendency to go beyond
 351 established opinion in making claims about reality (Katzav, 2018; Katzav & Vaesen,
 352 2017).

353 Non-American influences on American women philosophers writing during the
 354 first half of the twentieth century were also significant. European philosophers were,
 355 during this period, reacting to Kantian and Hegelian philosophies. Moreover, many
 356 of these reactions involved a concern with the meaning of human experience as well
 357 as other concerns shared with American philosophers. Thus, in the early decades
 358 of the twentieth century, some American philosophers, including Talbot and Harris,
 359 developed their views in dialogue with the work of Henri Bergson, who sympathised
 360 with the pragmatist view that reason was primarily a practical instrument but, unlike
 361 the pragmatists, took us to have direct intuitive knowledge of our own natures and of
 362 time. Later in the century, some American philosophers engaged in dialogue with,
 363 and sometimes joined, the existentialist and phenomenological tradition. Here too,
 364 Americans found philosophers engaged in understanding experience and the role of
 365 the subject in experience. Among our authors, de Laguna and Grene were particularly
 366 engaged with phenomenology and existentialism, with Grene identifying these as her
 367 primary influences.

368 1.4 Individual Thought

369 1.4.1 *Mary Whiton Calkins (1863–1930)*

370 Mary Whiton Calkins studied at Smith College, earning a BA in 1885 and an MA
 371 (in classics and philosophy) in 1887. She continued her graduate studies at Harvard,
 372 under William James, Josiah Royce and Hugo Münsterberg, but had to do so unof-
 373 ficially, given that the university refused formally to admit women. Her disserta-
 374 tion was entitled *Experimental Research on the Association of Ideas*. Despite never
 375 officially being conferred with a Harvard degree, she became an associate (1896)
 376 and subsequently full professor (1898) in philosophy and psychology at Wellesley
 377 College. Calkins published much in both fields of study. Her work on memory in
 378 psychology is still influential today (McDonald, 2005). She became the first woman
 379 to serve as the President of both the American Psychological Association (1905) and
 380 the American Philosophical Association (1918).

381 Calkins identified philosophy with metaphysics and took the results of the special
 382 sciences to be the starting point of metaphysics. Metaphysics aims, on her view,
 383 to explain these results and in doing so to investigate the fundamental nature of
 384 things, especially of all-that-there-is. At the same time, she thought that science
 385 deals with abstractions and thus that the metaphysicians' engagement with science
 386 should involve criticism of it. The system of metaphysics she constructed was a form

387 of personal absolute idealism. On her view, ultimately, all phenomena are reducible to
 388 selves and aspects of selves, where selves are conceived of as immaterial. Moreover,
 389 all finite selves are part of a single, all-encompassing self (1907). Importantly, Calkins
 390 posits a hierarchy of selves, from complex ones such as human selves, to simple
 391 ones, such as single-celled animals. The material world comprises the experiences
 392 of immaterial selves, including even of earth worms and amoeba (1919). Calkins was
 393 a sharp critic of the opponents of idealism, including, for example, of early analytic
 394 philosophy, along with its realism (1911, 1925) and of pragmatism (1925), and
 395 offered, in addition to her absolute idealism and criticism of opposing philosophies,
 396 a psychology and an ethics. Her psychology is centered on understanding the self
 397 with the aid of introspection; she defends such a view against forms of behaviourism
 398 that were dominant at the time (1901, 1921). Her ethics builds on her metaphysics
 399 and psychology, proposing a view of the good as the community of all selves (1918).
 400 She wrote numerous articles. Her major books are *An Introduction to Psychology*
 401 (1901), *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy* (1907) and *The Good Man and the*
 402 *Good* (1918).

403 1.4.2 *Grace Andrus de Laguna (1878–1978)*

404 Grace Andrus de Laguna received a BA (1903) and a Ph.D. (1906) from Cornell,
 405 the latter based on a dissertation, entitled *The Mechanical Theory in Pre-Kantian*
 406 *Rationalism*, a study that was supervised by James E. Creighton. De Laguna moved
 407 to Pennsylvania, where she taught at Bryn Mawr College until her retirement. She
 408 held a position as an assistant professor from 1912 to 1919, as an associate professor
 409 from 1922 to 1929, and as a full professor from 1929 onwards. She became chair
 410 of the philosophy department at Bryn Mawr in 1930, and President of the American
 411 Philosophical Association Eastern Division 1941–1942. After retiring (1944), she
 412 continued to be a prolific writer.

413 De Laguna was one of the most original American philosophers of the early twen-
 414 tieth century as well as a significant contributor to linguistics and psychology. Her
 415 work in linguistics played an important role in the development of pragmatic linguis-
 416 tics (Nerlich, 2023). Her work in psychology strongly influenced Edward C. Tolman
 417 (1922), a key figure in the development of cognitive psychology (Carroll, 2017).
 418 In philosophy, she produced work in metaphysics, epistemology, the philosophy of
 419 science, the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of language and political philoso-
 420 phy. Many of the positions and arguments she developed, including, for example,
 421 a critique of the analytic-synthetic distinction, meaning holism, a private language
 422 argument, functionalism about the mental and a modal ontology, were later to become
 423 central to analytic philosophy, though the precise channels of her influence are yet
 424 to be explored and though, as she notes, analytic philosophy opposed her specula-
 425 tive approach to philosophy (Katzav, 2023). De Laguna's metaphysics, which was
 426 at the heart of her philosophy, aims to give us a vision of reality in its totality. She
 427 takes the world to comprise many distinct, ontologically fundamental individuals.

428 Some individuals are purely material but, contrary to materialism, idealism and mind-
 429 body dualism, others have irreducible physical, biological, psychological and social
 430 aspects. All individuals, further, have an irreducible teleological side, an aim. Indi-
 431 viduals are, finally, thought by her as being irreplicable and qualitatively unique in a
 432 way that transcends what can be described in language and thus science. Her philos-
 433 ophy of science, in line with her metaphysics, takes the different special sciences to
 434 reveal different aspects of individuals using theories that are partially true or true-
 435 enough for the purposes to which they are put. Her epistemology of science is an
 436 evolutionary one that takes theory evaluation to be moderately holistic and relative
 437 to paradigm or research program success. Her evolutionary, dispositionalist view
 438 of properties is used to underpin a functionalist, teleological theory of the mental
 439 and the social (Katzav, 2022, 2023). She wrote many articles. Her published books
 440 are *Dogmatism and Evolution: Studies in Modern Philosophy* (1910), *Speech: Its*
 441 *Function and Development* (1927) and *On Existence and the Human World* (1966).

442 1.4.3 Grace Neal Dolson (1874–1961)

443 Grace Neal Dolson earned her BA (1896), MA (1897) and Ph.D. (1899) at Cornell,
 444 with a master's thesis on the philosophy of Henry More and a dissertation on
 445 Friedrich Nietzsche's thought. She was one of the first six women to earn a doctoral
 446 degree at Cornell, where she studied under Jacob G. Schurman and James E.
 447 Creighton. She taught at Wells College (1901–1911) and at Smith College (1911–
 448 1915). She was a charter member of the American Philosophical Association and
 449 was also a member of the American Psychological Association. In 1915, she gave
 450 up her faculty position to enter a religious order. There she adopted the name Sister
 451 Hilary.

452 Dolson was primarily an interpreter of the works of other philosophers and most of
 453 what she wrote focused on the works of More, Nietzsche and Henri Bergson. Never-
 454 theless, her philosophical temperament does emerge in her selection of authors, and
 455 in her treatment, including her criticism, of these (Rogers, 2021, pp. 82–86). Dolson
 456 complains (1897) about More's limited ability to produce an argued system, which
 457 was not unrelated to his mysticism and thus to his ultimate rejection of reason. She
 458 is similarly dissatisfied with Nietzsche's lack of systematicity and his associated
 459 emphasis on the primacy of feeling over reason in guiding action. Thus, she appreci-
 460 ates the value of a position, such as Nietzsche's, that takes scepticism to its extreme,
 461 arguing that all judgement is in the end an individual expression of the will to power,
 462 but notes that, as a theory, such a position can but be judged by general rather than
 463 individual standards (1901, pp. 65–66). Similarly, she appreciates the originality of
 464 Nietzsche's version of egoism, but laments its arbitrariness (1901, pp. 100–103).
 465 Dolson's critique of Bergson is her most extensive critique. As she reads him, he
 466 has the view that the intellect is purely an instrument that guides action and that, in
 467 doing so, distorts the truth. True knowledge, in turn, is only possible through intuition
 468 and involves an identity between the subject and the object. Here, Dolson objects

469 that knowledge is only possible if there is a distinction between subject and object.
470 Instinct, further, is not deserving of the title ‘knowledge’ (1910). Dolson’s books
471 were *The Ethical System of Henry More* (1897) and *The Philosophy of Friedrich*
472 *Nietzsche* (1901). Her key articles are “The idealism of Malebranche” (1906), “The
473 Philosophy of Henri Bergson I” (1910) and “The Philosophy of Bergson II” (1910).

474 **1.4.4 Marjorie Glicksman (Later Glicksman Grene)** 475 **(1910–2009)**

476 Marjorie Glicksman Grene studied zoology at Wellesley College, before turning to
477 philosophy (1931). She travelled to Germany to study with Martin Heidegger and
478 Karl Jaspers, and received her Ph.D. in philosophy from Radcliffe College (1935)
479 for a dissertation on *Existenzphilosophie*. She took up various temporary jobs (as an
480 instructor and assistant) and was out of academia from 1944–1957. She continued
481 to do work in philosophy, however, and met Michael Polanyi, with whom she would
482 closely collaborate. In 1965 she became a professor in philosophy at the University
483 of California Davis. She held this position until her retirement in 1978. From 1988
484 onwards, she was an Honorary University Distinguished Professor of philosophy at
485 Virginia Tech.

486 Grene was important in introducing the work of key European philosophers, such
487 as Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre, to America during the middle decades of the
488 twentieth century. She is sympathetic to Heidegger’s goal of providing an under-
489 standing of human beings as embedded in the world but worries that his humans are
490 not situated biologically or, except in an abstract way, historically. Sartre does better
491 in understanding our situatedness but, in the end, also fails appropriately to illuminate
492 how it meshes with our freedom. It is, on her view, Maurice Merleau-Ponty who,
493 building on Heidegger’s ideas about human being, gives us a way of appropriately
494 accounting for the biological and historical aspects of the human as well as its unique
495 freedom (La Caze, forthcoming). Grene was, further, a philosopher of science. She
496 argues against the reductionist view that all of science did, or could, share a single
497 subject matter or methodology. She thus, for example, rejects the view that reality is
498 ultimately physical, insisting instead that biology is an autonomous science (1966,
499 ch. 8; 2002). With Polanyi, in a way that sits neatly with her work on European
500 philosophy, she argues that scientific practice is grounded in a free commitment by
501 individual scientists to a vision of the real and that scientific knowledge involves at
502 least partly tacit clues that direct attention to objects in the world (ibid.). Grene was,
503 further, an historian of philosophy and wrote on Aristotle, Descartes, Malebranche
504 and Spinoza. She proposes that philosophical ideas should be articulated in a dialogue
505 with past philosophers, a dialogue which understands them partly in relation to their
506 historical contexts and partly in relation to their role in the broader philosophical
507 dialogue (ibid.). Her books include, among others, *Dreadful Freedom: A Critique of*

508 *Existentialism* (1948), *The Knower and the Known* (1966) and *The Understanding*
 509 *of Nature: Essays in the Philosophy of Biology* (1974).

510 **1.4.5 Marjorie Silliman Harris (1890–1976)**

511 Marjorie Silliman Harris earned her BA at Mount Holyoke College in 1913, where
 512 she studied under Ellen Bliss Talbot. She completed her Ph.D. in philosophy in 1921
 513 at Cornell University, with a dissertation on Auguste Comte, under the supervision
 514 of James E. Creighton. She spent most of her academic career at Randolph-Macon
 515 Woman’s College in Virginia (1922–1958), from 1930 onwards as a full professor.
 516 She served as a president of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology
 517 (1940) and the Virginia Philosophical Association (1946).

518 Harris took the primary goal of philosophy to be that of exposing the limitations
 519 of our interpretations of experience and, in doing so, exploring the meaning of life
 520 and adapting our behaviour to experience. She took the attempt to offer a system-
 521 atic interpretation of experience to be a suitable way of fulfilling this primary goal
 522 (1923) but also recognised the importance of a more problem-oriented approach to
 523 philosophy (1960). Her work focuses on a number of key philosophers, especially
 524 August Comte, Henri Bergson and Francisco Romero. She criticises Comte’s posi-
 525 tivism from a Hegelian perspective, for example, for failing to realise that science
 526 is not limited to knowledge of the phenomenal or subjective, and that reason must
 527 in the end aim at a vision that synthesises the subjective and the objective (1923).
 528 She expresses sympathy with Bergson’s treatment of time and the individual, though
 529 she also criticises his irrationalism (1937). It is in discussion with Bergson that she
 530 develops her own idealist conception of the self and its freedom (1933, this volume).
 531 In the 1950s and 1960s, she developed a focus on South American philosophy and,
 532 especially, looked to Romero as a continuer of the idealist tradition and as a starting
 533 point for developing a philosophy of culture that helped to address the need for a
 534 new shared vision of reality for humanity (1960). Her books include *The Positive*
 535 *Philosophy of Auguste Comte* (1923), *Sub Specie Aeternitatis* (1937) and *Francisco*
 536 *Romero on Problems of Philosophy* (1960).

537 **1.4.6 Thelma Zeno Lavine (1915–2011)**

538 Thelma Zeno Lavine earned a BA from Radcliffe College in 1936, and an MA (1937)
 539 and Ph.D. (1939) from Harvard University. She graduated with a dissertation entitled
 540 *The Naturalistic Approach to Theory of Knowledge*, studying with Ralph B. Perry
 541 and David W. Prall, and later with Clarence I. Lewis. She was a professor in philos-
 542 ophy at Brooklyn College (1946–1951), the University of Maryland (1955–1965),

543 George Washington University (1965–1985) and George Mason University (1985–
544 1988). She was awarded an Outstanding Faculty Member award at the University of
545 Maryland, and an Outstanding Professor award at George Washington.

546 Lavine thought of philosophy as aiming to critically and systematically inter-
547 pret the meanings we humans produce in the various compartments of knowledge
548 production. The method of philosophy thus conceived she called ‘*verstehen*’, but she
549 recognised that it was just the method of traditional philosophy, including of ideal-
550 istic dialectic (1953). She thought of pragmatism, and especially of John Dewey’s
551 pragmatism, as the best hope for continuing the tradition of the Enlightenment, with
552 its aim of rationally improving the human lot (1988), while also adequately updating
553 enlightenment thought for the twentieth century and beyond. Her espousal of prag-
554 matism and *verstehen* thus conceived came along with a criticism of the positivist
555 and logical empiricist form of naturalism according to which there is only one valid
556 method of gaining knowledge, namely the inductive method (1953). She was equally
557 critical of the postmodernist strand of European philosophy which, on her view,
558 went too far in its critique of reason, leaving no room for constructive philosophy
559 or interventions in society that aim to assist the marginalised (1988). Alongside her
560 engagement with rival approaches to philosophy, Lavine also argued for a form of
561 naturalism that extended to all aspects of knowledge. On her view, even the question
562 of how evidence justifies theory should be subjected to the empirical, interpreta-
563 tive method; there is no a priori examination of the logic of justification (1944, this
564 volume). Lavine wrote the book *From Socrates to Sartre: A Historical Introduction*
565 *to Philosophy* (1984). Her key articles include, among others, “Naturalism and the
566 Sociological Analysis of Knowledge” (1944), “What Is the Method of Naturalism?”
567 (1953) and “The Interpretive Turn from Kant to Derrida: A Critique” (1989).

568 1.4.7 Marie Collins Swabey (1890–1966)

569 Marie Collins Swabey received her BA at Wellesley College (1913), studying under
570 Mary W. Calkins. She also earned an MA at the University of Kansas (1914) and a
571 Ph.D. at Cornell University (1919), studying under James E. Creighton. Her doctoral
572 dissertation was entitled *Some Modern Conceptions of Natural Law*. At New York
573 University, Swabey was an instructor (1924–1928), an assistant professor (1928–
574 1934), and an associate professor (1934–1956). She was a member of the American
575 Philosophical Association and the Association for Symbolic Logic.

576 Swabey swam against the tide of the philosophy of her time. While empiricism and
577 naturalism dominated American philosophy, she developed a sophisticated form of
578 rationalism. Further, her rationalism underpinned the other aspects of her philosophy,
579 including her metaphysics, aesthetics, and political philosophy. Her epistemology
580 took reason to be a human capacity for grasping the nature of the world as a whole,
581 one which, as such, can be thought of as supernatural. This capacity, in her view,
582 makes possible a priori knowledge of logic and, via this a priori knowledge, of
583 metaphysics and thus of the fundamental nature of reality. We have, on her view,

584 synthetic a priori knowledge that the entities in our world are atoms, in that they are
 585 discrete entities with discrete quantifiable qualities. But these entities nevertheless
 586 have their qualities, and are governed by the laws of nature, by virtue of being part
 587 of a unified system of meanings, the universe or absolute. It is the job of philosophy
 588 to study the universe as a whole. Our ability to grasp reality as a whole, further,
 589 allows us to justify fundamental aspects of reasoning in science, including the use
 590 of induction (Katzav & Vaesen, 2022; Swabey, 1920, 1930). Her rationalism carries
 591 over to her treatment of knowledge in the special sciences, for example, to her
 592 defence of a rationalist view of historical inquiry and criticism of then fashionable
 593 forms of relativism or scepticism about science (1954). Her defence of political
 594 liberalism involves showing that rationality justifies democracy in the same way that
 595 it justifies science (1937). Similarly, on her view, the comic involves recognition of
 596 an inconsistency and thus of impossible truth against a background assumption that
 597 the world exhibits a moral and rational order (1961). Swabey's books include *Some*
 598 *Modern Conceptions of Natural Law* (1920), *Logic and Nature* (1930), *Theory of*
 599 *the Democratic State* (1937), *The Judgment of History* (1954) and *Comic Laughter:*
 600 *A Philosophical Essay* (1961).

601 **1.4.8 Ellen Bliss Talbot (1867–1968)**

602 Ellen Bliss Talbot first studied at Ohio State University, where she earned a BA in
 603 1890. She then earned a Ph.D. in philosophy at Cornell University in 1898, with
 604 a study of Johann Gottlieb Fichte. This made her one of the first six women who
 605 managed to earn doctoral degrees in philosophy at Cornell before 1900. Her super-
 606 visor was James E. Creighton. In 1900, she became professor of philosophy at Mount
 607 Holyoke College, a position she held until 1936. At Mount Holyoke, she served as
 608 a chair of the philosophy department for over thirty years. Talbot was one of the
 609 first female members of the American Philosophical Association and one of seven
 610 women who also were members of the American Psychological Association.

611 Talbot was primarily a metaphysician. She focused on the nature of the human
 612 individual, its freedom and its relationships with time and value (see, e.g., her 1906,
 613 1909, 1915, this volume). She also aimed to understand how and why objective
 614 value has come to be realised in our world (1906, pp. 119–122). Her explanation,
 615 which was not articulated fully, at least not in print, was a form of non-psychological
 616 absolute idealism. She believed in the fundamental reality of individuals developing
 617 in time (1915, this volume; 1917). She also believed, however, that this development
 618 to some extent realises, and aims to realise, the Absolute, conceived of as some
 619 form of ultimate value in which all oppositions found in actuality are unified (1906,
 620 p. 67). Her vision of reality is largely an interpretation of that of Fichte (Talbot, 1906,
 621 1907). She was, however, critical of Fichte's treatment of the Absolute. Fichte, on
 622 her reading, thought of the actual world of finite consciousnesses as all that is actual,
 623 though this actuality, on his view, strives to realise the Absolute. This, in her view,
 624 raises the worry of whether Fichte had an adequate explanation of the extent to which

625 we are forced to adapt to external constraints (1907). She criticises pragmatism's
626 equation of reality with malleable experience on similar grounds (1907) and, indeed,
627 argues against the pragmatist view that a theory's truth is its workability in favour
628 of the view that its truth is its correspondence to the facts (1917). She wrote a single
629 monograph, *The Fundamental Principle of Fichte's Philosophy* (1906). Key articles
630 of hers include "The Philosophy of Fichte in its Relation to Pragmatism" (1906),
631 "Individuality and Freedom" (1909), "The Time-Process and the Value of Human
632 Life. II" (1915) and "Pragmatism and the Correspondence Theory of Truth" (1907).

633 1.4.9 Dorothy Walsh (1901–1982)

634 Dorothy Walsh first studied in Canada, receiving a BA from University of British
635 Columbia in 1923 and an MA from the University of Toronto in 1924, before moving
636 to Bryn Mawr in the U.S., where she earned her Ph.D. in 1926. Her doctoral disserta-
637 tion was supervised by Grace A. de Laguna, and addressed the objectivity of the
638 judgment of aesthetic values. In 1935 she became an assistant professor at Smith
639 College, where she taught until her retirement in the early 1960s. She was a member
640 of the American Philosophical Association throughout her career and remained
641 professionally active into the 1970s.

642 Like her teacher, de Laguna, Walsh put metaphysics at the heart of philosophy.
643 And, again like de Laguna and others working in the wake of absolute idealism,
644 Walsh thinks of metaphysics as aiming to offer a vision of reality as a whole (1938,
645 p. 76, this volume). She, however, presented no fully developed system, but wrote
646 on diverse issues within metaphysics, including the nature of facts, historical events,
647 causation, modality and, especially, the objects of literature and, more broadly, art.
648 She also wrote of diverse kinds of knowledge, including, especially, those provided
649 by philosophy, history and art. It is through the investigation of types of knowing and
650 experience that she developed her metaphysical theses. Walsh's study of fact gives us
651 a glimpse of a metaphysics according to which reality comprises non-deterministic
652 processes in which possibilities are selected for actualisation. Facts, as opposed to
653 processes, are epistemic rather than entities to which beliefs correspond. Factual
654 knowledge is ultimately the givenness of certain processes to the largely volitional
655 self (1943a, pp. 649–651). Art, on her view, provides a type of knowledge that is
656 distinct from that of philosophy or the sciences. A work of art is a sensuous, self-
657 sufficient structure that aims to mirror a kind of possible order, one characterised by
658 "plenitude and richness with structural self-sufficiency" (1943b, p. 449). Literature,
659 more than science, give us ultimate knowledge, knowledge that is true to certain
660 structures of experience, comes from living through events rather than inference
661 and is redemptive in the face of the transitoriness of experience (1969). Walsh's
662 monographs include *The Objectivity of the Judgment of Aesthetic Value* (1936) and
663 *Literature and Knowledge* (1969). Some of her significant papers are "Philosophical
664 Implications of the Historical Enterprise" (1937), "The Poetic Use of Language"
665 (1938), "Fact" (1943a) and "The Cognitive Content of Art" (1943b).

666 1.4.10 Margaret Floy Washburn (1871–1939)

667 Margaret Floy Washburn studied psychology, first at Vassar College and Columbia
 668 University, then at Cornell, to become the first woman at the university to receive
 669 a Ph.D. in psychology (1894). Washburn was a charter member of the American
 670 Philosophical Association. She was also a member of the American Psychological
 671 Association and served as its president in 1921. She taught psychology (and philos-
 672 ophy) at Wells College (1894–1900); part-time at Cornell, while also serving as a
 673 “warden” of women (1900–1902); the University of Cincinnati (1902–1908), and,
 674 during most of her career, as a full professor at Vassar (1908–1937). She was a prolific
 675 writer and still is one of the most cited psychologists of the Twentieth Century.

676 Washburn argued, contra some forms of behaviourism and in accord with the
 677 introspective approach of her teacher Edward B. Titchener, that essentially subjec-
 678 tive mental states are an appropriate object of study for psychology, in addition
 679 to behaviour. This view is applied in her use of inductive reasoning, on the basis
 680 of shared anatomical structure and behaviour, to investigate the kinds of subjective
 681 mental states of dozens of kinds of animals, including microscopic organisms (1917).
 682 Her view that psychology should concern itself with the subjective and the physio-
 683 logical reflected a firm commitment to psycho-physical dualism (1919, Woodworth,
 684 1948, p. 281). Her dualism went along with a dualistic treatment of consciousness,
 685 perception and learning. She argued that the subjective experience of consciousness
 686 is the result of the inhibition of one tendency to behaviour by another such tendency
 687 (1930). Perception involved two aspects, the having of subjective sensory impres-
 688 sions and motor preparation for action in relation to the object perceived. Learning,
 689 on her view, was a form of association between such states of motor readiness. In
 690 some cases, association between these states brought with it the association of ideas
 691 (1930, Woodworth, 1948, pp. 282–283). Washburn was, however, not primarily a
 692 theoretician. She was an experimentalist, performing experiments on skin sense,
 693 depth perception, after images, memory of emotional experience and more (Wood-
 694 worth, 1948, pp. 279–280). Her books include *The Animal Mind: A Textbook of*
 695 *Comparative Psychology* (1908) and *Movement and Mental Imagery: Outlines of a*
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