INTRODUCTION

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This companion volume to the ten-volume American Philosophical Association Centennial Series was envisioned by its general editor, Richard T. Hull. Anticipating when this multi-year project would culminate in the definitive collection of writings by philosophers who had each been elected president of one of the three divisions of the American Philosophical Association during its first 100 years, Hull asked me to edit a capstone volume of essays that presents both a retrospective and introspective overview of the series. I am pleased to be able to deliver this volume, which completes the most ambitious scholarly work about The American Philosophical Association (The APA) yet assembled.

The nineteen chapters in this volume are a magnificent set, surveying nearly 250 addresses. This is a stunning accomplishment by a fine group of scholars. Their dedication to the historical and contemporary study of philosophy in America is exemplary. They each have produced extremely valuable essays to guide the reader through the ten volumes of presidential addresses and survey the extraordinary diversity of philosophical thought represented there.

The first ten chapters each chronologically focus on one decade of the twentieth century. The assigned task was to weave together an account of that decade's addresses, pointing out the prominent topics and common themes among them, and discussing the philosophical movements they represented during their day. The next nine chapters are topical essays, each centering on a philosophical issue or area, and selecting out relevant addresses illustrating how that issue or area was developed over the course of the twentieth century. The choice of topical areas for this volume was determined by the number of presidential addresses falling under those areas, not by any proffered measure of their intrinsic merit or value for American philosophical thought. Many philosophical topics, such as those relating to anthropology, culture, or religion, are as equally important as any selected for inclusion here, but too few presidential addresses centered on them. Nevertheless, these addresses were not neglected, because they still receive due attention in their respective decade's chapter.

As James Good relates at the opening of the chapter on the first decade of the twentieth century, early presidential addresses typically provided sophisticated philosophical insights into broad intellectual concerns. With that goal firmly set by exemplary philosophers of stature and influence, the mission to professionalize the academic discipline of philosophy was taking one more step in the middle of a long journey. For some philosophers of that era, the examples of the ongoing professionalization of neighboring disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and history weighed heavily on their minds. Good's chapter is a clear window through which one can observe how the presidents used their

elected status in front of their peers to try to position philosophy's characteristic concerns with respect to the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. These early presidents also took their opportunities to try to shape the way philosophy itself should be done, by both example and exhortation. One of Good's citations for further reading about the formation and first decades of The APA deserves mention here: readers are well advised to consult James Campbell's thorough work, *A Thoughtful Profession: The Early Years of the American Philosophical Association*.[1]

Philosophy was among the last of the academic disciplines to be professionalized in the United States. The APA's second decade began with a continuation of the earnest debates among idealism, realism, and pragmatism, but social upheaval and World War I, followed by the tumultuous 1920s, made metaphysics an otiose extravagance. The burdens of the real world severely strained the young profession. Philosophy's guiding light was German-made, yet Germany was suddenly the enemy of civilization.

Philosophy was supposed to provide ethical wisdom, but what consolations could be offered for a tragically horrifying war? Randall Auxier identifies the presidencies of several pragmatic-minded and socially-oriented philosophers trying to guide philosophy through urgently practical matters. Matthew Broderick carries the tale through the 1920s, as peacetime for the civil realm was paired with dramatic scientific upheaval. Does science supply the standard of objective knowledge to which philosophy should aspire, or does the overthrow of scientific theories in abrupt revolutions instead open up vast vistas of fruitful metaphysical speculation for philosophy?

By the 1930s, the professionalization of philosophy was awkwardly, yet fully, completed. The second generation of scholars who earned their PhDs from young doctoral programs during 1890–1915 had, by then, reached mid-career and began populating The APA presidencies. Brian Henning organizes the addresses from the 1930s by the philosophical school they defended, indicating how philosophy was entirely controlled by debates within philosophy proper. Only the sudden rise of Fascism in central and southern Europe during the final years of that decade turned some presidential heads towards political issues. My chapter on the presidential addresses from the 1940s also highlights the substantial number of addresses tackling political questions, along with larger humanistic concerns about the capacity of humankind to govern itself, and the ultimate fate of civilization. To read a few of the most anxiety-driven and heart-rending addresses during the height of the war, and at the start of the atomic age, is to suffer with those presidents through truly dark and depressing visions of philosophy's stark irrelevance.

Presidents during the 1950s, in Frank Ryan's estimation, appeared to be casting about for great systems of philosophy as espoused by their teachers, but mostly succeeded in fostering a dramatic surge of diversity and breadth into the

profession. Their addresses typically reflected their own specialized scholarly interests more than any generation of philosophers before them. Yet the cumulative effect was to infuse philosophy with much-needed flexibility and fresh perspective. It was during this decade that addresses were heard about such matters as Zen Buddhism, Soviet jurisprudence, Plato's Demiurge, a universal grammar, nonlinguistic ritual, the tragic sense of life, logical positivism's failures, existentialism's contingencies, scientific naturalism, aesthetics, and undetached rabbit parts.

During the 1960s, widely regarded as the time when analytic philosophy achieved professional domination, many philosophical movements were still amply represented. As many presidents were explaining concerns for deep puzzles encountered while following out analytic precepts as there were presidents sounding confident that analytic techniques were finally resolving persistent puzzles. David Johnson and I also note how ethics rode of surge of interest from several presidents, and the area of history of philosophy also enjoyed some overdue attention. David Boersema's discussion of addresses from the 1970s shows how the heights of analytic philosophy were actually reached during that decade. The topical areas of philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, epistemology, and philosophy of science now formed the "core" to professional philosophy, and important addresses staked out vital positions on that core.

According to Drew Christie's narrative about that decade, during the 1980s, the history of philosophy, continental philosophy, ethics, and political philosophy regained a better balance with the analytic core. This reflects a broader diversity of interests and perspectives on philosophy by these presidents. A contributing factor was the revolt of the self-styled pluralists during the late 1970's.[2] They wrested away exclusive control over The APA presidency and its Eastern Division meeting's annual program from the reigning analytic camp, with the unexpected but timely assistance of Eastern Division president Richard Rorty.[3] The 1990s went on to witness, as Mark Tschaepe documents, a re-stablilized sense of philosophy as a profession that could handle large internal dissents across schools and movements. Many presidents sought to advance their areas of interest with creative combinations of views from various philosophical fields, and greater interest in interdisciplinary theoretical work was also much in evidence.

The chronological chapters are followed by the topical chapters. Gazing over the twentieth century's presidents, Nicholas Rescher examines addresses that concern the idea of philosophical progress. From the hopeful to the pessimistic, these addresses, not surprisingly, also disagree about what is meant by "philosophical progress." Few could deny that fads and fashions swept through philosophy no less frequently than the waves passing through other intellectual endeavors. Some presidents appealed to the ever-increasing specialization ex-

pected of professional philosophers, and its accompanying reliance on sophisticated argumentative technique, to make a case for some sort of progress. Other presidents made the rejoinder that only the appearance of progress was gained thereby, since specializations enhanced the guild-like structure of philosophical fields where initiates into arcane and esoteric matters could no longer understand other fields, or communicate their learning to other academic disciples or to the public.

Tibor Solymosi next turns to the crucial relationship between philosophy and the sciences. The emergence of philosophy as its own professionally academic discipline, first in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century, and then followed by English and American versions in the second half of the nineteenth century, involved a birth struggle against the mothering sciences. Was philosophy's right to be an independent discipline in the new academic superstructure for the university to be based on its own proprietary *scientia*—its own distinctive methodology, irreplaceable by any other mode of knowledge? That question had torn apart psychology already; experimentalists sought mathematical formulas for causality among mental processes, while proto-behaviorist functionalists appealed to teleological explanations and introspectionists demanded that the certainties of phenomenal consciousness take precedence.

This dispute was so destabilizing that philosophy had left psychology's orbit by the dawn of the twentieth century, but Anglo-American philosophy simply duplicated that dissent for itself. Several schools of philosophy claimed that they alone were capable of being scientific (in the broadest sense of possessing a genuine *scientia*), while other schools claimed that philosophy's humanistic distinctiveness instead lay in its non-scientific inquiries. Behind all these controversies lay the fundamental question: In what sense could philosophy still be relevant to science? Did philosophy hold the driving keys to the methodological engine making all science possible, or must philosophy be content to join the other humanities with the domestic task of getting our human experience of life comfortable with the sciences?

Philosophers who maintained close relationships with ongoing streams of philosophical thought on the Continent pursued these grand questions no less avidly. Cynthia Gayman's comprehensive four-chapter survey of continental-minded presidents, active in every decade of the twentieth century, reveals how thoroughly Kantian, Hegelian, Marxist, Nietzschean, phenomenological, hermeneutic, existentialist, postmodern, and feminist traditions (along with many more) sustained their impact on philosophical thought in America. Furthermore, as Gayman explains, many of the presidents not known by reputation as continentalist in spirit were, in fact, trying to bridge the growing divide between analytic and continental philosophy long before that effort became somewhat fashionable in the 1980s and 1990s.

The abiding concern for real-world problems of humanity animating much of continental philosophizing was also energizing philosophical work in America in the areas of political theory, political philosophy, and the ethos of democracy. Brian Butler supplies exhaustive evidence that American philosophers never abandoned these areas of philosophical inquiry during any of this century's decades. Great political events, both domestic and foreign, were the natural occasion calling for commentary and analysis, of course. From the convulsions of World War I and World War II, to the Vietnam War and the long Cold War, all the way to dawn of a hopeful new age for global democracy, prominent American philosophers reflected on perennial philosophical problems inherent to maintaining civic order, searching for political stability, finding the basis for human rights, and constructing constitutions for justice and peace.

Nancy Stanlick presents a survey across another perennial arena for philosophical investigation: the realm of ethics. Axiology, metaethics, the disputes among rival ethical systems, normative ethics, and applied ethics all received careful attention from presidents of The APA across the decades. Another perennial field of philosophy is aesthetics, discussed by Russell Pryba in the closing chapter. As he demonstrates, although twentieth-century aesthetics did not enjoy anything like the prominence in American philosophy that it enjoyed in the nineteenth century, a large number of the presidents made substantial contributions to issues concerning the nature of beauty, the distinctiveness of aesthetic experience, art and creativity, and the status of the art object and the art world.

In closing, permit me to express some thoughts about the nature of this companion volume and the primary volumes of The APA presidential addresses themselves. That these eleven volumes were assembled for perusal and study in permanent published form is itself an event in the course of professional philosophy calling for explanation. Collected volumes such as these, along with encyclopedic reference works, require vast energies and unparalleled scholarly effort.[4] Interest in the history of philosophy is one thing; dedication to the historiography of philosophy is another.

It is almost beyond words for me to express my profound respect and gratitude for the numerous professional philosophers here in America who have sustained the historiography of philosophy in America. The way that several of the presidents were themselves highly respected historiographers of philosophy is a comforting thought. Of even greater comfort is the knowledge that philosophy itself is a historically cumulative enterprise having the grandest experimental scope. Therefore, familiarity with its intellectual genealogies is necessary for anything worthy of characterization as philosophical achievement and progress.

Notes

1. James Campbell, *A Thoughtful Profession: The Early Years of the American Philosophical Association* (Chicago: Open Court, 2006).

2. Bruce Wilshire, The Pluralist Rebellion in the American Philosophical Association, in *Fashionable Nihilism: A Critique of Analytic Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 51–64.

3. Neil Gross, *Richard Rorty: The Making of an American Philosopher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 216–227.

4. My thoughts especially turn to the several hundred contributors to the *Dictionary of Modern American Philosophers*, 4 vols., ed. John R. Shook (Bristol, UK: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005); and the *Dictionary of Early American Philosophers*, 2 vols., ed. John R. Shook (London and New York: Continuum, 2012).