

Magda Arnold and the Human Person:  
A Mid-Century Case Study on the Relationship Between Psychology and Religion

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### **Abstract**

The life of Magda Arnold (1903-2002)—best known for her pioneering appraisal theory of emotion—spanned the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and as a result she witnessed the rise and fall of many of the major “schools” of psychology. Arnold had an unusual perspective on these theories of psychology, due in large part to an event that occurred in 1948: her conversion to Roman Catholicism. Throughout her life, but especially following her conversion, Arnold rejected reductionistic theories of the human person, instead articulating theories which emphasized human agency and telos, and which held up the human experience as the primary source of psychological knowledge. Arnold’s conversion significantly affected her career, as she made professional sacrifices to teach in Catholic institutions and was open about her religious identity in her academic work at a time when Catholic scholars were suspect. Arnold’s conversion also shaped her psychological thinking—she later credited her conversion and her resulting exposure to scholastic philosophy with inspiring her appraisal theory. Although there were other Catholics active in psychology at mid-century, Arnold was unusual even in that cohort for her seamless integration of her faith and her science.

Arnold’s involvement in psychology (1935-1975) roughly corresponds with a period in academic psychology in which there was very minimal investigation of religious topics (1930-1976)—they were generally considered taboo or unscientific. Yet the majority of American consumers of psychology remained religious in this period, and applied and popular psychology addressed their interests. Arnold’s life contributes an important perspective on this time period, highlighting how one psychologist of faith responded to the pressures of an increasingly secular psychology by rejecting the apparent conflict to affirm the fundamental compatibility of faith and science. As such Arnold’s life is a useful contribution to the growing literature on the

“complexity” perspective on the relationship between science and religion (as opposed to the traditional “conflict” perspective). Arnold was also aware of her own perspective as a religious psychologist and emphasized experimenter subjectivity in her work—offering a critical perspective on psychology that anticipated modern critiques of scientific objectivity. As a result Arnold can contribute to discussions of reflexivity and objectivity in psychology, both by drawing on her writings about the role of basic assumptions in science, and by considering her life to see just how her personal beliefs shaped her science.

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Finally, I echo John Gasson: *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*.

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Figure 1: Magda Arnold's Basic Emotions

Figure 2: Aquinas' Concupiscible and Irascible Passions

## Introduction

In January 1946, while at the University of Iowa, the 21-year-old Flannery O'Connor began a journal in which she recorded her prayers. These prayers document both her already impressive literary talent and her earnest spiritual yearning. For example, near the end of her journal, she writes: "What I am asking for is really very ridiculous. Oh Lord, I am saying, at present I am a cheese, make me a mystic, immediately. But then God can do that—make mystics out of cheeses" (O'Connor, 2013, p. 38). In this brief journal (only 24 entries) psychology makes a surprisingly frequent appearance.<sup>1</sup> In her very first entry O'Connor prays: "I can feel a warmth of love heating me when I think & write this to you. Please do not let the explanations of the psychologist about this make it turn suddenly cold. My intellect is so limited, Lord that I can only trust in you to preserve me as I should be" (O'Connor, 2013, p. 4). This anxiety that psychological explanations would destroy her faith is a theme that reoccurs in the journal. O'Connor writes frankly:

I dread, Oh Lord, losing my faith. My mind is not strong. It is a prey to all sorts of intellectual quackery. I do not want it to be fear which keeps me in the church. I don't want to be a coward, staying with You because I fear hell. I should reason that if I fear hell, I can be assured of the author of it. But learned people can analyze me for why I fear hell and their implication is that there is no hell. (O'Connor, 2013, pp. 5-6)

As the mention of "learned people" suggests, O'Connor's ongoing education is the culprit in these doubts. She writes that the virtue of faith "gives me the most mental pain. At every point in this educational process, we are told that it is ridiculous and their arguments sound so good it is hard not to fall into them" (O'Connor, 2013, p. 15). In response to this intellectual

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<sup>1</sup> O'Connor received a social science degree at Georgia State College for Women in 1945.

assault O'Connor petitions God for deliverance from Freudian explanations of her feelings of faith:

Dear God, please let it be that [real] instead of that cowardice the psychologists would gloat so over & explain so glibly. And please don't let it be what they jubilantly call water-tight compartments. Dear Lord, please give the people like me who don't have the brains to cope with that, please give us some kind of weapon, not to defend us from them but to defend us from ourselves after they have gotten through with us. Dear God, I don't want to have invented my faith to satisfy my weakness. I don't want to have created God to my own image as they're so fond of saying. (O'Connor, 2013, pp. 15-16)

The O'Connor journal, in addition to its literary uses, can also be seen as a historical artifact, the documentation of an undergraduate's encounter with psychology circa 1946. What O'Connor's highly personal account contributes to our historical understanding is how personally threatening psychology could feel to a religious person. O'Connor clearly experienced psychological theories as an attack on her core identity; gloating psychological authorities overruled her experience of herself, reinterpreting her religious emotions in terms of cowardice and water-tight compartments. It is significant that psychology is the discipline O'Connor singled out—her journal records no anxiety over evolutionary facts presented in biology class; it was the redefinition of the human person and the reinterpretation of human emotions that troubled O'Connor. Although O'Connor's psychologist boogie man could arguably be a placeholder for all manner of secular theories, it appears that she found something singularly disturbing about “the explanations of the psychologist.”

Flannery O'Connor was hardly the first to worry about what would be left of the traditional conception of the self once psychologists got through with it. At the beginning of

experimental psychology in America in the last few decades of the 19th century, moral philosophers—the previous authorities on human nature—had warned against reductionist interpretations of the new psychology and fretted that psychology would render the concept of the soul meaningless. Princeton president James McCosh worried that an exclusively materialist interpretation of scientific findings would prevail and urged that in education “our young men be reminded that they have souls, which they are very apt to forget when their attention is engrossed with the motions of stars or the motions of molecules, with the flesh, the bones, the brain” (McCosh, 1971, p. 182).<sup>2</sup>

But while many of the “new” psychologists had religious backgrounds and affiliations, most were drawn to psychology precisely because it offered something different from traditional religious systems. For them psychology served as “a religion to take the place of religion” (Woodworth, 1931, p. 92), offering a new, more secular morality and an escape from constricting religious creeds and complicating metaphysical entanglements (Fuller, 2006; Nicholson 1994). By the time O’Connor encountered psychology, what the moral philosophers had feared had long since occurred. The concept of the soul was banished and psychology was dominated by explanations of human life that either deemed religious belief irrational weakness, or ignored it as irrelevant (Reed, 1997). J. B. Watson’s *Behaviorism* (1925) and Sigmund Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* (1913), *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) had explicitly attacked religious belief as superstitious and psychologically unhealthy. Psychology’s verdict, as was so clearly communicated to O’Connor, was that religious belief “was the mark of an underdeveloped mind” (Sparr, 1990, p. 10).

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<sup>2</sup> Similarly Noah Porter wrote about consciousness, “Nothing is more arrogant, and nothing could be more offensive, than that the powers and principles on which all science and induction depend, should be resolved by or after analogies derived from the mechanics of matter and the dynamics of life. To narrowness of this sort the sciences of nature offer special temptations” (Porter, 1871, pp. 82-83).

It was in this context that the subject of this dissertation, Magda B. Arnold (1903-2002) received her training in psychology. Although born in rural Austria (now part of the Czech Republic), Arnold had immigrated to Canada in 1928 and began her studies in psychology at the University of Toronto in 1935. From the start Arnold was dissatisfied with psychology's more limiting explanations of human nature. In her autobiographical writings Arnold recounts a conversation with her mentor at the University of Toronto: "Once I said to Dr. Line that we might have to reintroduce the soul into psychology. He, shocked: 'For goodness sake, keep that under your hat!'" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 7). The metaphysical and religious associations of the word "soul" made it taboo within mainstream psychology (Reed, 1997). Undeterred by such warnings, Arnold continued to search for more satisfying theories of human experience, particularly in her primary area of interest—emotion. Although Arnold was deeply committed to the scientific model, she found the then-popular biological, often animal-based theories of emotion simplistic and problematic (Arnold, n.d. c).

Arnold's conversion to Catholicism in 1948 opened up new explanatory possibilities for her, particularly in the form of neoscholasticism—the revival and application of St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophy to modern problems. Arnold found Thomism particularly relevant for emotion theorizing and it helped inspire her articulation of the pioneering appraisal theory, which foreshadowed and influenced the cognitive theories that characterize modern emotion research (Cornelius, 2006; Gasper & Bramesfeld, 2006; Reisenzein, 2006; Shields, 2006). While she never hesitated to criticize psychology's more reductionist theories, Arnold is notable for the ease with which she integrated her faith and her science. Both the discomfort with which O'Connor regarded psychology and the antagonism with which psychologists often regarded religious belief are completely absent from Arnold's writings. Perhaps most unusually, Arnold

did not compartmentalize her life, separating her faith and her science, a common strategy for religious scientists who hope to safeguard their work from suspicion (Kosits, 2014). Instead Arnold saw the two as intimately connected. In a paper she wrote encouraging Catholics to engage intellectually, Arnold approvingly quoted Pope Pius XII's statement on science: "Contrary to rash statements in the past, the more true science advances, the more it discovers God, almost as though he were standing, vigilant and waiting, behind every door which science opens" (Arnold, n.d. i, p. 2).

Magda Arnold is worth studying for several reasons, a few of which I will explore later in this introduction. But the primary reason I have chosen Arnold as the subject of this dissertation is her unusually confident assertion of the compatibility of her scientific and religious identity, and her constructive psychological work which remained faithful to both identities. Traditionally engagement between science and religion has been depicted in "conflict" narratives and language (e.g., in the emphasis on Darwin and Galileo's conflict with religious authorities) (Brooke, 1991; Wilson, 2002). However in more recent scholarship there is a growing consensus around the "complexity" position (Wilson, 2002), that is, the view that the relationship was sometimes characterized by strife and competing interests, sometimes by harmony and collaboration, all depending on the particular players, culture, and time period in question. Arnold's life contributes to the "complexity" literature as an example of this more positive relationship. Post-conversion Arnold remained deeply engaged in psychological research, embracing the then-innovative humanistic and phenomenological approaches to psychology (see Arnold & Gasson, 1954b) and integrating cutting-edge brain research into her emotion research (Arnold 1960, 1984). She also wrote about psychology explicitly from the perspective of a Catholic (Arnold & Gasson, 1954a) and the entirety of her post-conversion work reflects her Thomistic influence.

As a result Arnold's work can illuminate the concerns of mid-century religious psychologists, illustrating one way in which it was possible to respond to the challenges of an increasingly secularized psychology and society. Unlike O'Connor and other naïve consumers of psychology, Arnold's scientific identity gave her the tools and language to respond constructively to mid-century psychology's attacks on religious belief. Rather than rejecting psychology or resorting to prayers for deliverance from psychological explanations, Arnold's beliefs remained unshaken. This background allowed her to at times go on the offensive, critiquing psychology for less than explanatory theories and for failing to be completely honest about its own extra-scientific assumptions. Given that the relationship between faith and science remains contentious and the appropriateness of religious beliefs in academic life continues to be hotly debated (for one such debate in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, see Conn, 2014, and Jones, 2014), Arnold's sanguine response to faith-science warfare seems worth exploring for what it can tell us about the relationship between psychology and religion both at mid-century and today.

### **The Relationship Between Psychology and Religion: A Historical Review**

Understanding Magda Arnold's life and work requires an exploration of psychology's historical relationship with religion, and Christianity specifically. The previous section briefly elaborated one such history, with a narrative that emphasized psychology's abandonment of traditional religious systems of meaning and identified Arnold as one of the rare exceptions in a history of faith-psychology estrangement. While this is certainly an accurate description of one significant trend, the history of the relationship is far more complicated, consisting of multiple strands and stories. There are at least two such strands that must be identified in introducing Arnold. One traces the origins of psychology in America and the experimental interest in

religion—one might call this the relationship from a disciplinary or experimental psychology perspective. The other traces a less obvious but no less real history—the overlap between religion and non-experimental psychology, which could variously be described as clinical, popular, or cultural psychology. This non-disciplinary amalgamation is harder to label, its nearest equivalent in the scholarly literature is probably looking at the relationship from a “folk psychology” or “indigenous psychology” perspective (Danziger, 2006; Pickren, 2009, 2010; Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). That is, this non-disciplinary psychology investigates the unofficial uses of psychology (in this case its use related to religious questions) and the way in which psychological knowledge was shaped by its host culture (which was often religious). These two narratives—the professional and the popular—on the surface provide apparently contradictory accounts of psychology’s relationship with religion; however I hope to show that together they provide a nuanced, more complete understanding of a multifaceted relationship.

### **Religion and the Discipline of Psychology**

Psychology’s fraught relationship with religion is perhaps unsurprising, given that psychology addresses much of religion’s traditional subject matter (i.e., human nature and conduct), and puts forward competing explanations for these phenomena. Yet in contrast to the other countries in which psychology emerged (Germany, France, and England) where the origins were more experimental and medical, American psychology had robust religious roots. Early American psychology originated in mental and moral philosophy, which was based on Protestant ideas. Particularly influential for early American scholars was Scottish realist philosophy, which, against Kantian idealism and Humean skepticism, held that it was possible to know matter directly, through the senses. The combination of realist and Protestant perspectives resulted in an optimism about the intelligibility of the mind. Since God was an orderly creator, it was expected



that the human mind would be orderly as well, and that even without experimental methods, careful introspection could uncover this order reflected in mental structure and laws (Rodkey, 2011a). In this period psychology was often taught by college presidents, generally themselves practicing Protestants, in a senior-level class that covered both human nature and society. This course had a prescriptive element—it did not limit itself to facts about human psychology, but was also concerned with the implications, with how students ought to live once they graduated.

Historically the relationship between these earlier moral philosophers and the new experimental psychologists was represented in terms of revolution and discontinuity. However, the current scholarly consensus holds that the new psychology was very much a child of the older mental philosophy (Fuchs, 2000; Leary, 1987; Richards, 1995). But however indebted the new psychologists were to their past, they were eager to distance themselves from their more religiously-oriented predecessors and often used harsh rhetoric to denigrate or deny the contributions of these early religious and philosophical forms of psychology (Fuchs, 2000; Rodkey, 2011a). Nevertheless the first generation of experimental psychologists retained religious concerns and ways of thinking. They used psychology to pursue the same moral projects (Richards, 1995), shared traditional religious concerns about materialism, such as a desire to retain the notion of free will (Kosits, 2004), and used religious language in popularization efforts (Pickren, 2000; Zenderland 1988).

Moreover, early experimental psychologists developed research programs that explored psychology of religion phenomena through a liberal, progressive Christian lens (White, 2008). The Clark School of Religious Psychology, active from approximately 1890 to 1930, was the major player in this effort, with G. Stanley Hall and his students conducting research on an

impressive variety of topics (Beit-Hallahm, 1974).<sup>3</sup> Often this research was designed with specific applications for religious organizations in mind. For example, conversion was a popular topic, conducted often with the intention of reforming religious education (e.g., knowledge of children's developmental trajectory could be used to time conversion appeals to the most opportune moment) (Rodkey, 2011b; White, 2008). Similarly there were numerous investigations of children's preferences around Bible stories and adolescents' moral development, with the intent that the science's new insights would help religious educators to present age-appropriate material to nurture religious feeling (e.g., Dawson, 1900). The idea was that religious development followed regular patterns like physical development and so such research would increase "our exact knowledge of the laws of spiritual life" (White, 2008, p. 435). One of the most productive members of the Clark School, Edwin Starbuck, enthused to his mentor William James about his conversion research "...this is the beginning of a new science in the world—the psychology of religion, and we must have the *facts*" (Starbuck, 1943, p. 129). Not everyone was so sure that bringing scientific methods to belief was a good idea—James fielded a complaint from an outraged colleague who denounced Starbuck's conversion questionnaire as "moral and spiritual vivisection" (White, 2008, p. 435).

This program was part of a larger progressivist effort to rationalize Christianity. The goal of research on religion, as Starbuck summarized it, was for psychology to "lift religion sufficiently out of the domain of feeling to make it appeal to the understanding, so that it may become possible, progressively, to appreciate its truth and apperceive its essential elements" (Starbuck, 1899, pp. 16-17). Further, as multiple scholars have remarked, a significant number of

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Hall's research been criticized by modern scholars for its sexism (see Bohan, 1992; Morse, 1995) and racism (see Teo, 2004).

the new psychologists were raised in Calvinist homes<sup>4</sup> in which a dramatic spiritual conversion was highly valued (Homans, 1982; Nicholson, 1994; White, 2008). Several of the new psychologists were troubled in adolescence with their failure to have a conversion experience (e.g., Hall, Coe, Starbuck, James Leuba, William James),<sup>5</sup> or otherwise found their parents' religious forms to be inadequate for their experience, particularly after their exposure to more liberal theology during their education. This helps explain their preoccupation with using psychology to make rational the more transcendent or spiritual elements of religion.

Paradoxically, thinkers of this era were also worried that modern society was too rational and overly domesticated. In this light conversions were of interest because they were the last curious vestiges of more emotional, irrational forms of religion common in "primitive" cultures representing the pure religious impulse, which it was hoped, psychology could recover (see Hall, 1905).

Taking this view generally meant abandoning or substantially reinterpreting orthodox Christianity, with its claims to ultimate historic truth, and its existing explanations for human psychology (i.e. humans are sinful as a result of the Fall, yet capable of good since created in the image of God). For example, Hall was deeply influenced by the new German biblical criticism, which rejected most traditional doctrinal claims, such as Jesus' divinity (Vande Kemp, 1992). In his book *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology*, Hall answered such questions as "How Jesus came to believe himself the Messiah" (Hall, 1917, p. 326) using psychoanalytic readings of

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that the term "Calvinist" is commonly used by scholars in this context in a derogatory rather than descriptive manner (i.e., its usage is intended to communicate a rigid and authoritarian Christianity with an emphasis on sin and hell). In reality "Calvinist" (after the Reformer John Calvin, 1509-1564) by itself primarily connotes the belief in predestination: that humans are chosen for salvation by God from the beginning of time. Since belief in predestination was common within Protestantism, the observation that the early psychologists came from Calvinist homes is not by itself particularly informative.

<sup>5</sup> Starbuck, a Quaker, did have a conversion, but questioned whether it was genuine, given its highly emotional nature (White, 2008).

Jesus and sociological interpretations of messianic phenomenon in “primitive” cultures.<sup>6</sup> Yet despite his hostility towards orthodox Christianity,<sup>7</sup> Hall clearly still saw a place for religious ideas within psychology. Hall called Jesus the “ideal type man of the race,” and “The truest member of the genus homo, the superman” (Hall, 1905, p. 493) and argued for the benefits of psychology reinterpreting Jesus as a moral exemplar.<sup>8</sup> In the same way, a general moral benefit was believed to result from religious ideas and education,<sup>9</sup> even if the proponents of such an education no longer believed Christian beliefs expressed historical truths. In the context of the progressive movement psychology was to rescue religious belief from its own excesses and make it useful. The religious impulse was too valuable a resource in the great effort to perfect humankind to discard, but too dangerous in its traditional form. Psychology alone had the potential to discover in the confounding diversity of religious practices the governing mental laws of religiosity and to harness it for the good of society.

At the height of this movement Edwin Starbuck established the Research Station in Character Education and Religious Education at the University of Iowa, with a publication branch (producing psychologically-appropriate religious children’s books) and graduate program in moral education (Booth, 1981). The research station’s name reflected both the movement’s success and the changes afoot in the culture. The religious education movement was in the

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<sup>6</sup> As if this blow to the heart of the historic Christian creed was not clear enough, Hall expressed his hostility explicitly. Hall described traditional Christian belief as “the virus of orthodox theology” (Hall, 1904, p. 317) and said he intended his work to wage “eternal warfare upon orthodoxies and all dogmatic finalities, which are only the petrifications of faith” (Hall, 1904, p. 330).

<sup>7</sup> Here and throughout I use orthodox to denote beliefs conforming to the creeds of the early Christian church (e.g., the Apostle’s Creed, the Nicene Creed). These creeds were hammered out in various ecumenical councils in the first 800 years of church history, and have played a significant role in defining what constitutes Christian belief ever since.

<sup>8</sup> “One of the great tasks of the psychology of the future... must be to reinterpret its Lord and Master to the Christian world” (Hall, 1917, p. viii).

<sup>9</sup> In large part religious education for children seems to have been valued by Hall and other liberal Christians because of their belief in recapitulation. Religious education was well-suited to address the more primitive nature of young children, and to help adolescents make the leap to comprehending more civilized abstract ethical principles (see Hall, 1901, and Dawson, 1900).

process of transitioning from promoting religious education to moral education. In this move it shed much of the specifically Christian content for a more widely applicable generic inculcation of character (Nicholson, 2003). Such character education was necessary because of the corrosive effects of modernity, yet the way that character was conceptualized was itself very modern, modeling itself on the intelligence test (Pettit, 2013).

But even in the face of secularization psychologists such as Starbuck held on to progressive Christian aims, to “saving the lives of the young for the church, for great causes, for high ideals” (Booth, 1981, p. 123). Starbuck’s Research Station was part of a much larger trend: circa 1913 there were 80 institutions with pedagogy of religion courses (Starbuck, 1913). But the movement faced a gradual decline in the 1920s and was defunct by 1930 (Beit-Hallahm, 1974). This corresponds almost exactly with the extinction of the Clark School. The decline in the area was reflected in the *Psychological Bulletin*’s reviews of research on the psychology of religion—although a review had been published annually since 1904,<sup>10</sup> between 1928 and 1933 no reviews were published and the last review published (1933) had only European material to review. After 1933 publication of psychology of religion research was practically nonexistent in America (Beit-Hallahm, 1974).

It is worth noting that this bust coincided with the boom of behaviorism. The 1910s-1930s saw the advent of behaviorism and other more materialist theories that further estranged American psychology from its religious origins. The behaviorist movement seems to have been particularly influential in this regard, since behaviorists were not interested in internal states and modeled their understanding of human psychology on animal behavior (Watson, 1913). While behaviorism was hardly universal, it influenced psychology’s standards for acceptable subject matter and methods, resulting in a narrowing in the previous scope of psychology.

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<sup>10</sup> Hall’s *Psychological Bulletin* served as the mouthpiece of the psychology of religion movement.

Freudian psychology too gained in these years and its explicit attacks on religion and alternative explanations for belief (belief as a coping mechanism for the weak, and psychotherapists as the replacement for priests) helped to make sympathetic psychological investigations of religion untenable. If the fear of being tainted by association with religious forbearers had initially made the new psychologists distance themselves from the term “soul” even while their projects dealt with it under other names, in the early 20th century the negative psychoanalytic explanations for religious belief and the intentional behaviorist stripping of meaning from psychological subject matter made religion distinctly unscientific, even taboo (Delaney & DiClemente, 2005; Jones, 1994).

Besides the theories popular in psychology, another cause of this secularizing, reductionist trend may be psychology’s development as a discipline. As psychology professionalized there was a reduction in the number of acceptable research subjects, and standards deemed rigorous had to be upheld. Just as it was no longer acceptable to study the instincts of chickens by tossing them out of a rowboat or by throwing the experimenter’s slipper and shaving mug at them (see Thorndike, 1899), it was no longer acceptable for a leading psychologist to muse on the importance of religious belief and the possibility of supernatural human powers (e.g., James, 1902). The first enthusiasm and creativity of early psychology which had resulted in such a variety of research gradually settled into predictable paths as psychologist negotiated and agreed on scientific methods. It was not that religious questions were never asked, but they constituted an extreme minority.<sup>11</sup> As numerous scholars have noted, psychology’s insecurity as a science contributed to the abandonment of research subjects that were perceived

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<sup>11</sup> Sometimes psychologists engaged with religion from a debunking perspective, as in Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter’s *When Prophecy Fails* (1956).

to be “soft” or those which indicated cultural/sociological methods (Coon, 1992; Hornstein, 1992).

Still, whatever the cause, religion was for several decades exiled from psychology. It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that psychology of religion began to be considered once again a legitimate topic of psychological inquiry. A seminal event in this history was the establishment in 1976 of Division 36 of the American Psychological Association (APA), the division for the Psychology of Religion (now the Division for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality). Prior to being made an APA division the group was known as Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues (PIRI), and before 1970 had been the American Catholic Psychological Association (ACPA). PIRI, with its non-denomination status, provided a space for members to define their topic and gain respectability in scientific psychology. Nevertheless some stigma remained attached to the psychology of religion—a fact demonstrated by the opposition within the APA Council of Representatives to the creation of Division 36, which resulted in an initial rejection of the group’s application for divisional status in 1975 (Reuder, 1999). Today, Division 36 is a flourishing division that has expanded to encompass spirituality as well as organized religion (Kugelman, 2011), and whose findings on such topics as the origins of religious thinking and the health benefits of religious belief are generally well accepted by the field (see Pargament, 2013; Paloutzian & Park, 2005).

To date there has been limited scholarship on the relationship between psychology and religion in the period 1930-1976 (1930 being the collapse of the Clark School of Religious Psychology and 1976 being the year of APA Division 36’s birth). There is a dearth of scholarship on how psychologists engaged with religion in this 46-year period in which there was very little disciplinary support for research on religious topics or for the integration of

psychologists' religious beliefs and academic interests. One of the notable exceptions to this trend has been Robert Kugelmann's work on Catholic psychologists during this era (Kugelmann 2000, 2009, 2011). It was within this period that Catholic psychologists created the American Catholic Psychological Association (formed in 1948), frequently published psychological work from an explicitly Catholic perspective, and took steps to promote the acceptance of psychology by Catholics. This was highly unusual for this time period—although there were a few Protestant publications in the 1950s and 1960s (e.g., Cross, 1952; Narramore, 1960),<sup>12</sup> similar efforts within evangelical Christianity did not gain traction until the 1970s, during the period of the general resurgence (Johnson & Jones, 2000).<sup>13</sup> It is worth investigating what institutional and cultural factors allowed Catholic psychologist to ignore disciplinary conventions and pressure to create an environment which allowed for exploration of religious issues.

Interestingly, Magda Arnold's career coincides almost perfectly with this approximately 40-year period: Arnold first began studying psychology as an undergraduate in 1935 and retired in 1975. Thus, another reason Arnold is worth studying is that she serves as an interesting case study for Catholic psychology efforts in this mid-century period of religious drought. Compared to many other Catholic psychologists, even those active in the ACPA, Arnold produced an unusually large body of literature that defined her vision for Catholic psychology explicitly and responded to and incorporated various trends within psychology (Freudian, Jungian, and

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<sup>12</sup> Along with these publications, other Protestant efforts in this period were Clyde Narramore's radio program, "Psychology For Living" (started in 1954) and the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS) (founded in 1956) (Johnson & Jones, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> The reason for this difference between Catholic and Protestant engagement with psychology is unknown. However it seems likely that Catholicism's more hierarchical organization, which allowed for a clear group affiliation and a single (and positive) official position on science helped Catholic efforts (see also the discussion in Chapter 2 of the interest in the Catholic world in producing work that would demonstrate that there was no conflict between faith and science). By its nature Protestantism (particularly American Protestantism) is more fragmented, making collective action more unlikely, and for much of the century conservative Protestants tended to be anti-intellectual and therefore suspicious of psychology (Noll, 1994). It also may have been that psychotherapy's similarity to the sacrament of confession (and thus potential competition with it) made the need for Catholic engagement with psychology more urgent. The confession-therapy comparison was one frequently made by both those within and without the Catholic Church (Kugelmann, 2011).



humanistic psychology) from a religious perspective. Her successful formulation of her religiously-influenced appraisal theory of emotion—a mainstream theory of psychology substantially influenced by a pre-modern, religious philosopher—is a particularly significant accomplishment, given the highly secularized psychology of the time.

### **Religion and Popular Psychology**

As we have seen, looking at the relationship between psychology and religion from a disciplinary perspective results, for the most part, in a narrative of secularization. This account runs as follows: Although psychology in America emerged in an era of strong, shared religious assumptions, by the end of the 19th century that was changing. As the wider culture took a more liberal theological turn, and increasing numbers rejected religious belief entirely (although retaining a Judeo-Christian-influenced morality), psychology mirrored those changes (see, e.g., the trends in religious education). This gradual secularization continued until explicit religious engagement within psychology died out, having become perceived as old-fashioned and irrelevant to modern concerns.

In this retelling of events the period of religious drought is unsurprising and sharply defined. It is unsurprising because the culture as a whole in this narrative is uniformly secular and it seems logical that psychology would follow broader cultural trends. And the period of religious disengagement is sharply defined in this view because it examines exclusively experimental and mainstream psychological developments—and no such efforts to engage religious issues are apparent in the mainstream until the 1970s. The resurgence of psychological interest in religious issues in 1970s too can be accounted for by the numerous and dramatic cultural changes which happened in that decade. The critical attitude of the late 1960s and 1970s towards the establishment and traditions in many aspects of American life also changed

psychology, introducing into the discipline a wide range of subject matter and research methods not previously considered appropriate. In this context the resurgence of interest in religion was part of a larger trend of making identity politics legitimate research subjects in psychology (feminism, racial issues, the gay rights movement).<sup>14</sup>

While there remains a good deal of truth to this account, this secularization narrative is too narrow. Its focus on disciplinary psychology and orthodox Protestant public religious expression obscures and excludes a wide range of religious engagement with psychology between 1930 and 1970. If one broadens the scope of our history to include all manner of application of psychology, and to include religion in its non-Protestant<sup>15</sup> and non-institutional forms (what has been called “unchurched spirituality” (Fuller, 2006, p. 221) and “post-theological spirituality” [Fuller, 2006, p. 234]), a rich geography of religious-psychological life emerges. Religiously-influenced understandings of psychology and psychologically-influenced understandings of religion and spirituality were very common throughout the century, even during periods of heightened disciplinary secularism. Perhaps the best example of this intertwined relationship is the ubiquity of a “therapeutic” religiosity (often unattached to traditional religious systems) which has emerged as the quintessential American religious characteristic (Fuller, 2006). In therapeutic religiosity religious belief is embraced as a means to self-fulfillment and self-esteem; God is seen as fundamentally affirming and nonjudgmental.

Psychology is not the only discipline which has been blind to unexpected forms of religiosity. Professor of American history Jon Butler has critiqued his field for uncritically accepting the secularization narrative, which has meant that historians see individual instances of

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<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that, unlike the others in this category, psychology of religion did not, by and large, question the psychological methods used. Rather, they embraced the methods of mainstream psychology.

<sup>15</sup> See Heinze (2001) for a discussion of how historians of psychology have neglected Jewish influences, and Heinze (2006) for his recovery of this important strand of American psychology.

modern religious belief as anomalous and ineffectual, and disregard the strong evidence of powerful and enduring American spiritual life after 1870 (Butler, 2004). Particularly of note for our purposes is Butler's documentation of a dramatic post-war engagement with religion in the form of increased church membership. As Butler puts it, "For every trip to the mall, suburban families easily made two, three, even five or more trips to suburban congregations between 1945 and the 1970s and beyond" (2004, p. 1375).

This increased religious expression has rarely been explored by historians because it was regarded as a private affair, which did not influence public life. But Butler emphasizes the flexibility of American religion "in the face of monumental post-1870 technological, social, economic, and political change" (2004, p. 1359) and argues that privatized personal religion is a powerful phenomenon which motivates revolutionary social change (e.g., the Civil Rights Movement; liberation theology in South America). Butler concludes that it is vital for historians of modern America to attend to privatized religion, given the "remarkable persistence in twentieth-century America of an individual religious commitment so deep that it defies classification as a privatized religion irrelevant to public life" (2004, p. 1360).

Butler's critique provides a foundation for our understanding of religious life outside of traditional disciplinary bounds. First we can reject the notion of secularization as the "irrepressible, inevitable outcome of industrialization, urbanization, and bureaucratization" (Butler, 2004, p. 1360). Although Freud and other early proponents of secularization optimistically depicted it as total and inevitable, the remainder of the century clearly disproved this thesis. Instead, as secularization gradually gained momentum, religious belief persisted, and even gained ground by taking on new forms which took advantage of new cultural niches and possibilities. For example, Paul Mattingly makes this point in his history of Christian rhetoric in

education: “‘Secularization’ and ‘bureaucratization’” “not only did not preclude but, rather, sustained new forms of evangelism and religious fervor” (Mattingly, 1975, p. xvii).

The consequence of secularization in psychology meant that religious topics simply moved outside traditional disciplinary bounds to more applied venues. Robert Fuller makes a similar point when he describes the possibilities of “a cultural history of psychology that focuses on the ‘demand’ side of psychological concepts” (2006, p. 223). By this Fuller means instances of psychology self-consciously addressing general audiences, with the “overt intention of helping the general public symbolize and resolve problems that arise in the context of everyday life” (2006, p. 223). Spiritual questions were a highly relevant everyday problem for the American public, and thus there was a demand for psychology’s engagement with these topics. Even when psychologists preferred to address exclusively efficient causes,<sup>16</sup> their interest in engaging their audience often meant that they were forced to address the lurking “metaphysical horizon” and questions of value and meaning (Fuller, 2006). This meant that rather than secular psychology stamping out a religious perspective on life, as has frequently been asserted (e.g., Rieff, 1966), psychology provided new language and ideas that shaped and supported Americans’ religious and metaphysical beliefs. In fact, as Fuller puts it, “an important factor in the emergence and growth of psychology in the United States has been its continuing resonance with the nation’s popular religious imagination” (Fuller, 2006, p. 222).

As a result, in order to fully understand the relationship between psychology and religion in the 20th century, we must look beyond the religious drought in professional psychology that lasted from 1930 to 1970, to popular psychology where religion and psychology merged in

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<sup>16</sup> Efficient causes are one type of cause in Aristotle’s four-part theory of cause. In Aristotle’s system the material cause is the cause that is determined by the material of the object; the formal cause is the cause brought about by the arrangement or appearance of the object; the efficient cause is a cause that is brought about by something outside of but interacting with the object; and the final cause is the end or purpose towards which the object is directed.

various “new forms.” Popular, applied, and clinical psychology represented the fields where the most fruitful psychological engagement with religious ideas took place post-1930. Because these areas have a diverse scholarship and have been often been ignored within the history of psychology, conducting a comprehensive literature review is challenging. What follows is necessarily incomplete, but highlights some of the directions taken by these types of engagement.

A good place to start is Christopher White’s book *Unsettled Minds: Psychology and the American Search for Spiritual Assurance, 1830-1940* (2009). Although the book ends at nearly the beginning of the period we are concerned with, it documents the variety of ways in which psychological ideas were incorporated into religious thought in the early 20th century, which then set the stage for the rest of the century. White identifies spiritual-physical monism as a particularly formative belief—the idea that the body and mind/spirit were inextricably connected led to the popularity of the notions like nervous fatigue (which could be addressed by rest, relaxation, suggestion, and religious therapies). The muscular Christianity movement similarly elided physical, psychological, and spiritual prowess (a belief exemplified by the statement-- “There are men who are losing spiritual battles simply because they are physically fatigued” [White, 2009, p. 117]) and therefore emphasized will-training and self-control. Although their specific beliefs systems differed, whether it was the Emmanuel Movement, New Thought, Christian Science, or the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), all believed that traditional religious forms did not hold a “monopoly on either virtue or spirituality” (White, 2009, p. 177). This openness to ideas outside of traditional Christian orthodoxy meant a new level of comfort with incorporating psychology into religious belief. There was a widespread willingness to borrow and reinterpret psychological findings (often quite dramatically at odds

with the interpretations of the scientists themselves) into spiritual beliefs, which profoundly shaped Americans' ideas of themselves.

Looking back to the 19th century, one can see the similarity of these ideas to other wildly popular theories that were eventually discarded by scientific psychology: mesmerism, phrenology, and spiritualism. The questions of the supernatural, the irrational, and the unconscious—themes at first relevant thanks to the confusing spiritual enthusiasms that characterized the Great Awakening (Taves, 1999)—remained of great interest to Americans in the 20th century. Looking forward to after 1930, the clearest equivalent for such discussion of such topics was the work of Freud. Ironically, despite Freud's best debunking efforts, religious questions would find a place within clinical psychology, aided and abetted by Freud's successors less hostile to religion, such as Jung and Adler. The rise of clinical psychology after WWI meant that this was no mean position—although not within the bounds of experimental psychology, clinical psychology still had a large influence on the narrative of the discipline.

It is helpful to return to Fuller's idea of focusing on the "demand" side of psychology—clinical psychology is a field largely shaped by the needs and desires of clients. And counsel on religious and spiritual topics was often just what clients demanded. It proved impossible to provide psychological care without addressing ultimate questions, and this meant that it was impossible to keep religious beliefs from infiltrating and influencing psychology. Stephanie Muravchik's *American Protestantism in the Age of Psychology* (2011) shows how this was the case with Protestants' adoption of clinical psychology. Based on her historical analysis of pastoral counseling, Alcoholics Anonymous, and the Salvation Army, Muravchik says, "As psychology moved into the mainstream, the mainstream - with its considerable religiosity - moved into psychology. Believers harnessed therapy to their own purposes. They innovated

psychospiritual programs that nurtured faith, virtue, and community rather than supplanting them” (2011, p. 2).

Such programs provided space for asking questions about religion and psychology in an otherwise hostile environment. The pastoral counseling movement, for instance, began in earnest in the 1930s. John McNeill wrote in 1934: “We are evidently at the opening of a new era in the history of souls...the new ministry to personality will be at once psychological and religious” (in Holifield, 1983, p. 221), yet in that same period disciplinary psychology marked the beginning of religious drought. Pastoral counseling explicitly linked religious belief with the client’s capacity for self-realization and personality readjustment (Holifield, 1983). This would be echoed outside the counseling situation in a number of popular books that offered religiously-based therapeutic solutions to all manner of personal problems (e.g., *Peace of Mind* [Liebman, 1946], *Peace of Soul* [Sheen, 1949], *The Power of Positive Thinking* [Peale, 1952], *The Secret of Happiness: Jesus’ Teaching on Happiness As Expressed in the Beatitudes* [Graham, 1955]; list from Fuller, 2006). Sometimes more mainstream experimental psychologists were tempted into the fray and offered their own take on metaphysical/religious questions, although generally in nonacademic settings such as popular publications or lectures (e.g. Gordon Allport’s *The Individual and His Religion* [1950] and *Becoming* [1955]; and B. F. Skinner regularly engaged with these issues in popular publications [Rutherford, 2003]).

Religious questions finally resurfaced in mainstream psychology in the form of the Third Force in the 1960s. Humanistic psychology’s concern with “human capacities and potentials that have no systematic place either in positivist or behavioristic theory or in classical psychoanalytic theory” opened up psychology to once again include religious content (Fuller, 2001, p. 137). But to pursue this history too far here is to preempt our discussion of humanistic psychology in

Chapter 4. Instead, we must consider how our discussion of professional and popular psychology's relationship with religion impacts our understanding of Magda Arnold.

### *The Importance of Popular Psychology*

From the second narrative—popular psychology's engagement with religion—it is clear that no matter how secular the discipline of psychology became in this period, the majority of American consumers of psychology remained religious. This meant that the American public, like Arnold, often engaged with findings of psychology and attempted to make sense of them in terms of their religious commitments. That is, if Arnold's example is any guide, they were sometimes troubled by the claims of psychology, sometimes easily incorporated them into their existing religious worldview, and sometimes altered them to fit their own views. Although O'Connor's journal gives us a clear picture of one such struggle, this is unusual—by and large these consumers of psychology are voiceless. Since in this period of drought there was little overt discussion of religious questions in disciplinary psychology, and even popular psychology discussions were framed by authors' ideas about what the public believed, the struggles of the religious public to incorporate psychology into their belief systems can be rediscovered only indirectly. There are a few methods that might recover these lost voices—one is to listen to Arnold's voice. As an articulate, intelligent woman, conversant with the psychological literature of the day, Arnold's writings help us understand what might have been the problems and the resistances of religious Americans to mid-century psychology. It is worth noting how unusual it is to have a professor of psychology serve as the representative for those resisting psychology's secularizing impulse—as Butler notes, academics were far more likely to be acting as agents of secularization. But while Arnold's faith was unusual within academic circles, our second



narrative reminds us that she was hardly an anomaly in terms of the general American public. The typical American in the 1930-1970s was a religious one.

The existence of the second narrative (popular psychology's engagement with religious issues) does not render the first narrative (the story of disciplinary psychology's secularization) untrue. The secularizing trend was real, as was the hostility towards bringing religious ideas into disciplinary psychology. These dynamics are evident in Arnold's life and experience. And although popular psychology did provide a place for consideration of religious belief, popular psychology's lower status kept these developments peripheral. Instead of dismissing the first narrative, then, it must be held in tension with the second. The result of introducing the second narrative should be to complicate the secularization narrative, rather than to dismiss it entirely. In the context of these two narratives Arnold's life offers further evidence of this more complicated history. She was both someone fiercely struggling against psychology's secularizing tendencies and someone blithely introducing religious issues into psychology at mid-century—a sign that things were not as secular as they seemed.

### **Objectivity and the Personal in Science**

The history of the various relationships between psychology and religion raises a final reason why Magda Arnold is worth studying. An analysis of Arnold's life and work can also provide insight into the influence of personal beliefs on scientific theorizing. This line of inquiry follows a number of works that expose the moral and ideological underpinnings of psychologists' thought, documenting the inevitable leakage of personal belief into the presumably sterile domain of scientific work. For example, Porter (2004) has shown how Karl Pearson's statistical innovations were influenced by his struggle to create a unified sense of self, Bordogna (2005) has explored how the virtues and traits that James, Hall, and Titchener prized

informed their scientific practice, and Morawski (1982) has demonstrated how the utopian fiction of early psychologists reflected their moral priorities. These works have helped to underline psychology's historical and geographical contingency and to expose the artificiality of the division between the personal and the professional, a false dichotomy that is rarely challenged within mainstream psychology.

This function of recapturing the fundamental unity of scientists' lives (and therefore the subjectivity of their work) Porter claims is the chief advantage of biography:

Great scientists, as well as poets, mystics, and priests, have sometimes refused to admit a world purged of human significance. And many who endorsed rigorous detachment and objectivity regarding nature have seen science itself as a moral quest. Biography, if it does not assume the separation of science from life, can recapture some of the ways that scientists found meaning in the world and attached moral value to their work. (Porter, 2006, p. 316)

Magda Arnold's life is ripe for analysis of this type, given how thoroughly her religious beliefs influenced her thinking, and pervaded every aspect of her life. The fact that the values in her case are religious values of a traditional type may in fact prove advantageous, given how strikingly this contradicts our expectations of scientific objectivity and detachment. As Porter explains the common view, "A scientist may be religious, but proper science implies *disenchantment*" (Porter, 2006, p. 316). Acceptable religious beliefs in scientists are ones held at arm's length, not passionately held, or else those understood as personal, compartmentalized away from scientific work. Magda Arnold, by refusing to keep her religious allegiances safely segregated from her scientific thinking forcibly reminds us that the scientist's beliefs and work are ultimately inseparable.

Psychology has traditionally been resistant to the idea of experimenter subjectivity, choosing instead to emphasize subject bias and unreliability. Throughout much of psychology's history to acknowledge psychologists' reflexivity has been seen as undermining psychology's shaky professional authority. Nevertheless, there have been several psychologists over the years who raised the issue of psychology's inherent subjectivity. Morawski (2005, 2007) has identified early awareness of experimenter subjectivity in William James (for "The Psychologist's Fallacy", Horace Mann Bond (for recognizing the experimenter's "game"), and Saul Rosenzweig (for recognizing psychology's experimental situation as inherently problematic). Pandora (2007) traces another such early critical thread in the vigorous critiques of Gordon Allport and Gardner and Lois Murphy of psychology's narrowness, idolatry of method, and lack of transparency about its political commitments. Some methodological criticisms resonated within psychology, such as Martin Orne's 1950s observation of the phenomenon that became known as "demand characteristics" (Capshe, 1999). But these experimenter effects were generally recognized as "artifacts" to be eliminated, not pervasive problems with psychology's epistemology.

Psychologists who voiced such criticisms of psychology, tended to receive significant push-back from more positivist psychologists. It was not until mid-century, with the emergence of Humanistic psychology, that discussions of psychologist's reflexivity became more common, although still controversial (Capshe, 1999).

These earlier critical voices have been supported in recent years by postmodern and feminist psychologists who have emphasized the impossibility of scientific objectivity and pointed to ways in which science can actually be strengthened through reflexivity. Feminist critiques emphasize the highly masculine nature of the allegedly neutral scientific endeavor, visible, for example in the Baconian and Cartesian view of nature (which has traditionally been

personified as female) as a separate, passive object to be operated on and dominated (Bordo 1987; Keller, 1985; Lott, 1985; Merchant, 1980). This dichotomy between subject and object, and the enduring myth that the production of scientific knowledge can be unaffected by the values of scientists, feminist philosophers of science identify as particularly harmful to the scientific project. The requirement that scientists adhere to these “objective” standards without reflexive consideration has distorted science, resulting in errors, blind spots, and the restriction of the methods and objects of scientific inquiry (Sherif, 1987).

In contrast, feminist critics have identified particular characteristics generally considered unscientific and often conceptualized as female, such relationality, contextuality, interaction, integration, and interdependence, as contributing to increased objectivity<sup>17</sup> and have offered new insights impossible with more “masculine” approaches (Keller, 1983, 1985; Rose, 1987).

Although there has been disagreement about whether women or other outsiders possess inherent advantages in performing this sort of science, there is consensus that the scientific knower is not a neutral position, but socially and historically constituted (Harding, 1986). The identity of the knower is epistemologically significant (Code, 1991). Scientists, like all humans, are inescapably influenced by their “standpoint” and would do well to incorporate such a recognition into their scientific process. From this perspective the objectivity that any scientific research achieves is temporary or contingent at best, since in science “culturewide assumptions that have not been criticized within the scientific research process are transported into the results of research, making visible the historicity of specific scientific claims to people at other times, other places, or in other groups in the very same social order” (Harding, 1993, p. 57).

In the context of this discussion of scientific subjectivity Arnold is especially interesting because she was not unaware of her biases, in fact at various points in her writing she articulated

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<sup>17</sup> The concept is generally redefined to mean something quite different from the traditional usage.

a view of experimenter subjectivity that seems to have anticipated more recent critiques of scientific objectivity (e.g., Gadamer, 1960; Haraway, 1988). She pointed out that basic assumptions bias every stage of an experiment: design, methodology, and interpretation; thus scientists' conclusions will always be "a combination of prior assumption and experimental fact" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 15). Arnold's critique of psychology was not that it was biased, but that it was unwilling to admit its own (inevitable) biases. For Arnold on the other hand, as a member of a minority group, ignorance of her own biases was hardly an option (see Harding, 1993, on standpoint epistemology), and she frankly confessed her own philosophical and religious prejudices (see 1954). This fact adds to Arnold's value as a historical research subject, for in her case, not only can we explore the results of a strong religious belief on psychological theorizing, we can ask: what is the result of strong, self-aware religious assumptions on psychological theorizing? Arnold's reflexivity provides an extra layer for analysis.

### **Materials and Methods**

In constructing this dissertation I have relied on a variety of materials, both archival and published. For the biographical chapters I am deeply indebted to Joan Arnold, Magda's daughter, who shared with me her mother's personal papers. Of these the most significant are two autobiographical essays by Magda Arnold (one personal and one professional in nature) and approximately 200 letters between Magda Arnold and her close friend and collaborator, Father John Gasson, between 1948 and 1956. These help to flesh out the details of a life that would otherwise have been lost, and allow Arnold to tell much of the story in her own words.

I have also incorporated material from the Magda B. Arnold Collection at the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, at the University of Akron. This collection includes Arnold's professional papers, including many unpublished papers and letters which have

preserved Arnold's opinions on a variety of issues. I also draw on the resources of the Harvard University Archives, whose Gordon W. Allport collection includes a few letters between Allport and Arnold, and the Spring Hill College Archives, which possesses a small collection of papers related to Arnold and Gasson.

For my understanding of Catholic psychology, I am most indebted to Robert Kugelman's extensive scholarship in the area (Kugelman 2000, 2009, 2011). By far the most comprehensive work on Catholic psychology in this period available is his *Catholicism and Psychology: Contested Boundaries* (2011). I have relied on his insightful and detailed analysis of the context and activities of Catholic psychologists to help me understand Arnold's context, Arnold's use of Thomistic psychology, and Arnold's engagement with humanistic psychology.

The existing scholarship on Magda Arnold has been dominated by Stephanie Shields' excellent work; particularly informative is her "Magda B. Arnold's life and work in context" (2006). This article is published in a special issue of *Cognition & Emotion* edited by Shields which was devoted to Arnold (see *Cognition & Emotion* Volume 20, Issue 7). Within this issue, Randolph Cornelius' "Magda Arnold's Thomistic theory of emotion, the self-ideal, and the moral dimension of appraisal" (Cornelius, 2006) was especially relevant.

Of Arnold's many academic works, I have chosen to focus primarily on the two I consider her most significant for addressing the issue of the impact of her faith on her science: *The Human Person: An Approach to an Integral Theory of Personality* (1954a) and *Emotion and Personality* (1960). *The Human Person* provides Arnold's vision for a distinctively Catholic psychology and *Emotion and Personality* is her application of that approach: a psychological theory deeply rooted in Thomistic philosophy. There are certainly other publications (such as Arnold, 1962, Arnold's contribution to the Thematic Apperception Test [TAT]), which are

significant for the history of psychology, but which are not as relevant to my project. These I leave for a future scholar; certainly Arnold deserves more than one.

This combination of archival and published materials allows me to provide a detailed description of Arnold's life in the years following her conversion as well as to analyze her two most influential scholarly contributions. Much has been written about the dangers (Lepore, 2001) and virtues (Porter 2006; Nye, 2006) of scientific biography. I certainly recognize Terrall's description of biography as "unrelentingly particular" (2006, p. 307) and the temptation to include every detail, given the abundance of diverse material available to me. I hope that I have not become one of the historians "who love too much" (Lepore, 2001), though I freely confess to affection for Arnold, in spite of, and perhaps especially because of, her foibles. My intention in including as much detail as I have is that the richness of Arnold's lived experience in the first two chapters will enliven and color the reader's interpretation of Arnold's published work in the second two chapters, illustrating the tight relationship between science and the personal in her life.

White (2009) has explored the "emotional economy of science" in the life of Darwin, and I see parallels with the letters between Gasson and Arnold. These private letters, undistorted by strategic or self-presentation considerations characteristic of public speech, reveal what irritates them (uncritical secular psychologists, unfair book reviewers, relativistic students) and what makes them sad (loneliness, primarily) and what they love. Gasson is shown to be a man of many loves and simple, almost child-like tastes (comics, beer, baseball, and woodworking), while Arnold is more serious and particular (her loves seem more or less limited to Gasson, her academic work, and God). They both are passionate about talking to and spending time with each other, using careful logic to work out psychological or philosophical problems, and

engaging in devotional practices which help them to feel the love of God. Terrall suggests that scientific biography explores “how people live out their scientific ambitions, exploring the resources used in the process” (2006, p. 311), and judging by Terrall’s examples, Arnold’s means of living out her ambitions is unusual. Arnold had resources and ambitions, to be sure, but her choice to privilege the resources that Gasson offered her over all others, and her spiritual standards of academic success, put her life on a different trajectory than many scientists. My aim is not hagiography, however. While Arnold’s life is unconventional in terms of traditional scientific mores, with their emphasis on objectivity and neutrality, my review of the history of the interactions between psychology and religion demonstrates that such religious entanglements in psychology was the norm rather than an anomaly.

### **Conclusion**

To summarize, my purpose in investigating Magda Arnold is twofold: 1) To explore the relationship between psychology and religion in North America (1930-1976) by looking at Arnold as an example of Catholic efforts in this time period and as an indication of the reaction of the religious public to an increasingly secularized psychology. 2) To explore the impact of strong, self-aware religious beliefs on scientific theorizing, and its implications for discussions of scientific objectivity and subjectivity in psychology. The first purpose will contribute not only to a more complete understanding of psychology’s religious involvement, but also to scholarship on the relationship between science and religion more generally. In the later scholarship “conflict” models and narratives have tended to predominate (Numbers, 2010; Wilson, 2002), and Arnold’s more positive engagement provides an illuminating counterexample, which contributes to the growing consensus around the “complexity” position (Wilson, 2002). The second purpose can contribute a historically-informed perspective on discussions of scientific objectivity, by offering



Arnold's candid approach to her own philosophical and moral commitments as a viable model for committed engagement with psychology.

## Chapter 1: Magda Arnold's Biography

In April 1948 the Eastern Psychological Association (EPA) was conducting their annual meeting in Philadelphia. Magda Arnold, only recently immigrated to the United States from Canada, was enjoying her first EPA meetings. Compared to the smaller Canadian psychology meetings she had previously attended, the Eastern Psychological Association was delightfully stimulating—an environment bustling with nearly a thousand people and a diversity of interests and perspectives (Seashore, 1948).<sup>1</sup> She later remembered:

I had a thoroughly good time and was tired and content when I went back to my hotel room. Not surprisingly, sleep did not come easily, I was too full of all I had seen and heard, enthusiastic about everything psychological. Eventually I did fall asleep but after some time, I woke again and became aware of a great calm. One by one, all the Catholic doctrines, most of them discarded long ago, now appeared in the light of reality: this is the way it is, necessary and undeniable. The Trinity, the virgin birth, Christ's sacrifice on the cross: All that and much more became clear and real beyond all doubt. I stayed awake the rest of the night, thinking. I knew that this experience was bound to change my life.

Now I had a firm basis, a firm belief. (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 10)

This startling conversion account—certainly not the usual outcome of attendance at a professional psychology conference—was the pivotal event in the life of Magda Arnold. As Arnold had foreseen, her conversion did indeed have a profound impact on her life, influencing both her thinking and her career. She would later credit it with sparking her theoretical creativity:

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<sup>1</sup> The conference proceedings reveal a diverse program; no item stands out as likely to be particularly stimulating to Arnold. No talks dealt with emotion explicitly, although Arnold would likely have been interested in two talks which dealt with the TAT. If Arnold's conversion experience happened on the first evening of the conference, the day ended with a banquet and the Presidential Address, *A Social Agency as a Setting for Research—The Institute of Welfare Research* (Seashore, 1948).

“my conversion brought with it such an expansion of my horizon that I do believe without it I could not have written the books I did” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29).

As crucial as this experience was, it was not the only disruptive event in Arnold’s life—her life up to 1948 had been marked by instability and upheaval. Surprisingly it was these painful events that launched her from rural Austria to Canada’s largest city, and made possible her career in psychology. In order to understand how Arnold came to be lying in a Philadelphia hotel bed, contemplating the beauty of psychology, we must return to her early years as a neglected illegitimate child in an insignificant European town.

### **A Lonely and Independent Childhood**

Arnold begins her personal autobiographical account: “My earliest memory is sitting at a table with a stern-looking woman looking at me and apparently scolding me” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 1). This woman was her mother, an operatic soprano named Rosa Marie Blondiau, and this memory was from a rare occasion in which Blondiau actually took Magda<sup>2</sup> on tour with her theater group. But this arrangement did not suit Blondiau, and instead she left her young illegitimate daughter with two of her admirers who lived in Mährisch-Trübau<sup>3</sup>, a small German-speaking town in what was then Austria.

These two sisters, Marie and Resi Werner, whom Magda called her aunts, but who were not in fact related to Magda, raised her. The three of them lived together in a small apartment that consisted of a single room and kitchen, across the street from the boutique that Marie, the elder sister, owned.<sup>4</sup> As a young child Magda slept between the sisters in the middle of their

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<sup>2</sup> To avoid the confusion of referring to the child Magda Blondiau as Arnold, and the awkwardness of referring to her as Arnold and her husband as Bertl, I have referred to her as Magda up until Bertl exits her life, calling her Arnold only when referring to the adult woman reminiscing about her past.

<sup>3</sup> This is the modern day city Moravská Třebová in the Czech Republic.

<sup>4</sup> It is not clear how soon after birth Magda was dropped off with the sisters, but Magda’s mother apparently never lived with them.

pushed together single beds, on some blankets covering the junction of the beds; when she got older she slept on the couch. The Werner sisters were hardly the warm foster parents a young child could desire. Although Resi was affectionate (Magda recalls sitting on her lap and being read fairy tales), she was a “semi-invalid” (Arnold, 1976, p. 3) bent with arthritis and overwhelmed by her more dominant older sister. Marie was “of sterner stuff” and “ruled over” Resi and Magda (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 1). Describing her teenage relationship with Marie, Arnold recalled, “eternal nagging that went on practically all the time I was home. . . . She would stand at the stove, preparing something to eat, and would engage in a monologue, telling me all the things wrong with me, all the things I had done wrong, from childhood on” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 11). Money was always tight: “My mother, who originally had promised to pay for my keep, as often as not forgot to do so and my aunt found it difficult to make ends meet” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 3).

Overall, the picture Arnold provides is of a neglected and independent childhood. While Marie and Resi were at work (at the boutique and a silk factory, respectively), the young Magda either sat on the boutique’s front steps watching the ladies who entered, or was left to draw and color alone in the apartment. Or she would explore the forest alone. Arnold later recalled taking her uncle on one of her long walks during one of his very rare visits when she was about age 8. He worried they would get lost, but “I told him I roamed all over the forest, all by myself, whenever I wanted” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 6). The uncle was scandalized. “I would be out for hours at a time, but was always careful to be back for meals, so my aunts wouldn’t worry.” Nonetheless, “Those walks are some of my brightest memories” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 6).

In this rather bleak childhood, schooling was salvation. Magda chafed at not being taught to read in kindergarten and made some precocious attempts to teach herself once she learned her letters, so finally entering primary school was heavenly. “School was a new lease on life. Here, I

was no longer the little shrimp of no consequence to anybody; here I was considered competent and was called on frequently” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 2). Crucially, school offered her another form of escape, reading: “Reading had always been my solace and great delight” (Arnold, n.d. e, p.4). She was allowed to borrow books from a boutique customer with older children, and although shy, took advantage of the situation:

Every week I used to go there, the book to be returned in my hot little hand, ready to pick up another. I still remember how my heart hammered against my chest as I climbed up the three floors to what to me was their palatial apartment. Then I stood outside the door, not daring to knock, yet not willing to leave without a book in exchange. (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 4)

Once she was old enough Magda got a library card, and quickly began to read her way through the Mührisch-Trübau library’s collection. She recalled, “there was no children's division, nor any guidance for children. So I ranged freely though the catalog...I suppose if I had picked out something desperately unsuitable, somebody would have stopped me, but nobody ever did” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 4). The charm of reading quickly outshone the limited challenges offered by the classroom: “My school performance suffered from my addiction to reading.... Many of the classes frankly bored me, so I would have a book on my knees and would surreptitiously read instead of paying attention to the teacher” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 4). If she’d had her druthers, Magda would have kept her “nose in a book from morning till night” (Arnold, 1976, p. 5); “books, books, of course — I practically read everything in the local library” (Arnold, 1976, p. 5).

There was very little tolerance for this voracious reading appetite at home:

My aunts never read, except for the newspaper the landlord sent up every Sunday. When I had a book, I got lost in it, neither hearing nor seeing anything else. Often Aunt Marie

would threaten to throw the book into the fire, which always petrified me--how could I explain the loss to the people who had lent me the book? (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 4)

Years later, when asked by an oral history interviewer about the support for her intellectual development, Arnold reported, “at home there was no education, no stimulation, no nothing.” “But some admiration for education?” the interviewer asks. “No, No.” Arnold responds (Arnold, 1976, p. 4). “I had a difficult time at home because my aunt just didn't -- she was really helpless as far as I was concerned. She didn't know what to do with me-- I had such odd ideas, you know” (Arnold, 1976, p. 5).

In summary of her childhood Arnold offers the following: “These years of growing up were difficult for me. I had no support at home, was painfully shy and well aware of being an unattractive shrimp with freckles, a nose that was far too big and an imbalance of the eye muscles that made one eye stray, whenever I was not focusing properly” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 5). In addition, in the town of 5,000 or so people, everyone knew of her illegitimate origins. In 1976 she reflected, “I suppose today it wouldn't be particularly astonishing but at the time it was pretty bad....so I was under a cloud, you know, from the time I was born” (Arnold, 1976, p. 3).

Magda's teachers noticed that she was very bright and lobbied her aunt to send her to the gymnasium so that she might eventually attend university, but Aunt Marie “just laughed. She said “What on?”” (Arnold, 1976, p. 4).<sup>5</sup> Instead, in 1917, at age 13, Magda began a 2-year commercial course at a local convent, the fees paid half by her uncle, and half by scholarships. It was two years of “stress and desperation” thanks to a hypocritical and despotic Sister Directrice who “never let us forget that she had come from a metropolis [Vienna] to a class of backwoods innocents” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 5). Arnold recalled regularly stopping in the chapel to pray that

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<sup>5</sup> Aunt Marie's dismissal of Magda's university prospects likely had a gendered element, but this is not mentioned in Arnold's memoirs.

nothing bad would happen that day in class. Another downside was the required religion class taught by a priest who was clearly aroused by “being surrounded by a odd dozen nubile and attractive girls” and always stood too close. Always shortsighted, Magda got the worst of it since she sat in the front row: “On the best way to losing my faith, all I could see was his face thrust against mine when I stood up to answer” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 5).

However the experience was not without its benefits. Arnold said it “taught me to work hard with very little recognition, except for grades” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 5) and it gave her marketable skills that would stand her in good stead at several points the future. Immediately out of school Magda was able to get job as a clerk in the local bank, where, although she was annoyed at being treated like a precocious child, she did well, and was promoted, eventually ending up in bookkeeping, as high as she could expect to go as a woman: “Of course, the job of cashier and branch manager was strictly a male preserve” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 7). With this job, which she began at age 15 and a half, Magda became the primary breadwinner in her household, and their financial situation became more comfortable.

It was while she was working at the bank that Arnold was first exposed to psychology. Even while working full time she went to the library every other day and took out as many books as possible and “devoured them” (Arnold, 1976, p. 6). She had read widely: “Goethe and Schiller, most of Shakespeare, and lesser German classics like Mörike, Storm, and Löns” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 7), and was motivated to learn English because of “the great literature waiting for me in English” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 7). But it was psychology that had the greatest impact: “All through these years, I read voraciously, mostly philosophy and psychology - as much of it as I could find in the public library. I was much impressed by Freud. I read all I could lay hands on...” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 7). As Arnold put it in her professional autobiography, “From the time

I first read Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, at the age of sixteen, I wanted to be a psychologist. There was not the faintest chance, I knew that" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 1). The problem of course was money, but more importantly, her lack of education: her lack of a gymnasium education made it impossible for her to be admitted to university. "Still, I could dream, couldn't I?" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 7).

Besides reading, the other thing that sustained Magda in adolescence was her involvement in the Wandervogel. This was a self-organized youth movement group which emphasized nature—the name means "wandering bird" or vagabond, and long hikes through the woods were characteristic. According to Arnold, being a member of Wandervogel meant "long hikes, "nest" parties which included folk dancing, choirs devoted to folk songs, historical lore, lectures on all kinds of topics" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 3). Arnold remembered the collective appeal of the Wandervogel: "On Sundays we went on long hikes. We usually preferred foot paths, but on the way home, we marched singing on the road, with all the instruments playing, their colored ribbons streaming in the breeze" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 3).

The Wandervogel movement was founded on the principle of independence, and fiercely resisted any adult interference. Leaders were carefully selected older members of the group who possessed scouting skills, and the younger groups were gender segregated, with an eye to avoiding offending adults. Although the oldest group, age 15 and up, had mixed-gender events, "To avoid gossip and other difficulties from parents and teachers, we had a very strict though unacknowledged custom of never touching, except for a firm handclasp" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 3).<sup>6</sup> Once she joined Wandervogel at about age 12, Magda found the community she so sorely lacked: "This group became my home, my circle of friends, the center of all my interests, during

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<sup>6</sup> This corresponds with other accounts of Wandervogel as "an organization for sublimating the juvenile libido" (Laqueur, 1962, p. 57).



the years I spent in my home town” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 3). Arnold recalled how intensely she felt about the group: “I remember that in all those early years among the “Wandervogel” I had no more heartfelt wish than to be an “older one” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 3). By the time she was an older one, Magda was working at the bank, but continued to join in activities and hikes when she could.

In addition to supplying companions to her previously lonely wanders in the woods, the group’s cultural educational evenings and discussions also provided Magda with further desperately needed intellectual stimulation. While she had no intimate female friends, “My interest in literature was shared by the other girls, but my interest in psychology and philosophy was not” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 8), she got on well with the boys and enjoyed discussions with them. “I was precocious, and very lively; my shyness had disappeared, at least when I was among friends, and I was always interested in anything new” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 8).

It was in this period, and in the guise of yet another Wandervogel companion, that Magda met the man she would marry: Robert Arnold. In 1920, when Magda was not quite 17, “Salzburger Bertl” joined her Wandervogel group. Bertl, who as his nickname indicated was from Salzburg but was visiting his mother who lived in a village close by, “singled me out, often came to take me for walks and proved a cheerful companion and good sparring partner. We argued about everything, philosophy, psychology, and mostly about the relationship between men and women” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 7-8). Ominously, Bertl was a fan of Otto Weininger, who, as Arnold later summarized his misogynistic and racist views, “insisted that women were barely half human, that everything important and worthwhile had been done by men” (Arnold, n.d. e, p.

8).<sup>7</sup> Although Magda was indignant, she was also unable to name any notable women and “I resolved there and then that I would do all I could to remedy this state of affairs, at least in my small circle” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 8).

At the end of Bertl’s time in the area, he brought Magda to visit his mother. Given that Bertl was “thoroughly citified, almost dapper, a good talker, a voracious reader” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 8), Magda was shocked to find his mother an uneducated peasant woman. It seemed that Bertl’s father had “insisted on a divorce as soon as he became successful” and sent his wife back to her home village without providing for her financially (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 8). Bertl told Magda that he hated his father as a result, and had rebelliously determined to spend as much time with his mother as possible, although he now had to go to his father in Vienna to start an apprenticeship arranged by his father.<sup>8</sup> On the walk home, Bertl awkwardly kissed Magda for the first time, and they promised to write to each other. However Magda found Bertl’s letters disappointingly negative: “full of bitter criticism of his job, the people in the factory, his father, his family, and everything around him” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 8). Gradually their correspondence ceased. Arnold reports, “I was not too disturbed; I had lots of friends, boys and girls, we had our meetings and our hiking trips” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 8). She wrote in her journal:

I am not yet finished with Bertl. I can see how far apart we have grown, I know all that separates us, know that we cannot talk about anything without fighting; I know all that and yet he still is closer to me than anyone else. It is my longing for love that leads me to believe that there is still a bond between us. (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 8).

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<sup>7</sup> Otto Weininger (1880-1903) was an Austrian philosopher. Arnold’s impression of Weininger is correct—he held strongly misogynistic and antisemitic views, expressed in his 1903 book *Sex and Character – A Fundamental Investigation*.

<sup>8</sup> Bertl’s paternal family had a noble Polish background—Bertl’s grandfather had some title, possibly he was a count (Arnold, 2014). At some point the family had immigrated to Germany, where Bertl was born.

As Magda wandered the woods with the Wandervogel, the world she inhabited changed around her—including its very geographical borders. When World War I broke out in 1914, Magda was only 10 and, at least judging by her recorded memories, it seems to have had a minimal effect on her daily life. However, in the aftermath of the war, in 1919, Czechoslovakia declared its independence, an event that changed Magda's national identity. She suddenly lived in Czechoslovakia, rather than Austria. This was significant, since Magda's town was one of the islands of German speakers in a sea of Czech speakers, and the change of regime was announced there with a show of military force that left several of the town's more curious children dead (Arnold, n.d. e). While the Germans had previously been in power, Sudeten Germans now found themselves regarded as "second-rate citizens" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 6) in the "brave new country" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 6).

Even the existence of the Wandervogel underlined the reality of the changing world. Scholars have characterized Wandervogel as a spontaneous "movement of youthful protest against the stiff and constricting conventions of late Wilhelmine society" (Stachura, 1981, p. 15), a symptom of a deep seated bourgeois disillusionment with modern industrialized, urban culture. According to Peter Stachura's analysis of German youth movements, Wandervogel was an expression of the feelings of the "frustration, alienation, and loneliness" induced by mass industrial society, and part of a broader "campaign against modernism (Kulturkritik) in all spheres of German public life" (Stachura, 1981, p. 14). While Stachura identifies certain scientific theories ("Freud in psychology, Weber in sociology and Einstein in physics") as foundational to this revolt against modernity, the movement also questioned the validity of science's authority: "There was a probing criticism of established standards, assumptions and

codes of conduct. Chiliastic needs and calls to action replaced rational systems of thought. Positivism, scientism and rationalism were all attacked” (Stachura, 1981, p. 14).

At the heart of the Wandervogel was the basic “failure of the technological age and urban culture to offer youth either emotional or moral inspiration” (Stachura, 1981, p. 15) and the urgent need to “re-establish the personal identity of the individual man who had become a cog in a huge, bewildering machine age” (Stachura, 1981, p. 17). Interestingly, given Arnold’s later critiques of psychology’s failure to emphasize the humanity of its subjects,

The purpose of the early Wandervogel was intrinsically humanitarian. It sought, through a passionate commitment to rambling and hiking in the countryside and to the untrammelled delights of Nature, to bring the younger generation back to the purer foundations of a society in which human bonds would be restored to their rightful place of priority over machines, factories, materialism, and the impersonalia of urban civilization. (Stachura, 1981, p. 16).

This idealistic perspective resulted in a powerful cult of the past, with the wandering Medieval scholar held up as the ideal and the rediscovery of Germanic folk traditions (music, dance, poetry, and stories) and old fashioned musical instruments, like the lute and guitar. But it was the purposeless ramble that was the Wandervogel’s characteristic activity—its aimlessness a revolt against the modern obsession with productive work.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The German youth movement’s success meant that it took on a variety of forms, some of which held closer to its original ideals than others. Arnold’s perception was that the movement lost touch with its roots about the time that she outgrew it: She wrote “...many heard the call and swelled the ranks who never grasped the message. From being a sect, it became a fashion. By 1920, instead of opposition in School, Church Family, State, it had won recommendation. Every school had its Y.M. Group, every denomination, every political party started a Y.M. of its own, it was a movement no longer. To the outsider, of course, it seemed to flourish: youth hostels were being opened everywhere, conventions were being held, young folk thronged the countryside, but the dynamic force it once had was watered down” (Arnold ‘The German Youth Movement’, n. d.). Some of these groups were religious, such as Quickborn, the Catholic youth group, and Evangelische Jugend, a Lutheran group (Walker, 1970). Another variety was scouting groups, which differed from the Wandervogel in their focus and style: “Youth led the Wandervogel; adults led the scouts. The Wandervogel concentrated on rambles; the scouts on woodcraft and

While Wandervogel's anti-urban and anti-industrial roots may not have been clear to the young Magda, she herself exemplified another theme of the Wandervogel: the generational estrangement and familial alienation of the youth. While the Wandervogel was not anti-family, its avoidance of adult influence reflected the weakened and strained relationships between parents and adolescents and the decreasing influence of family life on the youth (Stachura, 1981). Magda was certainly alienated from her family—both her foster aunt (by this time Aunt Resi had died, leaving only Aunt Marie)<sup>10</sup> and her mother.

Arnold reports memories of only two visits by her mother during her childhood. One took place when Magda was about 10 years old and she recalls being “overawed at having such an attractive and elegant mother” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 11). Although Magda came and got into her mother's bed to talk to her the morning after her arrival, “It would never have occurred to me to put my arms around her neck — and apparently it didn't occur to her either” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 11). During that visit on a walk she and her mother:

...sat down on a bench in the forest and I asked her to sing something for me. She looked around, and decided there was nobody to see or hear, and sang the song of the “Waldmägdelein”.<sup>11</sup> Her voice filled the clearing and I understood why she had always

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paramilitary training. The Wandervogel wore bizarre clothing and strolled; the scouts wore uniforms and marched” (Walker, 1970, p. 8). The rise of Nazism led to the end of these independent groups, and the incorporation of many of the para-military and German cultural elements into the Hitler Youth or Hitlerjugend (HJ). The Nazis outlawed all non-HJ youth groups in 1934, and disbanded or forcibly integrated these competing groups (although some Catholic and Protestant youth groups were allowed until 1936). In contrast to the Wandervogel ideal of the itinerant medieval scholar, the HJ idealized the knight, and rather than the ramble, the HJ's central activity were athletic competitions (Walker, 1970). The ramble clashed with Nazi principles, as can be seen by a 1935 directive from the Hitler Youth leader Hartmann Lauterbacher: “The excursion belongs to the service of the HJ, and its organizations. Basically, therefore, it is always undertaken by the group. But even if a member of the HJ goes on a ramble either alone, or with a few comrades, due to special circumstances-- and this much always be regarded as exceptional--he is still in service; therefore in the future no excursion is to be made except in uniform” (Walker, 1970, p. 21).

<sup>10</sup> Aunt Resi died when Magda was about 4 years old (Arnold, 1992, M. A. Arnold to J. Arnold, January 10, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> An appropriate choice for the setting, the piece is *Vilja-Lied (Lied vom Waldmägdelein)*, or *Vilja Song (The Song of the Maid of the Woods)*—from the operetta *Die lustige Witwe* or *The Merry Widow* by Franz Lehár, first performed in 1905.

refused to sing in the house. I cried when she left but more because I felt abandoned than from sorrow at her leaving. (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 10)

On her later visit Arnold recalled feeling “resentful at having been abandoned to live in a small town with a woman who took care of me but didn't understand me” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 10).

After years of little to no contact, in 1922, Magda was invited to spend Christmas with her mother in Berlin. So on her 19th birthday Magda arrived in Berlin by train, “eager to find a mother and determined to be a daughter of whom she could be proud” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 11). Arnold recalled that her mother “received me kindly enough, considering that we had had very little contact during the years of my growing up” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 11). However, Magda was uncomfortable when her mother introduced her to her elegant gentleman “boarder,” who was clearly her current lover. But the visit took a turn for the better when a boy of 16 arrived. Much to her surprise, Magda learned she had a younger brother, or rather a half-brother! Willi had also been raised by a foster family, but had been living with their mother since he had finished school.

Although the handsome Willi was clearly her mother's favorite, Magda was overjoyed: “This really was a Christmas present, to have a brother! I had always envied my friends who had brothers and sisters, and now I had a brother myself!” The siblings took to each other instantly: Arnold says Willi “called me ice maiden but adored me” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 14). Like Magda, Willi lacked a gymnasium background which would get him into university and instead was apprenticed to a merchant. Magda was deeply sympathetic: “I made all sorts of plans how I could pay for his studies, but they came to nothing” because of the barrier of his high school education. The gift of her brother was to be the best influence her mother had on her life. While

there is very little further mention of Rosa Marie Blondiau in Arnold's memoirs, she and her brother kept in touch, and met several more times.

In terms of Arnold's "Aunt" Marie, their relationship seems to have entirely consisted of Marie's scolding and disapproval: "She didn't like my being with the youth movement, my reading, my interests." However, Arnold reports "I just sat and took it" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 11). After the Christmas visit to her mother, the nagging grew particularly terrible, and so Magda threatened to leave for Berlin, since she could stay with her mother and was certain of getting a job with her good recommendations. Since Magda's salary had been supporting them both,<sup>12</sup> Marie abruptly stopped her scolding and was more restrained from then on. Reflecting on her relationship with Aunt Marie, Arnold mused:

I suppose she was fond of me and in a way I was fond of her. She kept telling me I did not appreciate her care for me; once she was gone, I would never again find anyone who would do for me the way she did. She was right in that. Nobody looked after me once she died. But nobody harangued me as she did, either. (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 11)

### **Romantic Attachments**

1922 was an eventful year for Magda. In addition to visiting her mother, in the summer of her 18th year Magda had made another journey, which had introduced perhaps even more drama into her life than her later trip to Berlin. As a part of her involvement with Wandervogel, Magda had decided to attend a youth movement meeting that was being held in Bohemia, since it coincided with her vacation. As it turned out, she was the only girl who could make the trip, so she made the trip accompanied by seven tall young men. The group was lightheartedly dubbed "Snow White and the seven dwarfs" and Magda had a marvelous time on her first visit to

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<sup>12</sup> Aunt Marie didn't keep any books for her boutique and often let "her ladies" buy on credit, which eventually led to the failure of the business (Arnold, 1992, M. A. Arnold to J. Arnold, January 10, 1992)

Germany. They got to the meeting by walking nearly 200 kilometers north and crossing into Germany, then taking a train to the stop nearest their destination, and then walking back into Czechoslovakia where the meeting was being held in a Sudeten-German town.

Walking meant there was plenty of time for talking, and Magda found herself most enjoying her conversations with the glamorous Richard Monhart, who was new to the group. Richard had been taken prisoner in Russia during the war, had learned to speak some Russian, worked on a Russian collective farm, and had organized the prisoners at the end of the war and they had walked across Russia to the German border. A teacher in a nearby town, Richard was only recently returned from Russia. In addition to his fascinating background, Richard was quite handsome, according to Arnold “6’4”, blond and blue eyed, a viking figure if I ever saw one” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 9).

However, once they arrived at the meeting, Magda did not see much of her traveling companions, as they were housed far off. However she did see plenty of another young man, Ernst Kundt, a law student and something of a personality within the youth movement. He was 7 years older, and quite intense. Magda was in emotional turmoil, ill at ease with him, but also fascinated: “Before the meetings ended, he told me he loved me and I thought that that must be what I felt, too” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 9). Yet she recorded in her journal at the time, “His presence seems to paralyze me, dominate me, so that I am not myself” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 19-10). Ernst gave her a book of poetry and promised to visit. On the return journey back Richard was unfailingly polite, but Magda felt “vaguely regretful” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 10) for having committed to Ernst.

These doubts grew even more pronounced when she began receiving letters from Ernst, which she found dissatisfying, while at the same time Richard also began to write and looked her



up when he was in town. She felt overwhelmed by Ernst's passion and in the depths of despair when Richard's letters were cool. Visits with Ernst only made things worse, but she was anxiously unsure of Richard's feelings for her. She recorded her angst in her journal, and copied some lines from a poem by Theodor Storm: "And though he never trembled for her in love / she suffered for love of him and only lived for him" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 10). Arnold later commented: "At the time, that seemed to me the fate of women, and perhaps my own..." (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 10). Eventually she took her friend Hedda's advice to call things off with Ernst and wait for someone better. "But," Hedda warned her, "The kind of man you want doesn't grow on trees" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 12).

During one of his visits to her Ernst had decided to organize a "Song Week" at a resort near Trübau, to which all of the Wandervogel in Czechoslovakia would be invited. This event, which took place in July 1923, would demonstrate both the underlying antisemitism of the culture and the tenuousness of Magda's social position. To Magda's dismay, Richard attended with a girl, Blanka, "who was everything I was not: she was tall and beautiful, sure of herself, admired by all, including me" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 12). Magda had to work so she could not stay at the resort, but walked the hour and a half to the retreat after work whenever she could. On the last weekend she arrived to find "the place in an uproar. It turned out that the girl Richard had brought had a Jewish grandmother" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 13). The Wandervogel only admitted "pure Aryans" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 13) so the girl should not have been allowed to attend.<sup>13</sup>

Although Magda had been aware of these rules (one of her close friends was Jewish and barred from Wandervogel), she was furious at the exclusion of Blanka and said so.

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<sup>13</sup> According to Laquer (1962), technically Wandervogel did allow Jewish members, although this policy may not have been clear to individual branches. In 1914 the Wandervogel had discussed the issue at a meeting in Frankfurt, that resulted in a compromise which allowed local branches to accept or reject individual Jewish members as they saw fit; although in theory they were not to have antisemitic policies, there was to be no enforcement of this rule.

I had liked Blanka, she was far more intelligent and more in tune with the things that interested me than any of the girls in our group. But that, it seems, was the trouble.

Because I liked her and went around with her a good deal, it occurred to the assembled gathering that I was too much like her, I must be Jewish, too. This burst upon me like a thunderclap. I knew that I was illegitimate, but had never considered that my father might be Jewish. If he was, I knew that I suddenly was an outsider, my whole circle of friends would disappear. (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 13)<sup>14</sup>

The group split along gender lines, with the boys insisting that their local group would resign from the Wandervogel if Magda was to be excluded, the girls arguing that “I was much too intelligent for a German girl, it could well be that I was half Jewish, in which case I did not belong in the Wandervogel” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 13). Eventually things cooled down, but Arnold says the incident “gave me time to think. Before, I had always accepted the Aryan restriction unthinkingly” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 14). She was troubled by the fact that girls she had grown up with could suddenly turn against her: “The truth seemed to be that they had always felt uneasy with me and now found reasons why I must be an alien” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 14). However “I was not ready to give up my friends because that national group we belonged to had antisemitic views” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 14). Despite her outrage at the injustice “I was relieved to hear from my mother that my father was not Jewish, I was safe, after all” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 14).<sup>15</sup>

After breaking up with Ernst, Magda saw clearly that she had made a mistake in choosing him over Richard: “I let myself be bewitched, and it took long months before I was sober again”

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<sup>14</sup> In her oral history interview Arnold offers a slightly different retelling of what seems to be the same incident “there was at one point some rumour that my father was one of the local very well-to-do Jews and when I heard it I said, ‘I wish he were because then we would have a little more money at home’”(Arnold, 1976, p. 6).

<sup>15</sup> Her father was Rudolph Barta, the director of the traveling opera company of which Rosa Marie Blondiau was a member. Arnold apparently never met her father (Shields & Field, 2003; personal communication: Joan Arnold to Stephanie Shields, November 7, 2011).

(Arnold, n.d. e, p. 15). It was clear to her now that she was in love with Richard, but she feared that she'd lost her chance at happiness. Magda continued to be in suspense over Richard's feelings for her, they continued to see each other, and at times he seemed quite in love with her, but nothing ever came of it. Interestingly this anxiety produced spiritual reflections in Magda, despite the fact that she'd lost her faith during her stint in the convent course:

In my diary, I said that if ever there is a time in my life that I could come to a strong faith, this would be it. If I could come from the belief in a mighty force which rules the universe to a faith in a God who is a loving father and would take me to His heart in love, I would count my loss fortunate. (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 15)

In this period Bertl made a reappearance, and Magda was impressed by his new maturity. Bertl spent his breaks from the university in Prague at Trübau. They began to spend time together, but in Magda's mind, just as good friends. "Then out of the blue, he asked me to marry him, which startled me to no end" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 16). She told him her heart was elsewhere, but a few days later he told her that Richard had wished him success—Richard apparently approved. Over the course of the next few months Bertl increased the frequency of his visits, and Magda began to see that they had more in common than she had thought. "He was as charming as he knew how and tried to convince me that we were in tune, were sib, we understood each other and did not need to adapt to each other. I enjoyed his wooing, yet in my heart I could not forget Richard" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 16).

Finally, in May of 1924, the mystery of Richard's behavior was solved. He wrote to Magda to announce his impending marriage to his landlady's daughter, who was expecting his child. He said that this event "ends his hopes for happiness" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 16) and Magda,

though shocked, primarily felt sorry for him. She attempted to move on with her life, but it was difficult, “my thoughts returned to him like homing birds” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 16).

This road not taken was something that Arnold would reflect on later in life, but rather than looking back on the loss of Richard with regret, she was struck by how different her life would have been. Richard was very traditional, so she would likely have stayed in Czechoslovakia and taken a traditional domestic role, never having the opportunity to get an education or pursue a career in psychology—a life she believed would have left her dissatisfied. As Arnold’s daughter Joan explained it, with the direction Magda’s life eventually took “In terms of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, she was up there at the top,” but with Richard she would never have been able to have such fulfillment (Joan Arnold, personal communication, January 15, 2015).

As Magda worked on getting over Richard, Bertl’s visits became more welcome: “I realized that his presence was healing -- he was cheerful, interesting and interested, and we had a good time together” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 16). Bertl had become a leader, someone she could respect:

For the first time, I had found someone with whom I could talk without fear of being misunderstood, who shared my interests and introduced me into his own world of dreams and plans. In my diary, I admitted this was a quiet kind of love, compared to my feeling for Richard. But I was ready to forget those transports, grateful for the understanding and new interests I found with Bertl. The only thing that worried me was that Bertl might not find me sufficiently stimulating, sufficiently bright, for any length of time. I suspected that in the end, he would turn away but hoped it wouldn’t be for many years. I was grateful for the unexpected and undeserved happiness I had found and asked from the

depth of my heart: “Dear Lord, if it is possible leave me this happiness!” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 17)

Around the time that Magda and Bertl became engaged, Magda’s Aunt Marie was diagnosed with colorectal cancer, but it was too late to operate. After several months of pain, Marie died peacefully while Magda was out shopping. Not surprisingly, Magda “felt uprooted and alone” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 18) and turned to Bertl for companionship. On January 26, 1926, she and Bertl were married in a Lutheran church in Prague. Neither the city nor the church was Magda’s first choice. Magda was disappointed to be married in Prague rather than in Trübau, where their Wangervogel friends could help them celebrate, but Bertl insisted: “He was a bit ashamed of getting married, it seemed to me, but I have never been able to figure out just why” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 18). Magda had also wanted to be married in the Catholic Church. Although she no longer had faith, she was “reluctant to leave the Church” and so met with the priest to see if something might be arranged, despite the fact that Bertl was Lutheran. But because Bertl refused to sign a promise to bring up the children Catholic, the priest said it was impossible for them to be married in the church. Magda, rather discouraged, replied that then they would have to be married in the Lutheran church. The priest “asked me did I know what the consequences would be? No, I said. “Hellfire and damnation,” he assured me. I turned around and left” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 19).

At this time, Bertl was working as the secretary of the Prague YMCA. It was primarily run by Americans, so both he and Magda began to learn English. The previous spring, Bertl had finished a PhD in Slavic languages, with a dissertation on Tolstoy<sup>16</sup> which Magda had written

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<sup>16</sup> Bertl’s dissertation was likely on either Aleksey Konstantinovich Tolstoy (1817-1875) or Aleksey Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1883-1945), rather than Leo Tolstoy (Arnold’s autobiography simply calls him “A. Tolstoy”).

out in longhand, because all the Russian quotations could not be typed. The marriage got off to a rough start as Magda tried to adjust to the big city and Bertl's often selfish behavior.

Bertl had taken a room not far from the YMCA and I tried to find my bearings in Prague. It was a big city and a very beautiful city, but we had neither time nor money to enjoy it. I had got a bonus from the bank before I left, but it all went to pay debts Bertl had made. It appeared that he had ordered a dowry for himself, handmade shirts and shorts. Our room was not very attractive and outside, the elevated railway roared day and night. I was lonesome and homesick. Soon, I caught a cold and had to stay in bed for a few days, the landlady's kitten my only company. (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 19)

Arnold later described Prague in this period as "a wasteland" since she had "not a single friend" (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992).

Although Bertl enjoyed interacting with Americans and the opportunity to improve his English that his job offered, he quickly became restless and began looking for other work. His first plan was for him to move to Vienna for a year, where his brother could get him a job, and Magda would join him later. But that was too much for Magda. She told him she wouldn't be left behind to join him at his convenience, either he would look for a job in Prague "or I would consider myself free" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 20). Although "surprised at this show of independence" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 20), Bertl agreed to look in Prague. Soon they both had jobs and a comfortable apartment, where they could have Magda's furniture that she had bought piece by piece while working in Trübau. Magda took advantage of Bertl's affiliation with Charles University to sit in on psychology courses (Shields & Field, 2003).

### Strange Land, Unknown Future

Everything went well for a while until Bertl again became restless. His idea this time (influenced by his work at the YMCA) was to immigrate to America, or Canada. Again the plan was for Magda to stay behind while he found his feet. This time, though, Magda did not object. One of Bertl's reasons for wanting to immigrate was that "he was sure that we were going to have another war, and he did not want to be caught in it" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 20) and that was plausible to Magda. Three years older than Magda, Bertl had been in boot camp at the end of WWI and had not found it a pleasant experience. "Still and all, I hated the thought of leaving all my friends, everything I knew, behind and to have to face a strange land, strange people, an unknown future. But Bertl had caught fire" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 20).

In the spring of 1927, Bertl left for Canada, since they had open immigration.<sup>17</sup> Magda stayed behind, living with a Czech family, and working as the bookkeeper for an Import/Export business. While she waited to immigrate she tried to improve her English, and as a part of that read the Forsyte Saga, which "impressed me a great deal" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 21). Perhaps she could relate to unhappily married Irene Forsyte, whose difficulties with her controlling husband Soames provides much of the plot of the series. In addition to her fears about the new country ("the people and their ways that were completely unknown to me") she worried about her relationship with Bertl. "Bertl and I had drifted apart, even before he left, and the distance did nothing to bring us together" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 27).

But despite her fears, in January 1928, Magda left Prague to join Bertl in Toronto, where he was working as a hotel bellboy. The winter weather made for a rough passage, the ship was

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<sup>17</sup> In this period Canada was open to ethnic German immigration, although there were more restrictions later. To immigrate to the US, the Arnolds would have had to wait 8 years (Arnold, 1976).

encased in ice and severe storms left most of the passengers desperately seasick. Surprisingly Magda was not sick, leaving her plenty of time to worry about the future.

I remember once standing at the stern, looking at the wake and saying to the girl beside me that I was scared to death of Canada, I didn't know anybody but my husband (and adding under my breath “and he is not too reliable”). She looked at me: “But there are nice people everywhere and Canada won't be any exception.” It cheered me up to no end and I felt a bit easier. (Arnold, n.d. e, pg. 27).

Magda also practiced her English on her cabin steward who was “a nice young black haired blue eyed” man who listened sympathetically to Magda's fears. “I suppose I fell a little in love with him in the half-unconscious and wholly superstitious belief that if he, a Canadian, liked me other Canadians would too” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 21-22). Finally the voyage ended and “the ship arrived in Halifax, a day late, plated in white ice, a forbidding sight” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 22).

When Magda finally arrived in Toronto, completely exhausted from her travels, she was surprised by the provincial appearance of the place—“the mean little houses, the street lights which were dim little squares mounted on concrete poles” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 22). Remembering the literature which had advertised Toronto as “the best-lighted city in North-America” she concluded “the other cities must be pitch dark!” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 22).<sup>18</sup> The return to life with Bertl also “left much to be desired” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 22). She honestly told Bertl about her “contretemps” with the young steward (they had kissed a few times) and he was deeply shocked and offended. While Magda reminded Bertl that she was “sure he had kissed a lot of girls casually” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 22), he had a different standard for Magda, and treated her as though she had committed adultery, despite her assurances that it had all been quite innocent. He

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<sup>18</sup> Toronto was at this time a distinctly white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant city. Most of the immigration to Canada was from Europe in the late 19th and early 20th century, so Toronto was not yet very racially or religiously diverse (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2010).



returned to his usual tactic of giving her the silent treatment, but that didn't last long "because obviously I couldn't be left to myself in a strange city, so after a few days, there was a kind of truce though it took a long time before things were normal" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 22).

Bertl had quit his bell boy job for a business venture that did not pan out, so Magda had to immediately look for work. But "despite my peculiar English pronunciation and despite the fact that I was obviously a raw immigrant - or perhaps because of it" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 22), Magda immediately found work. It was a "soulless" job addressing envelopes for a mail order house. Magda could only bear such work by competing with herself to see how many envelopes she could address. By the time her daily output hit 2,000 envelopes, she had to quit, her back could not take the strain. Her next job was for a company that sold amusement novelties for Catholic parish fairs in Quebec—they needed someone who was able to read and write French. In this role Magda's bookkeeping skills once more provided the opportunity for upward mobility. She noticed that they had an outside accountant and offered to do the task for them in-house.

In the winter of 1929, Magda learned that she was pregnant. The prospect "scared me no end" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 23) because it seemed Bertl's salary alone would not be enough to live on. However when she told her employers the news, they suggested that her husband take over her accounting job—with a raise! Arnold remembered, "I was amused at this sign of masculine superiority. Because he was a man, they were quite sure he would be at least as good as I, when in reality he didn't know anything about bookkeeping" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 23). However, while she was pregnant Magda taught Bertl all he needed to know.

However soon another, even better job prospect for Bertl presented itself. Upon Magda's arrival in Toronto, the couple had begun attending Lutheran services because the Americans they

knew in Prague had told them joining a church was “the best way in Canada or the U.S. to make social contacts” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 23). Although they had chosen a Lutheran church because Bertl was a practicing Lutheran, they were dismayed by the hellfire and brimstone-themed sermons—the same as Magda remembered from attending Catholic services in her childhood but with “thumping of the pulpit and shouting as added attractions” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 23). Eventually they could not take it any longer, and began attending St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in downtown Toronto. The pastor there was Dr. Sclater, a Scot whose sermons were much more to their taste—“little literary masterpieces, usually on some Old Testament text” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 23). In the process of becoming members, they met Dr. Sclater and found him quite interested in them and their “checkered career” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 23) He declared it “a shame” that Bertl, with his PhD, was working in an office, and when he realized Magda was pregnant, he determined to help Bertl get a better job. True to his word, Dr. Sclater got Bertl work teaching German at the University of Toronto’s Victoria College, a post Bertl would hold for the rest of his career.

Their daughter, Joan, was born September 4, 1929, after a 24-hour labor that left Magda “exhausted but happy” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 24). Upon returning home Arnold recalled, “I was still pretty weak, but there was nothing for it, I had to take care of the baby. Washing the diapers was the worst, it was a chore that never seemed to end. Bertl was a proud father and enjoyed the baby thoroughly” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 24). Bertl also started the university job<sup>19</sup> and it seemed as though there might be stability at last.

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<sup>19</sup> At this point, to help Bertl with his lectures in English, they began speaking English only at home and Bertl began going by Bert. Later in life Magda referred to him as Robert.

### **The End of a Marriage**

But although the couple might be settled physically, their marital problems continued and even worsened after Joan's birth. Arnold recalled about that time: "I don't know what went wrong the following year or so. We didn't seem to agree on things" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 26). Bertl stopped attending church, ostensibly to watch Joan, while Magda began attending twice a Sunday because of the friends she was making there and because it was "the only intellectual stimulation I had at that time" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 26). Their new apartment was awkwardly laid out, with a small master bedroom, so Bertl moved into the attic bedroom while Magda slept downstairs. Bertl began spending all his free time in his room and only came down for meals. He didn't help at all with the baby or chores: "Of course, as a European, it never occurred to him to help me with the chores in any way, not even to wipe the dishes I had washed" (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 25). In fact, when Bertl took up the flute, he often insisted that Magda come and sing while he played the old Wandervogel songs—oblivious to her pressing household duties. In addition, their sex life was dissatisfying to both of them—Bertl blamed Magda for avoiding sex, while Magda found Bertl's approach to sex insensitive:

He would come down after I was in bed, claimed his right (without any talking or loving) and disappeared again. He has never been a very accomplished or considerate lover, but at that time he was at his worst. He had told me early in our marriage that his mother had mentioned that most nice women had no sexual feelings and that, apparently, absolved him from any necessity of trying to arouse them. (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 26)

Bertl's inconsiderate behavior was highlighted by their 1932 trip to Europe. Bertl's brother Gustl had a home in Styria where they could stay—an appealing prospect given that Magda was expecting a second child, and they could avoid the hot Toronto summer that Magda

had suffered through while pregnant with Joan. But the trip turned out to be quite disappointing for Magda: “This was our first homecoming after five years but it didn't feel much like home. I had been terribly homesick all these years, but now it looked as if I had been longing for a home that didn't exist” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 28). They were appalled by the economic chaos they found in Berlin: “Unemployed thronged the streets[.] Men sold postcards and matches on street corners, prostitutes approached my brother and husband while I was walking with them, everywhere was misery, even desperation” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 27). Magda encountered people who believed Hitler would deliver them, but having read *Mein Kampf* Magda was very skeptical. “A third-rate intelligence with megalomania” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 27) was her assessment of Hitler.

Magda had her second child, Margaret, near the end of July in Rottenmann, Germany. The baby was healthy and thriving, but Magda fell ill with Phlebitis, her leg swelling to twice its normal size and a blood clot eventually migrating to her lung. Magda had to spend all of August in the hospital, but rather than caring for her, Bertl took off on their planned visit to a mountain resort, where according to a friend of Magda's who was along on the trip, he flirted outrageously with another woman. Bertl only visited Magda once or twice in the hospital: “full of the wonderful time he was having and was sorry it was to end so soon” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 29). This was not the first warning sign Magda had seen. Earlier in the trip Bertl and Gustl had gone out for the evening and Bertl had come home “drunk as a Lord.”

It was such a shock, I started crying and Gustl got impatient: “I only hope you'll never have anything more serious to cry about!” To me, with my Wandervogel training, it was serious enough. Back in Toronto, he had started smoking big smelly cigars; and now

getting drunk seemed to me a sign that he had definitely abandoned our Wandervogel ideals,<sup>20</sup> among them, I was afraid, our notions of marital fidelity. (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 30)

Although Bertl wanted to leave Magda to recover in Germany while he returned home, she could not imagine traveling with two small children, and decided to return with him, even though her leg was still painfully swollen. They had separate cabins on the ship and Magda “didn't see much of Bertl” on the voyage (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 30). Bertl was supposed to put Joan down for naps in his cabin, but he spent most of his time on deck and sometimes forgot to return in time to return Joan to Magda. Magda “was always worried about Joan” and although she found stairs difficult with her bad leg, she had to manage them once to rescue Joan who she found “awake, alone, and in tears” in her father’s cabin (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 30). The reason for Bertl’s neglect was not innocent, either:

Pretty soon I couldn't help noticing that most of time Bert was in the company of a tall, blond young woman who was traveling to Canada with her little boy, to join her husband. The times we were together, for meals and such, he would talk about her a great deal. He told me how nicely she dressed and blamed me for looking dowdy. I did, but then I hadn't been able to get any of the new fall fashions, even if I had had the money, which I didn't. I am afraid one day, after I had looked on for days, I got hysterical and Bert had quite a time calming me down. (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 30)

When they returned to Canada, their relationship remained strained. Bertl continued to close himself in his room, except for meals. When Magda “objected that that wasn't any kind of

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<sup>20</sup> According to Laqueur (1962), the Wandervogel movement idealized the man who abstained from alcohol and devoted himself to higher causes, in large part because alcohol could lead to extramarital sexual intercourse, which might contaminate the “German Race.” Alcohol was seen as “the root of all evil because it always leads to drunken excess and ultimately to the brothel and syphilis” (Laqueur, 1962, p. 44). Arnold’s take on the Wandervogel movement was somewhat different: “These young people did neither smoke nor drink; not because they thought it was ethically wrong but because they held that healthy and happy youth did not need any stimulants” (Arnold ‘The German Youth’, n.d.).

family life, he told me that it had always been like that. Apparently, he had completely forgotten the first good years, when we used to go out together or had people in” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 31).

This account of Bertl’s inconsiderate behavior is based on Magda’s later recorded memories, and is therefore one-sided. However this version of Bertl’s character and his lack of care for Magda, is borne out by one of Joan’s earliest memories. Joan recalled riding the streetcar with her parents when she was about age 3 when her mother was pregnant with Margaret. Magda threw up, which “disgusted” Bertl, who, holding Joan, moved away from Magda down the streetcar (Arnold, 2014). Bertl’s consistent selfishness and entitled attitude would have made him a poor husband for anyone, but he was a particularly poor fit for someone as intelligent and independent as Magda. But it was to be Bertl’s failure as a husband that ultimately led to Magda’s involvement in psychology.

In the spring of 1933 Magda considered attending university, since as the wife of a faculty member she could attend tuition free. It seemed possible: Margaret was an easy child and “Bert and I had often talked about it, he knew my ambition was to become a psychologist, and had always encouraged me. Perhaps now was my chance. Bert seemed quite willing and I thought it could be arranged” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 31). She applied for and was admitted to the University of Toronto, despite her lack of high school education—the school had lenient admissions requirements for its adult students.

But Bertl suddenly changed his mind, saying that he could not understand “how a mother could want to leave two small children to be cared for by a maid. In other words, I was an unnatural mother even to think of going to University. I was very much taken aback - hadn’t it all been settled months ago?” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 32). But she determined not to feel sorry for herself and make the best of things for the sake of the marriage. What followed was the “last

comparatively peaceful year” of their marriage (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 31) in a pleasant new house. In Arnold’s later analysis, she thought that her decision to give in about school had “probably saved our marriage for another two years” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 3).

In June 1935, their third daughter, Katherine, was born. The evening Magda returned from the hospital, Bertl told her their marriage was over.

I came home from the hospital and my husband told me the same evening that he didn’t feel like a married man and he didn’t intend to act like a married man -- so the same evening I necessarily moved out of the common bedroom and from that time on, there was no -- well, we lived in the same house but... (Arnold, 1976, p. 12)

The reason for the separation was that “Robert found that life was slipping him by and beviies of attractive women with it” and wanted to be free to play the field. But in the midst of the Depression they did not have enough money to live separately, and a divorce in Canada at the time required an act of Parliament (Arnold, 1976). So Bertl had decided to simply “live as if he were not married” and began going out dancing and making women friends.<sup>21</sup>

At first Magda simply tried to make the best of it. But then as she watched Bertl going out with other women while she had nothing to do but watch, she put her foot down: “I decided I had to do something -- I couldn't just stay home, you know, and wait until...” (Arnold, 1976, p. 12). She told Bertl: “Well, if this is the end of our married life, at least I want to have some life for myself” (Arnold, 1976, p. 13), something to “fill my time” (Arnold, n.d. e, p. 1). But she absolutely “refused to go back to typing and bookkeeping” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 1).

I said to him then, “All right, you go your own way if you have to -- I don’t like it, but what can I do? But at the very least, I want to go to university and see how far I can get.”

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<sup>21</sup> Joan Arnold confirms this account: Bertl wanted to be free to have multiple sexual partners, yet wanted Magda to continue keeping house for him. After he and Magda separated, and he had alienated several housekeepers, Joan was expected to cook and clean for the family (Arnold, 2014).

And he was perfectly willing -- at least it would keep me quiet, you know, keep me from making a fuss, so this was what happened finally. (Arnold, 1976, p. 14)

They hired a competent housekeeper (luckily good help was cheap during the Depression) and Magda prepared to attend school at Victoria College in the fall. But following Katherine's birth Magda had developed kidney stones, so just a month before classes started she had an operation to remove a kidney. Given this and the fact that she also had a new baby, Bertl's superiors strongly encouraged her to take the Pass course, which only offered three psychology courses, rather than the Honours course of study. She reluctantly agreed. Her classes would only be in the morning, so she was able to nurse Katherine and spend afternoons and evenings at home.

### **New Intellectual Life**

Thus it was that in September of 1935, at age 31, Magda began her undergraduate degree. She loved her new life: "Robert had warned me that I would find my courses very elementary and would soon be bored. I was not. I had been starved for intellectual stimulation, despite my voracious but undirected reading" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 2). She ate up the new knowledge, and enjoyed the more systematic approach to psychology, and after completing her first year with all As she was allowed to transfer to the Honours program.<sup>22</sup>

But it wasn't just psychology that she found fascinating: "There was so much else to arouse my interest: the courses in anthropology and biology, but particularly in philosophy interested me almost as much as psychology. In addition, I took as many electives as I could" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 2). In Arnold's opinion the University of Toronto had "several professors who were competent, but only one who was brilliant" — Bill Line (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 2). As a

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<sup>22</sup> For more on psychology at the University of Toronto, see Kalin (1996), Myers (1982) and Pols (2002). For the experience of Canadian women in psychology (many of them at the University of Toronto), see de la Cour (1987), Gul et al. (2013), Keates and Stam (2009), and Stark (2000). For the history of psychology in Canada in general, see Ferguson (1992) and Wright and Myers (1982).



chemistry PhD who had later become interested in psychology, Line had similarly diverse interests:

His lectures were brilliant, so full of all kinds of allusions to things that I didn't know that I decided I would read everything he had published, to find out just what was his point of view. Accordingly, I ranged through the psychological literature, found what I wanted and enjoyed Dr. Line's lectures from then on. (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 2).

Given her prior familiarity with Freud and Jung, Magda at first found the antipathy toward depth psychology at Toronto puzzling. She recalled that "Freud was disliked and Jung unknown" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 2) and that one professor taught that patients got well "not because of psychoanalysis but despite psychoanalysis" (Arnold, 1976, p. 18). As a result Magda reread Freud and "soon realized that his method would not endear him to scientists" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 2). While she was at first "terribly disappointed" (Arnold, 1976, p. 18) not to be able to do anything with Freud and Jung, since she valued the experimental psychology she was being taught and indeed was getting quite interested in it, she decided not to protest. Arnold later used religious language to describe her shift from depth psychology to experimental psychology: "I got sort of a conversion experience -- I mean I was perfectly willing to go along provided only that people didn't insist on too narrow an interpretation of what they wanted" (Arnold, 1976, p. 19). As can be seen in this disclaimer, Magda recognized "the scientific brand of psychology" (Arnold, 1976, p. 19) of the University of Toronto as not the universal or superior form but merely one of many types of psychology possible. In a display of intellectual independence that was typical of her, she refused to forget about Jung "as I was told to. I merely put him off for a more thorough investigation" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 2).

Magda occasionally had to miss class when one of her children was sick, or when Bertl quarreled with and dismissed their housekeeper, as happened several times—always a “near disaster” (Arnold, 1976, p. 21) for Magda’s school schedule. And at one point Magda had to ask her Comparative Psychology professor to cut back the hours he expected students to be in the rat lab, because she could not possibly put in the nearly 40 hours required, in addition to her domestic duties. But in general she managed quite well, thanks to being a very fast reader. Arnold recalled, “I read voraciously all through my undergraduate years and on graduation in 1939 could say proudly that I had read all the important books in my field” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 2). She graduated with a Gold Medal award in psychology. She was offered an assistantship for the first year of her master’s at Toronto, and she wanted to get a Ph.D., so “the future seemed settled” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 3).

At the same time, Bertl bought a farm in Scarborough, just outside the city, engaged a housekeeper and her daughter to care for the children, and made plans to move the family there. He let Magda know he expected her to leave and live independently once she began her assistantship in the fall. However, before the summer was over, Bertl and the housekeeper had fallen out, and so just a few weeks before the start of classes Bertl told Magda that “it was my duty to look after the children, although I could not expect to be treated as a wife” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 3).

Rather than buckle under as she had before, Magda refused to give up her studies. She approached William Blatz, whose assistant she was to become, and asked him to mediate.

It did not surprise me when Dr. Blatz found Robert insistent on his rights but unwilling to grant me mine. On his advice, I appealed to the Domestic Relations Court in Toronto which sentenced Robert to let me go to university and give me a monthly stipend of

\$25.00 which was just enough to pay for room and board at the home of one of my fellow students. (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 3)

According to Arnold, Bertl was “livid” at this decision —“he was speechless, in fact, he wept out of sheer rage” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to K. Arnold, January 30, 1992). In spite of himself, Bertl had provided Magda with just what she needed to continue her studies.<sup>23</sup> Still, the separation from her children (then ages 9, 7, and 4) was deeply painful.

Magda was interested in schizophrenia research, but Line pushed her to make her project have “reasonable dimensions” (Arnold, 1976, p. 26). It was this direction that led to her research focus of emotions: “I said to myself, ‘Well, for heaven’s sake, before you do something about affective disorders, why not do something about just ordinary normal emotions’” (Arnold, 1976, p. 25-26). For her master’s thesis project she chose to test muscular tension (examining the relation between muscular tension and accuracy), because it was easier to measure than emotional tension. She collaborated with the teacher of a shorthand class to create a recording of shorthand dictation, which gradually increased in speed until it was impossible to keep up with. Magda then played the recording to the shorthand students individually, and recorded their muscle tension using a modified stylus attached to an old smoke kymograph from the department. She ran into trouble with this project when the department chair, Edward Bott, who had been a student of Titchener, decreed that she ought to run this experiment with only a single subject. Since the project was meant to measure individual differences, this change would ruin the experiment. Since the Christmas vacation was upon them and Magda knew Bott would not be around, she ran all the subjects during the holidays. “Since the data had turned out well and,

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<sup>23</sup> Arnold later said about Blatz, “I have always felt quite grateful to him” because “He got my husband to go down to the Domestic Relations Court and insisted on a settlement and anybody else, I am sure, couldn’t have done it because it really was an almost impossible case” (Arnold, 1976, p. 36).

indeed, were publishable” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 3), Magda’s adviser convinced the chairman to approve the research, and Magda received her MA in 1940 (published as Arnold, 1941).

This timing would make for a highly unusual PhD experience. War had begun in Europe in August 1939 and Canada was quick to join the war. Over the next year or two most University of Toronto psychology professors left to join the war effort, either abroad or in Ottawa, where, for example, Line oversaw personnel selection for the Army. Some graduate students, like Mary Salter (later Ainsworth), were able to go abroad as a part of the war effort, and Magda applied but was refused, since she only had one kidney. She had to content herself to admire “those who occasionally came back for a few days in their splendid uniforms” (Arnold, 1989, p. 1). As the professors’ numbers dwindled down to only two (one of whom was an industrial psychologist busy with war-related consulting work), the graduate student teaching assistants suddenly became valuable. They took over teaching most of the undergraduate courses, so Magda gained significant teaching experience, often with quite large class sizes.

During the summer of 1940, Magda interned at the Psychiatric Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario, an experience which would be formative for her later research interests. There she had a good relationship with the Chief of Staff, who arranged for her to interview typical patients, to give her a sense for diagnostic categories. As a part of that, she grew interested in a patient who had been given stimulants for his depression, and who seemed to have become highly tense and anxious as a result, “tearing at hair and fingernails, scratching until his skin was raw” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 4). Given her interest in tension and relaxation therapies, Magda suggested he be given relaxing therapies: a warm bath and mild relaxants. The patient dramatically improved, no longer disturbed his ward, and was able to be released. As a result the Chief of Staff requested that Magda stay on an extra month to try her approach on other patients.

However when Magda returned to Toronto, she was reprimanded by Dr. Myers for having meddled in patient treatment—a strictly medical realm: “All our psychologists are supposed to do in psychiatric hospitals is give I.Q. tests,” he said (Arnold, 1989, p. 1). Undeterred by this attitude, Magda decided to do her dissertation on tension in psychiatric patients. But while at Toronto it was the “custom to let a graduate student choose his own M.A. and Ph.D. topic” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 5), Magda soon learned that the department chair expected her to choose a topic that involved animal research. Queens University had recently published work on sound-produced seizures in rats, and Bott wanted Magda to do something similar (but create “bigger and better” seizures [Arnold, 1976, p. 29]) and to run the rat lab for him. Magda had not particularly enjoyed her prior work with animals, so she negotiated for a better assistantship package, on the grounds that she needed to have enough to live on, now that she was on her own. Bott relented, and gave her an assistant and \$1500 for the year—very good for the time (Arnold, 1976). Thankfully, as it turned out, the rats “who dashed madly about the box and eventually fell into a kind of coma” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 5) did interest Magda, since they reminded her of the distressed Hamilton patient. Besides, she felt she “had rebelled enough for my own good during my M.A. research” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 5).

She had been thinking about the relationship between muscle tension and emotion, and began to wonder what kind of drugs might affect tension. Taking “Cannon’s dictum” that “adrenalin prepares the body for fight or flight” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 5) as her starting point, she tried adrenalin injections in the seizure-prone rats. But the rats ceased to have seizures at all. It began to look as though adrenalin produces relaxation, rather than increased tension. Checking for confounds, she checked with the chairman of the pharmacology department, who thought her batch of adrenalin had probably deteriorated. “Properly chastened, I repeated the experiment—

with the proper solution and the proper technique, but the same results” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 6).

Luckily her assistant had observed her, and could testify that she had done everything correctly, otherwise she might never have been able to use the research for her dissertation. As it was, her defense was difficult. At the public defense, both the chair of Pharmacology and the chair of Physiology harshly attacked her work.

I gathered that my offense was to have contradicted the great Walter Cannon.

...Afterwards, I looked up Walter B. Cannon in “Who’s Who” and saw the pages and pages of honors he had received, I was no longer surprised that his fellow-scientists believed him rather than me. If I had known just how eminent the man whose views I had run up against, I wonder whether I would have dared to submit my dissertation. (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 6)

Arnold was told afterward that what had saved her was that she had stayed calm as the Pharmacology chair got increasingly aggressive, and eventually he was asked to leave the defense. She later commented, “Well, you know, I had to [keep cool] because I was just shivering inside with fright and when you're afraid like that you just can't get aggressive” (Arnold, 1976, p. 31).

Happily the psychology department was “impressed” (Arnold, 1976, p. 31) with her work and Magda received her PhD in the spring of 1942, at age 38, less than 7 years after beginning her undergraduate degree. She was immediately taken on faculty as a lecturer, since the faculty were still away at war, and class sizes were “huge” (Arnold, 1989, p. 1). As the war came to a close the veterans began returning so the class sizes ballooned even further, putting a heavy work load on the small numbers of faculty. Arnold remembered teaching four sections of experimental psychology with over 60 students in each section, which in the large laboratory classroom

presented a challenge for the petite Magda, who struggled to project her voice loudly enough to be heard. “But despite the mountain of work, teaching was a joy in those days. The veterans were eager to learn and were mature enough to challenge the teacher” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 6).

By 1945 the faculty began to return, and by 1946 everyone was back. Even so, class sizes remained large since “so many veterans decided to take advantage of their school benefits” (Arnold, 1989, p. 1). But there had been some more significant changes: “the lessons learned in wartime would be applied in peacetime” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 7). Bill Line had a new appointment as the head of Psychological Services in the Veterans’ Affairs (VA) Department, and he interned to reform psychological practices in veterans’ hospitals all over Canada. During the war psychiatrists had been exposed to and seen the value of psychological testing. Now, as they returned to civilian life and to their jobs in veterans’ hospitals, there was a huge demand for young psychologists who could do more clinical work, although these young psychologists generally had “only the sketchiest training” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 7).

Line chose Magda as the VA Psychological Services’ Director of Research and Training and sent her off on a train “from Montreal to Vancouver” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 7-8) to discover firsthand the situation in VA Hospitals. She found “a mixture of good and bad. Most of the psychologists were bright and eager, but they lacked training in the tests they were supposed to use” (Arnold, 1989, p. 1). They generally knew how to give the Wechsler and the Binet, but had no experience with personality tests—prewar, personality testing was not something covered in Canadian psychology programs (Arnold, n.d. c). In response to these needs, Line held a 2-week training workshop, in which students were taught how to administer the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and the Rorschach. While Line provided the theoretical background, Magda was to give the training in administering and analyzing the TAT. Magda investigated the TAT in

preparation and believed the test had “great possibilities” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 8) but believed the Murray method which assessed ‘needs and press’ was not ideal. This was the origin of Magda’s later work to develop an alternative interpretation of the TAT—the Story Sequence Analysis (Arnold, 1962).

Magda’s VA position and her teaching load at the university kept her busy, but despite that she managed to help form a provincial psychological association. Although the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) had a small membership, Canada’s immense geographical boundaries meant something local was necessary for “stimulation and mutual encouragement” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 8).<sup>24</sup> Although there was lively interest in an Ontario Psychology Association outside the university, Magda found her academic colleagues unsympathetic. Dr. Myers, for one, suspected her motives: “‘You know,’ he said, ‘that you won’t be elected president, don’t you?’” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 8).<sup>25</sup> Magda’s response highlights an awareness of how multiple facets of her identity were contributing to her marginalization: “Of course I knew it – I was still a foreigner, a woman, with no family to fall back on” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 8). But Magda protested that she did not have any interest in political office: “All I ever wanted was to get a chance at research” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 8).

But even that was hard to come by in Toronto. After having found Cannon’s “Emergency Theory” of emotion wanting, Magda was eager to investigate his “Thalamic Theory,” which held that there was cortical inhibition during unemotional states, followed by a sudden release for emotion. Magda thought it far more likely that different emotions involve the excitation of various areas of the brain, but even at the time she thought this a “crude” and unsatisfying

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<sup>24</sup> For the history of the founding of the CPA, see Dzinis, (2000).

<sup>25</sup> Arnold did successfully help create the Ontario Psychology Association, which still exists today (see Berry & Day, 2004, for a history of the OPA). Arnold notes that Myers was himself elected president, although he had not bothered to attend the meeting.



hypothesis (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 7). She thought it did not give proper credit to the indivisible nature of the individual and their agency in initiating emotions: “emotion is not something that happens to us, but something we do” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 7). However, as Arnold wryly noted at the end of her career, this early effort was “received much better than my later theory” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 7).<sup>26</sup>

Magda thought her chance to investigate these questions might have arrived when an interdisciplinary project on schizophrenia was announced. “It seemed to me like the answer to everything I had ever wanted” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9). But Myers, who was supervising the psychological aspect of the project, told her she was not in the running. When Magda “obviously seemed to expect some explanation” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9), Myers told her the junior people who would be hired would just be implementing the research design developed by the higher ups, and that he “didn’t think I would be satisfied with that” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9). He was right in this assessment of Madga; she had hoped that the senior scientists would be open to input.

It was in this rather frustrating professional environment that Magda received an invitation to come to Wellesley College for the academic year 1947-1948. She would be substituting for Edna Heidbreder, who was sick and needed a year’s leave.<sup>27</sup> Magda jumped at the chance:

This was too good an opportunity to miss. I knew that I did not have a chance to be taken on the permanent faculty in Toronto. I was an immigrant, a woman, and worst of all, I was separated from my husband who was a professor at the university even though in another college. Even if my appointment at Wellesley lasted only a year, I had met enough colleagues at Harvard and Smith College to know that south of the border

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<sup>26</sup> The early theory is represented in Arnold (1950).

<sup>27</sup> For background on Heidbreder, see Furumoto (1980) and Henle (1991).

prejudice was not nearly as strong, at least as far as women and immigrants were concerned. (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9)

It would be a good move for personal reasons as well. She saw it as:

...a chance to get away from the city that held my husband who had taken the children to bring up as he wished. Without a divorce, there was no way for me to have them even for a few days. I was allowed to visit them but these visits were painful because of Robert's attitude to me. (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9)

Thus it was that in the summer of 1947, Magda prepared to immigrate yet again, this time alone, and on her own terms.

### **Greener Pastures in America**

Arnold's first impression of American academic life was quite positive: "Wellesley was a delight" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9). The difference from Toronto's urban campus was astonishing: "It was the first time I had seen a proper campus, well laid out, with extensive lawns, trees, and flowering shrubs. The campus, the faculty apartments, the beautiful classrooms, everything was so different from what I had been used to" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9). The students were less impressive, however, as they "wanted lectures they could take down and would not have to think about" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9). This was particularly a disappointment to Arnold after her years teaching at Toronto, where even undergraduate classroom discussions were interesting and could get quite "lively" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9). Arnold continued to teach in the manner she was used to, only to have her students complain to the department chair about her "Canadian" teaching methods. Happily he took her part and "supported me completely and hoped I would make the students work" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9).

It was “a very stimulating year” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 10), especially since she took advantage of her proximity to Harvard and visited their Psychology Department and Department of Social Relations. There she had good conversations with Gordon Allport and Robert White and attended some of their lectures. B.F. Skinner was also a visiting lecturer that year, so she was able to hear him speak, and “marveled at his confidence that animal experiments would lead to valid knowledge about human beings, even if it took a thousand years” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 10).

At the end of the year Wellesley asked her to stay on another year—Heidbreder was still ill and didn't want to return. However, by this time Arnold had been offered a job as “Acting Head of the Department” at Bryn Mawr College which “sounded permanent” (Arnold, 1976, p. 34), whereas the Wellesley position did not. As it turned out Arnold would enjoy her time at Wellesley more than at Bryn Mawr. Although the Bryn Mawr students and atmosphere were much better—more “intellectually oriented” (Arnold, 1976, p. 34), Arnold was at odds with the president, Katharine E. McBride. McBride, a psychologist, had published a book on aphasia and taught the abnormal class. As Arnold recalled, she was “quite psychoanalytically oriented and I ran up against that orientation everywhere” (Arnold, 1976, p. 34). She was probably just reserved, Arnold later reflected, but she came off as quite cold and Arnold “just couldn't help” but be bothered by her (Arnold, 1976, p. 34).

But perhaps this was not surprising, since by the time Arnold had made it to Bryn Mawr, something had happened to further complicate her feelings towards the dominant psychological systems. It was in 1948, near the end of her final semester at Wellesley, that Arnold attended the Eastern Psychological Association meeting and had her conversion experience in a Philadelphia hotel room. Although this event held a great deal of meaning for Arnold, it was not until the

“memorable” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 11) summer of 1948 that her newly recovered faith began to make an impact on her life.

Arnold had planned to spend the summer in Monhegan, Maine, sharing the cottage she and a friend had bought, but then received an invitation from Robert White to teach a summer course at Harvard. Arnold was torn, but found that “teaching at Harvard, even if only during the summer, was irresistible” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 11). As it turned out, her decision offered her many professional opportunities since there was a Mental Health Congress at Harvard that summer, and she was able to meet many people she had previously only read about. One such person was Karl Menninger, who in fact offered Arnold a job at the Menninger Clinic. But while Arnold had longed for years to work in a psychiatric hospital, when it came down to it, she realized she preferred teaching: “I have never regretted my decision” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 11). She also was very pleased to receive an invitation to present a paper at the Mooseheart Symposium on Feelings and Emotions, which was to take place that fall in Chicago.<sup>28</sup>

Her teaching at Harvard was also enjoyable, since the students in her Abnormal Psychology class “ranged from sophomores who tried to make up a course they had flunked to college professors” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 11), making their discussions quite interesting. It was in this class that an event she later called “the greatest stroke of luck” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 28-29) of her life occurred.<sup>29</sup> She describes the event in her professional autobiography:

One day, when I held forth on my theory of emotion and explained that emotion consists of the perception of an object or situation, its cortical evaluation and the emotional

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<sup>28</sup> The Mooseheart Symposium was organized by Martin L. Reymert as a follow-up to the 1927 Wittenberg Symposium on Feelings and Emotions, which had been groundbreaking in the field of emotion research, a severely neglected research topic within early 20th century psychology. Mooseheart was to be similarly influential in the development of this area of psychology, reviewing the progress of the field and outlining the problems yet to be solved.

<sup>29</sup> In certain documents (e.g., Arnold, 1974) Arnold recalls this event as having occurred in the summer of 1947; that does not seem possible given that she only took the Wellesley appointment in the fall of 1947.

accompaniment (including emotional expression) one student (in black suit and Roman collar) raised his hand: “But where is the emotion?” Suddenly I realized that all unwitting I had left out the experience of emotion itself. While I was still considering how to answer, another student, eager to defend me from a Romanist attack, spoke up: “Everyone knows that perception and emotion are the same!” First student: “I don’t. If two things always go together, does that mean they are one and the same? If I see you and your wife always together, does that mean that the two of you are one person?” By that time, I had collected my wits and admitted that somewhere between perception and emotional expression, there must be the experience of emotion as well. (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 11)

It turned out Roman Collar was Dr. John Gasson, S. J., a Jesuit priest who taught psychology at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. Arnold got to know him near the end of her class when he stopped by her office to let her know that he would have to drop the course because he had to give a retreat in Fort Worth, Texas. Gasson was at Harvard because Spring Hill was assigning him an anthropology course, and so had sent him to learn about anthropology. He had enrolled in her course because “he wanted to know what the big shots at Harvard were teaching. I told him the big shots at Harvard never were teaching summer courses and this was my first time at Harvard too” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 11).

Before Gasson left for Texas they had several more conversations, which “opened new vistas” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 12) for Arnold, and made her realize that she would have to do “a great deal of rethinking” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13) of her theory of emotions. Arnold was particularly interested to talk to Gasson about “my notion of the individual as agent; also, the hierarchy of beings I had arrived at for myself” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 11). Arnold’s ad hoc hierarchy consisted of

structure, function, behavior, and conduct, describing rocks, plants, animals, and humans. “Smilingly” Gasson introduced her to the very similar Thomistic hierarchy of being, the inorganic, vegetative, sensitive and intellectual (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 12). When Gasson left Harvard they began a correspondence in which they continued to talk about both spiritual and psychological matters. These letters marked the beginning of an intimate friendship and intellectual partnership that would last until Gasson’s death in 1988.

The conversation continued when they both attended the Mooseheart Symposium in October. In addition to challenging her ideas about emotion, Gasson also pushed Arnold to give the Catholic Church a second chance.<sup>30</sup> When she told Gasson about her history and reasons for leaving the church, which she no longer saw as valid reasons, he responded “if there was no reason to leave, there is no good reason to stay out” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13). Arnold “had no answer” to this reasoning—since her EPA experience, she had experienced the love of God, and begun to pray regularly. She had also thought about how “the break-up of my marriage would not have been so devastating if I had had the faith to fall back on” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13).

But all the same she was frightened of returning to the church. When Gasson urged her to try imaginative exercises of devotion to Mary, she wrote in response “I wish I could even go a little way along that road” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 1, 1948). Instead, she said, “I just plod along the only road left open, not knowing whether I’m going forward or backward, nor at times whether I am on the right road at all” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 1, 1948). He responded, “Do you know, my child, where you want to go? Could it be that you are going away from something and not toward something?” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948).

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<sup>30</sup> Arnold had most recently attended St. Mary Magdalene, a high Anglican church in Toronto, with her friend Dorothy Beatty, a former student.

But their conversations at the Mooseheart Symposium seemed to tip the balance, and although Arnold wrote “the long road still appalls me and I feel rather like a disconsolate ghost haunting its childhood home” (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, January 15, 1949), she let Gasson put her in touch with a priest friend in Philadelphia, who would help her return to the Church. Arnold remembered, “I felt much like the prodigal son who also needed that extra push before he returned to his father. Dr. Gasson made it easy” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13). Before the end of November she had been received back into the church, which she described as “a joy and an indescribable relief. Home at last!” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948).

As Arnold grew in her understanding of her faith, she found her new beliefs resulted in professional challenges. Catholics were at the time viewed with suspicion and scorn in academic circles, and at Bryn Mawr, a formerly Quaker but now a strongly secular school, as Arnold’s Catholicism became known, there were “some rumblings but no open opposition” (Arnold, n. d. c, p. 15). With a convert’s zeal, Arnold threw herself into work with Catholic students, connected with Catholics at nearby Rosemount College, a girl’s school, and gave a talk at the school on psychology and religious experience. She received an offer to work on a research project at Cornell as well as a lectureship at Henry Murray’s Clinic at Harvard, but turned down both to spend another year at Bryn Mawr. She was now enjoying the school, and motivated to stay both because she was aware of the good she could do there as one of only three Catholic faculty members, and because she thought she could grow more spiritually if she stayed put. But she was aware that she had a short window of time to make up her mind about what was next: “as soon as I became known as a Catholic, it would be the end of invitations from prestige universities. At the time the prejudice against Catholics was quite common in academia” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 15).

That summer Arnold once again taught summer school at Harvard, and again Gasson came north to sit in on classes—he had been told by his superiors that he would be teaching an anthropology course, and so needed to study up. But this time Arnold was the student and Gasson was the teacher. Gasson gave Arnold a crash course in Thomistic philosophy, something Arnold confesses she found “a very difficult not to say traumatic experience. I felt like a child in kindergarten” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13). Nevertheless Arnold found St. Thomas’ writings “surprisingly simple and astonishingly modern” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13). Speaking about *De Anima* Arnold said, “To this day, I have not found anything to surpass it. It fits modern research findings and makes them intelligible in a way I have found nowhere else” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13). By the end of the summer she had a basic working grasp on Thomistic philosophy and could begin applying it to her ideas about emotion.

In the fall of 1949, Arnold’s 19-year-old daughter, Joan, joined her at Bryn Mawr, where she planned to major in philosophy. Joan had just gotten out of a bad relationship and was searching spiritually, and Arnold and Gasson fervently prayed that she might come to faith. Much to their delight, after taking instruction with a local priest, Joan did in fact decide to join the church. But she shared her mother’s passion and, as Arnold later put it, “as so often happens with new converts, she immediately wanted to go into a convent” (Arnold, 1976, p. 42). Happily there was a 2-year waiting period for people who wanted to enter religious orders, and so Joan could not immediately join the Trappistines in Quebec, her order of choice. Arnold was quite worried by this development: “I just couldn’t for the life of me, I just couldn’t see Joan who is a vivacious, lively, intelligent girl -- I just couldn’t see her with the Trappistines who have perpetual silence in French Quebec and she didn’t know French -- it seemed just so outrageous to



me, I decided to do something to prevent that” (Arnold, 1976, p. 42). It was this “personal problem” (Arnold, 1976, p. 41) that would ultimately bring Arnold to leave Bryn Mawr.

In the spring of 1950 Arnold had an offer of a professorship at Barat College of the Sacred Heart,<sup>31</sup> in Lake Forest, Illinois, outside Chicago. Arnold went out to visit and talk with the college president:

I didn't like the situation much because it was such a small college and I was very doubtful about the intellectual caliber of the students, but, oh, somehow she promised me the sky and the heavens behind it and she, of course, told me quite frankly that now that I was Catholic it was my duty to do something to further Catholic education so I couldn't resist that appeal and the combination with my idea that at least I should show Joan some more intellectually active women's orders so that she might forget about the Trappistines, so I took that job. (Arnold, 1976, p. 42)

Elsewhere Arnold confirms this reasoning—she made the move primarily because of her concern for Joan, and secondarily because she felt she had an obligation to contribute to Catholic higher education. However, yet another motive becomes clear in a letter Arnold wrote to Gordon Allport, telling him of her decision:

And though of course from a worldly or even strictly professional point of view, it's the wrong kind of change to make, I have decided to do so. ...it has become quite clear to me that I just don't fit into the deliberately secular tradition of Bryn Mawr, it seems just as well to leave this year as next. Though I am sorry to leave the East and I don't like Chicago, I am happy at the thought that next year I'll be able to teach psychology the way

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<sup>31</sup> The college was named for Madeleine Sophie Barat (1779-1865), the founder of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Barat College was bought by DePaul University in 2001 and has since been closed and absorbed by DePaul.

I think it should be taught so that the study of man will include man's purpose, both proximate and ultimate. (Arnold, 1950, M. Arnold to G. Allport, May 6, 1950)

This and several other letters<sup>32</sup> confirm that although Arnold liked many aspects of Bryn Mawr, since her conversion she had felt out of place as one opposed to a mechanist view of nature. Barat seemed a better fit for her philosophically. When he learned of the news, Gasson responded: "Your last letter produced mixed feelings in me. I am glad that you are moving to Barat - your spiritual life will get its proper chance there and Joan will get proper solidity; but I had thought Bryn Mawr would not let you go without a[t] least a small show of reluctance. Do firm-hearted people like Miss McBride find any advantage in living?" (Gasson, [1950], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 5, [1950]). But Arnold was at last free of McBride's Freudianism and looked forward to teaching in a distinctively Catholic context.

On their way to Barat during the summer of 1950, Magda and Joan Arnold detoured to New Orleans. They were there to see John Gasson, of course. Joan was to continue in philosophy at Barat but she was missing some prerequisites. Happily Gasson was giving a summer course at Loyola in ontology/metaphysics, which Joan could take and Magda audit. Arnold and Gasson were thrilled to be able to spend a large chunk of time in the same place, rather than regularly writing or phoning, as had become their practice. The only downside was the "indescribable" heat and humidity of the place, especially since Arnold had accidentally rented a west-facing apartment. Thankfully the course "in the early morning hours, was stimulating and somehow we got through the rest of the day" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 16). After the course finished Magda and Joan escaped to Daphne, Alabama on the Gulf Coast, for a 2-week vacation, where at least there was water, even if it too was warm to be really enjoyable. Refreshed in spirit if not in body, they set off for Lake Forest to begin their new life in the Midwest.

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<sup>32</sup> Such letters included, for example, Arnold, 1948, M. B. Arnold to G. Allport, October 1, 1948.

### **Into the Catholic Ghetto**

The first indication in the correspondence that Barat might prove a disappointment comes from a September 18th letter from Father Gasson to Arnold:

Your introduction (installation) to Barat college as your new home was really grim. Very like coming to the frontier in a covered wagon!! This much, I hope, can be said for it: subsequent events can't possibly be worse. How long will it be before you have adequate clothing and shelter? (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 18, 1950)

It is not clear exactly what grim circumstances Gasson was referring to, but in her autobiography Arnold recalls that she was unable to find a suitable furnished apartment (having sold her furniture for the move) and had taken a furnished room. The limited accommodations were a result of her decrease in salary—she had taken a pay cut to come to Barat. At Bryn Mawr, she'd had an annual salary of \$4800, “barely enough to live on” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 16), but at Barat it was down to \$4200. At the time that hadn't seemed like too great a sacrifice: “Still, when it came to a move that would set my conscience at rest and benefit my daughter, the financial question seemed secondary” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 16). But now the consequences of that smaller salary made themselves plain in her living situation. Although Arnold could have her meals at the school, that made for a very long day. It only took until she got quite ill with the flu early in the fall for her to realize that a room with no cooking facilities was not practical. The college president offered her a room in the college free of charge but it was “so tiny I had to sleep on a chair that unfolded into a (very uncomfortable) bed. Also it was a room with doors into two classrooms and no way of locking them” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 16). When he heard about her new living situation Gasson exclaimed:

Don't tell me you are living in a room 4x10. Sleeping on a rug is all very good in an emergency but as a regular thing, coordination or no coordination,<sup>33</sup> I am against it. But let your cubby hole be a parable. Out of a close came a kind of home; so out of an empty sea can come not only a sign but even a ship. (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 3, 1950)

But it was not just the housing situation that was discouraging; the academic environment at Barat was “appalling” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 16). There was “no comparison” to Bryn Mawr: “As soon as I got there, I realized that I had made a very big mistake. The students were more like first year high school students -- it was just an incredible comedown -- it was just a very, very bad situation” (Arnold, 1976, p. 43). The psychology department was unpopular, it seemed that her immediate predecessor had simply read the textbooks to the students, and as a result the students were resistant to Arnold's more demanding teaching approach. She later recalled a class made up of three juniors who were:

...completely disinterested. They didn't even pretend to listen, talked to each other during lecture without any attempt to hide it and only when I sent the worst offender out of the room did they consent to treat the hour as class time. Their ignorance was unbelievable, they might never have heard anything about psychology before. (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 16-17)

Arnold would write that the low standards of Catholic education, and the indifference of the Catholics to this situation “were my one big disappointment as a returned Catholic” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 17). And at that point, prior to Monsignor John Tracy Ellis' influential article ‘American Catholics and the Intellectual Life’ (Ellis, 1955), Arnold's highlighting of shortcomings was

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<sup>33</sup> Coordination was a muscle relaxation technique favored by Arnold.

unwelcome: “When I talked about the necessity of improvement I was bitterly criticized, privately and publicly” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 17).<sup>34</sup>

Arnold would articulate some of the reasons for the poor quality of Catholic students in an undated essay called “Opportunity for Catholic Scholarship,” identifying as particularly problematic the early teaching of theology dependent on parroting back the correct answers of the catechism, which at later stages resulted in an unwillingness to question and think deeply: “Afraid of the sin of doubt, they are reduced to a passive acceptance that makes a virtue of inertia and a mock of knowledge” (Arnold, n.d. d, p. 4). Arnold’s only comfort was that Joan appeared to be thriving at Barat and was now considering entering a more suitable convent.

Arnold, discouraged, wrote to Gasson, but he took a rather different perspective on her “mistake”:

Remember, darling, there are few things in this life that are final. Even death is not the end but the beginning. Decisions can change and new or compelling reasons for change can appear. In the end, the good Lord and His Mother will have Their way, whatever it be. You may seem to be lost in a desert just now yet you have had enough experience of the way our Lady works to know that She will arrange matters to the advantage of all concerned. Disappointment, contradiction and the Cross mark those who are closest to Him. It is natural to feel that your going to Barat turned out a wild goose chase but a little reflection will reveal a few small points that make it seem less so. Item: would Joan have come to Barat if you hadn’t? And if she hadn’t, would she have managed as she has done about her vocation? Item: would you have found elsewhere the novel experience of having to build the edifice of knowledge from the bottom up and not from the top down

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<sup>34</sup> Joan Arnold recalls that she and her mother would go on walks in this period and Arnold would spend the entire walk complaining about Barat (Arnold, 2014).

as so often our academicians do even in ‘elementary’ and ‘general’ courses? Item: would you have even bothered, otherwise, to inquire into the integrated philosophy of education, effective and fruitful as its products attest, part of which you find yourself at Barat?

(Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 3, 1950).

Although he commiserated with her feelings that it was “a waste of talent to be laboring to persuade a flock of girls to try to think and to learn, when so much more could be done on a higher level to put sense into the professionals” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 3, 1950), he urged her to have faith that even these “Ethel Mercedes Totare’s” would someday discover the love of God lurking behind psychology. Teaching these unpromising girls was an act of love and devotion, he reminded her: “For you are teaching now, first because you love God, and God loves you” (Gasson, 1950, November 3, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 3, 1950).

But there was another, even clearer benefit to being at Barat: it led to the publication of the book *The Human Person* (Arnold & Gasson, 1954a). In her first year at Barat, Arnold recalled, “it occurred to me that one way of luring Catholic Psychologists out of the ghetto would be to have a symposium on personality and invite the best psychologists I could find” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 17). Gasson and Arnold went about planning the symposium, strategically using their contacts in the Catholic world to invite people who were sympathetic to their perspective on psychology. The goal of the symposium was, as she wrote to Allport, that of reviewing personality research and “reinterpreting the conclusions, from a Christian conception of man as a philosophical basis” (Arnold 1951, M. Arnold to G. Allport, October 11, 1951). The event was a great success, and Gasson stayed on in Lake Forest for a couple weeks to help Arnold and Joan edit the session papers into a publishable form. Getting the book accepted for publication would

take much longer than they expected, because they found the existing material was too short for a book. So in addition to editing the book, Arnold and Gasson “added about half of the contents” themselves (Arnold, 1976, p. 44). As a result this book represents the most comprehensive account of Arnold’s perspective on how her faith connected with psychology.

But despite this success, Arnold’s tenure at Barat was to be short-lived. In her second year there she had come to the conclusion that she could not stay—the teaching load, although at a very basic level, absorbed all her time since she was one of only two psychology professors. She had occasionally lectured at Loyola University in Chicago, and learned that they needed faculty and so arranged to teach there starting in the fall of 1952. Then she received a letter from Allport, informing her that he was on the committee for choosing the post-doctoral Fellow for Radcliffe, and encouraging to her to apply. Although she had previously applied and been rejected, she plucked up courage and applied again. To her delight, she received the Helen Putnam Advanced Research Fellowship for the 1952-53 school year; she could trade Barat’s academic frustrations for the joys of Harvard! It was good timing personally as well—Joan had entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate in Kenwood, New York in 1951, so Arnold was “alone once more” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 17). Loyola agreed to a leave of absence and she was off to Cambridge.

### **Professional Flourishing**

In comparison to Barat, Harvard was idyllic—it came with plenty of intellectual stimulation, comfortable accommodations, and quiet office space. In fact the department secretary, a wonderful cook, provided lunch for the faculty, which allowed them to discuss all kinds of intellectual problems during their lunch hour. As a fellow Arnold was included in an exclusive symposium given by Anna Freud,<sup>35</sup> where she had the opportunity to interact with a

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<sup>35</sup> Anna Freud gave a series of 10 lectures at Harvard in 1951 on psychoanalytic theories of childhood (Sandler, 1990). For the transcription of the lectures, see Sandler (1992). Arnold appears to be referring however to a seminar

number of eminent scholars; besides Anna Freud, there were Abraham Maslow, Talcott Parsons, Jerome Bruner, Gardner Murray, Robert Richardson Sears, Grete Bibring Lehner, and Tamara Dembo.<sup>36</sup> She later called the year “stimulating,” “one of the best in my professional life” (Arnold, n.d. c, 18).

Arnold continued to edit and search for a publisher for *The Human Person* but she also began to write a book on emotion, the book she would eventually consider her magnum opus (Arnold, 1976). *Emotion and Personality* (Arnold, 1960) was an attempt to synthesize the available research and articulate a comprehensive theory of emotion. Arnold was convinced that this theory ought to “encompass not only psychological but physiological and neurological research results” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 18). She was frustrated with the lack of emphasis on theory in the scientific culture at the time: “without a comprehensive theory integrating psychological phenomena with brain function, research is bound to be haphazard” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 18). The scope of the project was daunting, and Arnold felt she had barely begun by the end of the year so she was relieved when her fellowship was renewed and Loyola agreed to let her stay away another year.

When it was time to return to Loyola, Arnold had other offers for work. Fresh from the freedom of Harvard, working at a large secular research institution was tempting. She mused in a letter to Gasson: “I seem to be in the dilemma of either having to go to a Non-Catholic institution where I can teach as I want but where I couldn’t write; or to go to Loyola where I can teach but not write” (Arnold, 1952, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 6, 1952 [Double check quote]).

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that dealt with “advanced problems of psychoanalytic theory” (Sandler, 1992, p. 2) that Freud gave for the faculty of the Department of Social Relations only. Arnold recalled that “the discussions stretched over several weeks” and “Anna Freud proved to be charming, but did not succeed in answering all the questions put to her. I’m afraid I was not on my best behavior, but I had come with a faint hope that she could make psychoanalytic ambiguities credible, and was disappointed. I realized afterwards that it would have been far better if we had allowed her to tell us about her work instead of challenging her at every opportunity” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 19).

<sup>36</sup> Harvard figures not mentioned at the Symposium, but who Arnold also knew, included A. A. Roback and J. Beebe-Center.



Ultimately the virtues of teaching at a Catholic institution won out, and Arnold returned to Loyola in the fall of 1954. Arnold found that the caliber of the students was significantly better than at Barat and after the first few years had the opportunity to supervise bright graduate students. The chair of the department gave her a light teaching load so that she could continue working on *Emotion and Personality*. Loyola would be Arnold's academic home for almost the rest of her career, and would prove a supportive and hospitable working environment. She turned down other offers because she found teaching at Loyola "wonderful" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 20) and "completely satisfactory" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 23).

As Arnold continued to work on *Emotion and Personality*, she consulted with Dr. Percival Bailey, an eminent neurologist who was at the time director of the Illinois Neuropsychiatric Institute and the Illinois State Psychopathic Institute.<sup>37</sup> As it turned out, he was on the board of the Guggenheim Foundation, and he suggested that Arnold apply for a Guggenheim Fellowship to complete her book. So for the 1957-1958 school year Arnold lived on her fellowship and immersed herself in writing her book. She would have liked to go somewhere more exotic with her Guggenheim, but she already had the scientific contacts and was familiar with the libraries in Chicago, so stayed and "the book almost finished itself" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 19). By 1958 Arnold was able to turn the manuscript over to the editor at Columbia University Press. The book was well received and became the standard reference book in emotions.

Once it was published and it became clear that it would be an important book, Arnold expected she might see this accomplishment reflected in her pay, which at the time was low,

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<sup>37</sup> Bailey was also a psychiatrist, with friendships with Pierre Janet and Adolf Meyer. Arnold would have been sympathetic to his views on Freud—Bailey published a screed against Freud called *Sigmund the Unserene: A Tragedy in Three Acts* in 1965. In this book, which was based on a lecture Bailey gave at the 1956 American Psychiatric Association meeting, he called Freud an unscientific "spiritual conquistador"—Arnold and Bailey would have had plenty to talk about in 1956.

about at the level of a Harvard assistant professor, though she was now a full professor. When she did not receive an increase, she went to see the vice president and asked him for a raise. He reminded her that she was the most recent hire, and that she should not expect a raise “as long as there were professors with families who needed it more” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 19).<sup>38</sup> “That was the wrong policy” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 19) to follow, Arnold replied—you would soon lose all your excellent faculty and retain only the mediocre who were unable to find any other jobs. She got the raise. After that, Arnold did not have any problem with Loyola “because gradually they did realize that the book was important and I was acquiring some kind of professional reputation and they don’t have so many people with an international reputation” (Arnold, 1976, p. 50). This was one of the factors contributing to sub-par Catholic higher education, as Arnold explained: Catholic institutions never poached from each other and “non-Catholic institutions did not want Catholics in their social science or other “sensitive” departments. So once on the faculty of a Catholic institution, a Catholic was not likely to get any other offers and had to depend on the goodwill of his own university” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 19).

Although Arnold initially taught at Loyola’s downtown campus “which was no great pleasure. It was hot, noisy and congested” (p. 19), she soon was able to move to the new science building at the Lakeshore campus. There they had “pleasant offices, many of them with a view of the lake and excellent lab facilities” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 20). In 1961 she was appointed director of the behavior laboratory, and with a grant from Illinois State she was able to use the lab to test the theories of emotion that she had just proposed in her book. One was a theory of brain function, which she examined by creating brain lesions on rats, and then testing their learning ability in various sensory modalities. She found what her theory predicted—lesions in the prefrontal cortex and hippocampal system did result in impaired motor recall. At Loyola she also had the

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<sup>38</sup> Clearly this reasoning cloaked sex-based discrimination.

opportunity to teach a class on her Story Sequence Analysis method of interpreting the TAT. The students enjoyed the course and she was able to put together a handbook of instructions which was published by Columbia as *Story Sequence Analysis* (Arnold, 1962).

Arnold wanted to further test her theories about emotion and the brain and she began thinking about research findings from other countries. She wondered what was going on in Russian research, as she had been impressed by Alexander Luria's earlier work.<sup>39</sup> Of course at the height of the Cold War, there was no way to access such research in America. But Arnold thought that if she could only spend some time in West Germany, she might be able to get a hold of East German translations of Russian research. She applied for a Fulbright Scholarship and received one for 1962-1963. Since she would already be traveling to Europe, she made plans to visit the Jung Institute in Zurich. The director, who had an interest in emotion, invited her to give a summer course at the Institute on TAT. Although the students were "a bit supercilious at first: how could the information gleaned from the TAT compare with Jungian analysis?" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 21), once they found that the test captured the issues they were dealing with in therapy, they became enthusiastic. Arnold sat in on lectures herself and went walking and boating with an old friend, enjoying the city's beautiful surroundings. Once the course ended, Arnold met up with some friends from the US and went traveling in Italy.

But when it was time for Arnold to head to Munich to begin her research, she ran into unforeseen problems. In Munich she found only barriers to research—handwritten, outdated catalogs, and very strict borrowing policies. The director of the Psychological Institute she found friendly, but outdated. She was amused to find that, like Titchener, he paraded into class in full academic regalia, with assistants in his train, and gave a formal, polished lecture, that students

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<sup>39</sup> It is not clear which of his publications Arnold was referring to when she noted the "extraordinary progress incorporated in A. R. Luria's work" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 21).

took down—there was no opportunity for questions or discussion. His ideas reminded her of psychology in the 1920s, yet he regarded her as strictly there to learn from German psychology; “that we had overtaken them never entered his head.” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 22). In addition, that winter was record cold so she had “rather an uncomfortable time” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 22) in her chilly apartment.

She had somewhat better luck at the Max Planck Institute. They welcomed her warmly, gave her library privileges and asked her to give seminars. There she was able to meet and talk with some well-known psychologists, such as Konrad Lorenz, the director. But unfortunately their library too contained no Russian research. While she enjoyed meeting up with old friends and relatives who had settled in Bavaria, before the year was half over she began to be homesick. Further preventing her enjoyment of Germany was her Sudeten-German accent. Upon the expulsion of the Sudeten-Germans from Czechoslovakia,<sup>40</sup> Germany had imposed taxes to pay for the refugees’ lost property. The Germans still resented this and did not attempt to hide their disdain for Sudeten-Germans.

By this time, Arnold was very well respected for her work on emotions, and when she returned from Germany she had a number of professional opportunities reflecting that status. Penguin asked her to put together a collection of readings on emotions, which was published as *The Nature of Emotion* in 1968 (Arnold, 1968). Recalling the Mooseheart Symposium held in 1947, Arnold got the idea to organize a second Mooseheart 20 years later. She successfully applied for funding from the National Science Foundation, so was able to invite eminent emotion researchers from all over the globe. The Symposium took place at Loyola in 1967, “quite an occasion for us” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 23). Arnold edited the papers presented at the Symposium

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<sup>40</sup> See Footnote 43.

into the book *Feeling and Emotions* (Arnold, 1970a). In 1970 Arnold spent the spring semester at Xavier University in Cincinnati, as the Reilly Distinguished Professor of Psychology.

It was this time in Cincinnati that was to prompt Arnold's next move:

I enjoyed the milder climate more than I would have thought possible. The early spring was a surprise and I delighted in the many flowering shrubs and trees. For the first time I began wondering whether it was worth while fighting snow and ice all winter and suffering from heat waves in the summer. (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 23)

During her annual Easter visit to Gasson in Mobile, she learned that there were a number of cheap houses on the market because the local air force base had just closed. She knew she did not want to retire in Chicago, and the weather and Gasson's presence in Mobile made it an attractive retirement option. To her surprise, she found herself looking at reasonably priced houses and actually buying one, which she arranged to rent until her retirement.

At a faculty lunch at Spring Hill, she talked with one of the Spring Hill administrators about how they might improve their social science department, which in comparison to the natural sciences had 'stepchild' status. She knew that the government was eager to have their grants go to support educational institutions in the South, and so suggested that they apply for a development grant. This casual conversation resulted in a request for her help in writing the grant, since she had significant grant-writing experience, and then the suggestion that she be the director of the project proposed in the grant. Arnold did have an idea for a project, assessing the relation between motivation, as measured by the TAT, and school success—so she agreed. She knew she would have to retire from Loyola in 1973 in any event, and the project seemed a good way to transition to Mobile. She and Gasson worked on a proposal to the National Science

Foundation, but were rejected. It seemed they had used outdated guidelines, so they reapplied the next year with further statistical support.

In the meantime Arnold was feverishly researching for her final book. When she had written *Personality and Emotion* she had run into trouble when she had attempted to trace the neural pathways mediating emotion. It was practically impossible, she thought, to trace any given neural pathway without tracing all of them. Of course that was not possible, but it seemed that tracing memory was the most important. She arranged for a final sabbatical for 1971-72 and spent the summer and fall working on the book that would eventually become *Memory and the Brain* (Arnold, 1984): “I stayed at home, where I had peace and quiet and made good progress” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 24). By the end of the fall she had completed a first draft of eight chapters of the book. At the beginning of 1972 she moved to Mobile where she continued working. Gasson had gotten her a guest professorship, so that she could help prepare for the project, which would begin in the fall, assuming they got the grant.

However, Arnold found preparation was difficult to do, since nobody else at Spring Hill believed they would actually get the grant. When they did get the news that they had won the College Science Improvement (COSIP) grant,<sup>41</sup> most of the faculty were already away for the summer (‘Dr. Arnold to retire’, 1975). In the fall Arnold got off to a bad start with the Academic Dean when she botched the registration process of her advisees—as a result the Dean decided she was incompetent and did his best to thwart her TAT testing project. The Dean’s cynicism about psychological testing was communicated to students and they often failed to show up for their assigned testing times. When they did show, they were uncooperative, and neglected to follow the TAT instructions to tell the first story that occurred to them about each picture. Instead “They decided to shock me and told stories of murder and mayhem, the more impossible,

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<sup>41</sup> The grant was for \$238,000 (“John Augustine Gasson, S. J.”, n.d.).

the better” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 25). The result was invalid TATs that were strikingly similar to research in which students were asked to “fake bad” on the test. Frustratingly, only the psychology students’ scores showed any correlation with their academic achievement. In addition to her work on the grant project, Arnold faced a full teaching load, but found the Spring Hill students “a disappointment” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 26), in that “too many of the students had come to Spring Hill to enjoy the mild winters and not to earn academic laurels” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 27). The students were oblivious to Arnold’s academic status: “I was a newcomer, they had no idea who I was or what I had done, nobody told them about it...” (Arnold, 1976, p. 53).

That dismal first fall at Spring Hill was punctuated by some good news: Arnold learned that Loyola University intended to award her an honorary doctorate at their 1973 February convocation. Arnold comforted herself that “they knew me better than the Dean of Spring Hill College” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 26). The rest of her 3 years at Spring Hill continued to be difficult. A faculty member who was to help Arnold and Gasson test the students left the school, leaving them with an enormous load, and little support from the administration. Since Arnold was more familiar with the TAT than Gasson, it primarily fell to her to test and retest students, score the TATs and write up the research reports. Arnold would later call this period “the most difficult in my professional life” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 27) and “a complete loss” (Arnold, 1976, p. 52). The motivation study had “not been worth the tremendous effort expended on it” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 27) and it had kept her from working on her book. Although she thought she had worked harder than in any other 30-year period of her life—“I just worked my head off” (Arnold, 1976, p. 53)—she had little to show for it.

In an oral history conducted in 1976, just a year after her retirement from Spring Hill, Arnold was clearly still frustrated about this last effort of her professional life. She told her

interviewer it was the “only real failure of my life and I felt very badly about it” (Arnold, 1976, p. 53). But she did see a silver lining: “probably it was just as well that the last three years were so hard and unrewarding, because I have absolutely no regrets” (Arnold, 1976, p. 55) about retirement. Rather than missing teaching, as she would have had she retired from Loyola in 1973, the shock of going from graduate teaching to undergraduate teaching and Chicago’s “intellectually live environment” (Arnold, 1976, p. 55) to the deep South, had made her content to just write. She was enjoying working in her “garden and house at a more leisurely pace” (Arnold, 1976, p. 53).

But after retiring in 1975 (to much acclaim from Mobile [“Dr Arnold”, 1975]), Arnold discovered that her 3 years away from her book had come at a cost. There had been much new research published during that time, and she had her work cut out for her to catch up. Her project had very ambitious parameters: she was aware that psychologists and neurophysiologists rarely spoke to each other, and did not speak the same language—she meant to review the research of the two fields and reconcile their theories (Arnold, 1976). But becoming conversant in these new fields and terminology took months. Arnold marveled at the progress that had been made: “Neurotransmitters, the hippocampal system, the amygdala, the brainstem reticular system—all these had been investigated and yielded knowledge barely thought of a few years before” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 27). The book was complete by the summer of 1981, when Arnold was 77. She was glad to be done but impatient when it took Erlbaum 3 years to publish the book. Reviews were mixed—a high profile review in *Contemporary Psychology* (Hirst, 1985) dismissed it as “armchair speculation” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 28). According to Arnold, the reviewer’s argument ran that in the modern day it was impossible to create a theory of brain function because “the task is so huge; ergo my theory must be speculation” (Arnold, n.d. c, p.



28). However later scholars (Shields, 2006; Tassinary, Smith, & Bortfeld, 2006) have noted that the book was written when the field of neuroscience was just taking off, so a 3-year publication lag made it less than cutting edge. Although she defended her work (Arnold, 1986), the review reflected the mood of the time: big, synthesizing theory was decidedly out of fashion.

With the book published, Arnold could truly enjoy retirement, although she still occasionally wrote reviews and papers. When personal computers became available, Arnold bought one and occupied herself with writing to her daughters and grandchildren, and with recording her memories of her life—both personal and professional. In 1987 she was invited to return to Toronto for the 40th anniversary of the Ontario Psychological Association that she had helped to found. She braved the February weather to attend, boasting to the audience that “Down my way, the camellias are in bloom and the narcissus are out, also Redwood and Jap.[anese]-Magnolia” (Arnold, 1987). Arnold’s enjoyment of retirement was tempered by John Gasson’s death the following year. He had long been ill with cancer and Arnold was glad he was out of pain but broken hearted, writing “His death left a yawning hole, it was as if I had lost friendship itself with no hope of achieving it again in this life” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992).

A year after Gasson’s death, in 1989, Arnold moved to Tucson so as to be in the same city as two of her three daughters. Although she had lost a breast to cancer that year, she continued to live independently and remained active. She became very involved in her church in Tucson, St. Cyril of Alexandria, using her financial skills on the finance committee and becoming close friends with one of the priests, Father Bill Dougherty. She served as a Lay Eucharistic Minister, serving the sacraments both in church and to the housebound, despite being

elderly herself (Shields & Fields, 2003). She died on October 2, 2002, just two months shy of her 99th birthday.

### **Conclusion**

When one considers Magda Arnold's life, for example her childhood—a neglected, illegitimate girl in a small Austrian village—or her adolescence—a sharp but awkward bank clerk with no educational prospects, who had already reached the glass ceiling of her career path—or even her early adulthood—a disadvantaged immigrant with limited English and an unreliable husband—her eventual academic accomplishments are astounding. Arnold's success seems to have been the result both of a number of what she called “fortunate circumstances” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29), which offered her opportunities, and Arnold's remarkable intelligence and persistence. It was a combination of these external circumstances and her unique personality that allowed her to flourish.

That Arnold was brilliant, there is little question. Her teachers, from earliest childhood to the University of Toronto, acknowledged her intellectual gifts. She breezed through both Mährisch-Trübau's library and the University of Toronto honours courses without apparently breaking a sweat—intellectually ravenous seemed to be her natural condition. Stevens and Gardner (1982b) went so far as to call her an “unacknowledged genius” and her Loyola graduate student Eileen Gavin remembered her as “a shining star, brilliant beyond” anyone else (Gavin, personal communication, January 2, 2013). Indeed, it seems likely that given Arnold's natural intelligence and knack for theorizing, had she not been a woman, and Catholic, she might today be remembered as one of the great minds of 20th century psychology. But it was not only her intelligence that helped her escape her humble origins, it was also her fortitude and drive.

Although she did not read her life through a feminist lens, Arnold's autobiographical writings show that she was very aware of the discrimination she faced as a woman, and did not hesitate to ask for what was due her. There are numerous points in her life where she responded assertively in the face of injustice—refusing to allow Bertl to continue to disrespect her when their marriage ended, bargaining with Bott for better assistantship pay, or confronting the Loyola administration about being underpaid. Her plaintive “All I ever wanted was to get a chance at research” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 8) in response to Myers' accusations of political ambitions identifies her as a typical second generation woman psychologist (Johnston & Johnson, 2008),<sup>42</sup> identifying herself as a scientist, rather than as a woman-scientist. Yet rather than silencing her, for Arnold this identity seems to have been a protective, empowering factor. Although she appears to have been cynical about the idea of scientific meritocracy, she did not hesitate to advocate for herself and demand her rights under that system.

Arnold also did not hesitate to tell people when she thought they were wrong intellectually—she was “direct to the point of bluntness” and did not suffer fools gladly (E. Gavin, personal communication, January 2, 2013). Gavin recalls that Arnold tended to say “That's all wrong” or “That will never work” to people who she believed were on the wrong track, whether students or colleagues—an approach which did not endear her to people and often resulted in her being misunderstood. Gavin raised the book review in which Arnold took 14 well known contributors to a volume on emotion to task as an example of her “stark straightforwardness” (Gavin, 2002, E. Gavin to J. and M. Arnold, November 13, 2002), and probably a reason she did not become better known. This came through in her teaching too—her Toronto students called her “Spitfire” although she said “It was quite a shock to me when I found

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<sup>42</sup> It should be noted, however, that Gul et al. (2013) argue that the first generation of women in Canadian psychology should be defined as those who received their PhDs from 1922-1960, because of the later start of Canadian psychology. Certainly Arnold was subject to the pressures of this cohort.

out” (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 5, 1949). She was independent and tended to work alone. When reminiscing about her graduate school days she confessed “I’m afraid I was always a lone wolf” (Arnold, 1976, p. 27). But this could also be an advantage—she believed Blatz chose her for his research assistant “because he knew I’d run the show on my own” (Arnold, 1976, p. 36).

This independent approach is understandable given the adversity Arnold faced throughout her lifetime. Yet Arnold herself recognized these events as having resulted in her ultimate happiness—that her professional opportunities came as “the result of these fortunate circumstances rather than a master plan of my own” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29). But, she acknowledged, “Many times the changes in my life were fortunate only in hindsight but very painful at the time” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29). Chief among these circumstances was the failure of her marriage to Bertl. It was his initiative that launched Magda out of her isolation in Austria and his selfishness that ultimately released her from her role of housewife. In reflecting back on her life, Magda identified his decision to leave Europe as critical for the direction her life took.

I have been fortunate also in that even the things that brought great pain in the end led to growth. I did not want to leave Europe, yet if I had stayed, I would never have had the chance to go to university; not only that, I would have been expelled from my home town together with all my friends.<sup>43</sup> The breakdown of my marriage was very painful, and still more the fact that Robert kept the children. And yet, without it, I would never have gone to university; if I had been allowed to keep the children, I would probably have had to take extra work and would not have had the time I needed for research and writing.

(Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29)

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<sup>43</sup> This comment refers to the expulsion of Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia at the conclusion of WWII. The remaining ethnic Germans living in Czechoslovakia were driven from their homes, sometimes violently (an unknown number were killed), and their property confiscated.

Arnold also identified the timing of her graduate studies as lucky. She was present in the department at the start of WWII, just in time to take advantage of the war time opportunities available to female grad students in the absence of the regular professors. But it was not simply luck that can account for her professional success. When the professors returned from war and it became clear that to stay would mean professional stagnation, Arnold moved on. She said “I knew I’d just never get beyond an instructorship and so what was the use” (Arnold, 1976, p. 39)—a correct assessment of the situation; no women were appointed in the department between 1947 and 1961 (de la Cour, 1987). But fortunately again, the postwar period was “a time of extraordinary expansion” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29) for psychology, and so job offers were plentiful, giving Arnold options in the US.

Arnold’s conversion is a more complicated factor. It appears to have both inhibited and nurtured her career. Arnold comments that the job offers “dried up because I became a Catholic” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29), because of discrimination against Catholics. Certainly her trade of Bryn Mawr for Barat was a bad move professionally, as was the move to Spring Hill years later. Yet even these ‘bad’ choices ultimately turned out well, with Barat giving her the ability to host the symposium that led to *The Human Person* which was influential in her thinking. But most importantly, her return to faith expanded her horizons and provided her with a firm philosophical foundation from which to theorize. It was in the years following her conversion that she found her niche and produced the emotion research that she is best remembered for. Her faith and her friendship with John Gasson allowed her to finally flourish academically. Arnold concluded her professional autobiography: “All in all, I cannot help feeling that God was working out his plans for me, often contrary to my wishes and prayers. Yet I am grateful even for the pain involved, it brought such unexpected happiness in its train” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29).

## Chapter 2: Arnold's Intellectual and Spiritual Development

When considering Magda Arnold's life, the role of her faith in her intellectual development stands out as a critical topic to explore. By Arnold's own account her religious intellectual resources played a significant role in her thinking, and indeed resulted in insights that she would not have otherwise had. Thus a consideration of Arnold's conversion—the starting point for her growth as a Christian, and as a Christian scholar—is crucial to understanding Arnold's life after 1948.

Arnold's conversion also can be contextualized, that is to say, considered in the context of other conversions, her particular cultural-historical context, and in light of the concept of conversion in general. The dramatic narrative structure that conversion accounts provides means that conversions are often used for storytelling in nonreligious contexts. Consider scientific biographies, where conversion stories are not uncommon. This seems to be because the nature of scientific biography lends itself to describing events with a distinct before and after, which result in a reorientation of priorities or thinking—most often a scientific discovery or a eureka moment of insight.<sup>1</sup> Even Arnold embraces this more general use of conversion herself, casually calling her transition from depth psychology to an experimental perspective at the University of Toronto a conversion experience. In contrast, discussions of religious belief in scientific biographies tend to be more static. Although there might be anecdotes describing a loss or fading of religious faith, in general people are described as being or possessing one or another religious identity—Jewish, Catholic, Quaker, Calvinist, Unitarian.<sup>2</sup> These static and rather general descriptors are

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<sup>1</sup> An example of the former is the (likely apocryphal) story of Isaac Newton's sudden formulation of his theory of gravitation, based on seeing an apple fall. An example of the latter is William James' decision to live as though he had free will. This is an interesting case, since James' was a deeply personal, religiously-freighted "conversion" but did not take the traditional Christian form (see King, 1983, for further analysis).

<sup>2</sup> Or, even more conveniently, they are described as being from a particular religious background. Conveniently because this implies a general influence which may have explanatory value but which leaves ambiguous the belief or commitment of the scientist themselves—which is often difficult to discern.

perhaps a reflection of historians' lack of experience in dealing with religious subject matter and in interpreting the complicated shades of meaning represented in the diverse religious or denominational affiliations.

But historians' discomfort with this material may also be the result of the once widespread assumption that "A scientist was entitled to a private life and to ideological commitments, provided these were kept apart from the science" (Porter, 2006, p. 316). That is to say, while historians of science have recognized the artificiality of personal and the professional boundaries,<sup>3</sup> the ideal of scientific objectivity continues to influence how the lives of scientists are described. Using a static religious descriptor denotes personal identity, but does not necessarily imply the impact of religious beliefs on scientist's work, and historians may assume that the impact of these beliefs on scientific output was negligible or only impacted certain moral questions. For example, Andrew Heinze (2001) has argued that the impact of the religious identity of Jewish psychologists on their psychology has been greatly underestimated. The still influential assumption is that if a good scientist is religious they hold such biasing beliefs at arms-length; they are certainly not passionate partisans, since "proper science implies *disenchantment*" (Porter, 2006, p. 316).

Magda Arnold's religious conversion challenges this narrative. Rather than possessing a static religious identity, Arnold life is defined by a disruptive event that dramatically changed both her personal religious affiliation and transformed her perspective on psychology. Arnold herself describes her conversion as cutting across boundaries: "Here I must insert a personal note because of an event that influenced the course of my life, both personal and professional" (Arnold, n.d. c, 10). From a historical perspective on her life, Arnold assessment is correct—her

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<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that the impossibility of scientific objectivity is generally not recognized by scientists or Western culture at large and that, despite the many insights of historians of science on this topic, they are no doubt influenced by the culture's attitude.

conversion caused a distinct break in her life, directing her along a less-prestigious Catholic education trajectory, but also offering her new intellectual resources, which she would use to do her most innovative work. Her conversion was not an end point, but rather the beginning of an intellectual journey. But from the start, Arnold refused to keep her transformed perspective separate from her science, even when it would have benefited her professionally.

In order to understand Arnold's life and thinking, therefore, her conversion and the spiritual and intellectual formation that followed it deserve further consideration. This chapter will do so, in particular by focusing on Arnold's relationship with Father John Gasson and the strong influence that he had on her thought. The Arnold-Gasson correspondence provides the best access to Arnold's religious thought and experience, therefore a detailed analysis of the major themes in the correspondence is merited. In particular, thick description of the parts of the correspondence which deal with Arnold and Gasson's relationship can help us to understand more fully Arnold's work. Additionally we will look at the Catholic world that Arnold joined upon her return to the church, and that world's broader social and cultural context, to assess what impact her faith had on her career.

### **The Mechanics of Conversion**

How should we understand that April evening of 1948 when Arnold awoke to a great calm and a strong sense of the reality of all the orthodox Christian doctrines? If we follow traditional models of scientific biography, we will interpret this event psychologically or sociologically. Certainly there is plenty of suggestive material from Arnold's emotionally impoverished childhood and traumatic marriage that would lend itself to a satisfying psychological explanation for her conversion. In letters she wrote but never sent to her daughter Joan, she said that from her childhood onward she saw herself as "eminently unlovable" and that



“By the time I was ready for school, I had stopped looking for love or understanding at home” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, January 10, 1992). An awareness of the love of God was one of the results of her conversion. Reflecting on the subject of love she wrote:

...fortunately Freud was wrong when he said you have to have that kind of love in your tender childhood. I think it is healing whenever it comes in one's life, and unlocks our heart and calls out our love, whether in childhood or old age. It's such a pity that people were never told, at a time when they would still listen, that God loves us. (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February, 19, 1992)

It is not a big leap to see the connection between the deficits of Arnold's “troubled childhood” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, March 19, 1992) and the benefits she found in conversion.

Sociologically too there is a compelling explanation—Arnold was hardly the only mid-century convert to Catholicism. Patrick Allitt (1997) documents a “flood” of American and British intellectuals who converted to Catholicism in the years 1840-1960.<sup>4</sup> Like Arnold, their conversion had a significant impact on their intellectual life, which they then made public, becoming outspoken advocates for the church:

Their chief line of attack was to criticize the premises of non-Catholic philosophy and science, to demonstrate its epistemological vulnerability, and to expose its links to a callow idealization of progress, sometimes with wry admissions that they too had once been deceived by its charms. (Allitt, 1997, p. 12)

Although it is difficult to identify what precisely caused this pattern of conversion, likely factors seem similar to the appeal of the Wandervogel: disillusionment with modernity, a feeling

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<sup>4</sup> G. K. Chesterton, Dorothy Day, Graham Greene, Marshall McLuhan, Thomas Merton, Walker Percy, and Evelyn Waugh are probably the best known of these converts.

of alienation, and an awareness of the deficit of humanity and morals in mass industrial society. Allitt notes the similarity between Catholic and communist conversion stories: “Both offered a complete philosophical system and a rich intellectual tradition” (1997, p. 323).

Avery Dulles, himself a convert to Catholicism, described the typical convert in this era: an energetic student passionately seeking meaning in life who dabbles for a while with modern literature and Freud, and flirts with Fascism and Marxism because they seem to offer “superior alternatives to a failing liberal capitalist system” (Allitt, 1997, p. 317) but eventually concludes these are dead ends. Then, seemingly by chance, the student comes across the work of contemporary Catholic philosophers like Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain, and is convinced that “civilization took a false turn with Luther and Descartes” and that Catholic philosophy alone holds the key to peaceful human existence (Allitt, 1997, p. 317). This is essentially the conversion story of famed author and Trappist monk Thomas Merton—he began to be interested in Catholicism after reading Gilson’s *Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*. There was something about medieval monasticism that appealed to people in those inter- and post-war years: Merton’s autobiographical conversion account *The Seven Story Mountain* was a surprise bestseller in 1948, the year of Arnold’s conversion (Allitt, 1997).

Without denying the relevance of these psychological and sociological factors, there is another approach that it is essential to consider: to attempt see the conversion from Magda Arnold’s perspective. This is not unprecedented—within sociology there has been a shift away from seeing the convert as a “cultural dope”—a mere pawn, powerless in the face of cultural factors pushing one to conversion (Bremmer et al., 2006, p. 5). Instead sociologists today tend to regard converts as “autonomous seekers” after truth (Bremmer et al., 2006, p. 5) and conversion as the organizing principle of their life story. Similarly there is within history the practice of

letting historical actors define their own experience, rather than imposing presentist evaluations on events and motives (e.g., Duden, 1991; Porter, 1985).

If we were to allow Arnold to explain her conversion, I suspect she would describe it in terms of an outside force acting on her life. Certainly this is how she retells the incident in her hotel room—she is excited about the ideas of psychology one moment and experiencing a spiritual epiphany the next. In theological terms, she might say that God’s spirit broke into her life, enlightening her with his truth. This fits perfectly within conversion narratives. The most famous Christian conversion account, the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus, who hears and is blinded by the risen Christ,<sup>5</sup> is similarly abrupt. Richardson (1985) distinguishes between a Pauline and an active conversion, with the Pauline conversion denoting the more passive approach. If we are simply looking at the initial conversion experience, Arnold’s conversion would be considered Pauline—it is something that happens to her, rather than something she sought. Robert Orsi (2012a) has suggested the concept of the holy as a way to describe religious experience without reducing it to a psychological (often pathological) cause. The holy, according to Orsi, is “apprehended as immediately and undeniably real” (2012a, p. 86) and separate from the person experiencing it. This fits well with Arnold’s description of her hotel-room revelation.

The interpretation of Arnold’s conversion as Pauline is confirmed by the sense of irresistibility that shows up in her letters to Gasson. At one point she tells Gasson, “By the way, you made one curious remark - you said: “at least you are praying”. Well, what would anyone do who has discovered the love of God?” (Arnold, [1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, [November, 1948]).<sup>6</sup> And later, when she had just returned to the Catholic Church, in response to the idea that she ought to have delayed until Joan was ready to join her, she wrote, “But, having been given

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<sup>5</sup> See Acts 9:1-19.

<sup>6</sup> Meaning, it seems, that prayer was the automatic response to a conviction of the love of God, hardly something to be congratulated on.

the grace to know that this is the Church of God, how could I have stayed out of it deliberately, even for a minute?” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948). In both cases, she appears to have seen her own response to her experience as the only one possible, “the only road left open” to her, even if it meant a difficult and confusing journey.

Although it is important to allow Arnold to define her experience, this does not mean reading her autobiographical account uncritically. Autobiography is a genre with its own conventions, and the conversion story (broadly defined) is a characteristic theme. In fact it has been argued (DiBattista & Wittman, 2014) that autobiography emerged with the Christian era—a new emphasis on interiority and awareness of God and a desire to testify to one’s own transformation led to this new technology of the self. St. Augustine’s *Confessions*, which includes his vivid account of his garden conversion—the result of hearing an unseen child chant “tolle lege” (“take up and read”)—is often considered the first autobiography (DiBattista & Wittman, 2014). In this light, Arnold is employing the paradigmatic autobiography convention by describing her EPA transformation, which raises questions about the way she experienced the event at the time.

However, Arnold’s autobiography is also operating under another set of conventions: the scientific autobiography. Arnold wrote two versions of her autobiography: one an in-depth account of her childhood, immigration to Canada, and marital struggles, the other, an account of her career and the development of her ideas. The latter is clearly a scientific biography in the tradition of the *History of Psychology in Autobiography* series<sup>7</sup> (see Fox Lee, 2014): although there are some personal details, such as a brief sketch of childhood experiences, the focus is on

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<sup>7</sup> Incidentally, Arnold was never asked to contribute to this series, a slight which she may have resented. An awareness of her historic contributions, and a sense of being unrecognized for her achievements may well have motivated her to write the autobiography in the first place (Arnold, 2014).

Arnold as scientist. In this context Arnold's mention of her conversion is an interruption<sup>8</sup> in the normal flow of professional achievements; one of a very few personal elements which merit mentioning. It is similar to Anne Anastasi's discussion of her cervical cancer in her contribution to the series—such a deeply personal item was included because of its bearing on the autobiographical subject's later career (Anastasi, 1980).<sup>9</sup> Thus, although Arnold may be conforming to some autobiographical conventions by including her conversion in her profession autobiography, she is confounding others. Even if Arnold is using the event as a dramatic element in constructing her self-representation, her correspondence (which was not written with a larger audience in mind) corroborates her depiction of the event as pivotal.<sup>10</sup>

Certainly the result of her conversion was not an immediate transformation. The Pauline paradigm works well to describe her initial return to faith in April 1948, but not to describe her spiritual development over the next months. Her return to the Catholic Church in November marked only the official beginning of her journey; her status, despite her education, was now that of a child, with much to learn.<sup>11</sup> Gasson reminded her to “Be a good child” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948) (i.e., humbly receive goodness), and showered her with resources to help her grow spiritually. Conversion, it has been noted, is an analogy, referring initially to chemical or metallurgical change (Morrison, 1992). As such it is also a gradual process, the transformation of human substance, a spiritual reorientation of the human away from the grave (i.e., sin) and towards life (God). Sanctification, meaning the process of

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<sup>8</sup> It takes place about one-third of the way through an account which is roughly chronological.

<sup>9</sup> In Anastasi's case, this meant that she was unable to have children, and thus did not struggle with work-life balance.

<sup>10</sup> Another aspect of Arnold's framing of her conversion to consider is whether it was a gendered act. Conversion research has found some gender differences in the way people recount their conversion (see Jindra, et al., 2012 for a review) and women are sometimes found to be higher in religiosity (Francis, 1997). However Arnold's telling of her conversion does not seem to have any obvious gendered elements, given that she framed it in primarily intellectual terms.

<sup>11</sup> She told Gasson she was “rattled” when the priests consistently called her Dr. Arnold: “Titles and penitents just don't mix” (Arnold, 1948, M. B. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948).

being made holy, is a term that crops up in one of Arnold's early post-conversion letters, and was certainly the way that Arnold understood her life-long process of spiritual growth.

We cannot get very far in looking at Arnold's conversion without bumping into Gasson. It was very clearly not just the night at EPA that resulted in Arnold's conversion, but her unexpected encounter with "Roman Collar" in her Harvard class that summer. Reflecting in September on all that had happened as a result of their coincidental meeting, Gasson wrote, "This summer in Cambridge gets unusualer and unusualer the more I think of it" (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 27, 1948). The months between July, when Arnold and Gasson first met, and November, when she was received back into the church, are critical for understanding Arnold's intellectual and spiritual development, even more so than her experience at EPA. While her EPA epiphany left her certain that it was "bound to change my life" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 10), it was her relationship with Gasson that determined what direction that change would take.

In order to fully understand Arnold's transformation into a fully committed and ardent Catholic, we must explore just who John Augustine Gasson was, and the nature of his relationship with Arnold. Luckily Arnold preserved much of their correspondence from the early years of their relationship, and this rich resource provides a sense of their relationship and allows for the reconstruction of Arnold's development. These nearly 200 letters were written during the period from 1948 to 1956, and document an increasingly intimate friendship and intellectual partnership.

### **The Beginning of a Friendship**

When he was at Harvard for summer school, John Gasson was on his home turf. He was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1904, and so had family that he liked to visit in western and

central Massachusetts (“John Augustine Gasson, S. J.”, n.d.). He was second born and the oldest son in a family of five children; his parents, John and Cypriana Posca Gasson, had been born in Lithuania (“Elvena Gasson Whitcomb Obituary”, 1965; Gasson, [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 11, [1953]; “Letter from the Trustees”, ca. 1985). It was his joining the Jesuits that had brought Gasson south. He had joined the Society of Jesus in Macon, Georgia, in 1921 (at age 16), and after a fire destroyed St. Stanislaus<sup>12</sup> that November, moved to the novitiate at Grand Coteau, Louisiana (“John Augustine Gasson, S. J.”, n.d.). He took his first vows in 1923 and was ordained in 1933 (“Letter from the Trustees”, ca. 1978). As is typical of the Jesuit order, he spent years in higher education, and received degrees from Boston College (AB, 1927 and AM, 1928),<sup>13</sup> Gregorian University in Rome (PhD, 1931), and Weston College (S.T.L.,<sup>14</sup> 1934), and did postdoctoral work at Gregorian University (1935-1937) and other European schools<sup>15</sup> (Gasson, n.d. b; Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, July, 1954). For his undergraduate degree Gasson had studied philosophy, but for his doctoral and postdoctoral studies he had studied both philosophy and psychology, and had written his dissertation on “The Psychological Structure of Religious Experience: A Study of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius From A Dynamic Point of View” (Gasson, 1951).

Between 1928 and 1930 Gasson taught Latin, Greek, and history as an instructor at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama (“Spring Hill Course Catalogs”, 1949-1951). In 1938, after his return from his studies abroad, he became a professor of psychology and philosophy at Spring Hill, and in 1962 he established the psychology department there (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, July, 1954; ‘SHE Pays Tribute’, 1974). He also taught at the Jesuit House

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<sup>12</sup> The Macon novitiate.

<sup>13</sup> His master’s thesis was entitled “The Psycho-physiology of Oral Speech” (John Augustine Gasson, S. J., n.d.).

<sup>14</sup> Licentiate in Sacred Theology.

<sup>15</sup> He spent time at Munich University, in Germany, in Zurich, Switzerland, and in Ireland, giving retreats and serving as a part of the National University in Dublin (Arnold, 1974).

of Studies, where until 1968 young men preparing for the priesthood received their education (Hart, [1971]). From his correspondence it is clear that in addition to his regular teaching duties Gasson was kept quite busy leading retreats,<sup>16</sup> teaching summer classes, providing counseling to various clients (both Catholics and non-Catholics), and giving popular talks on psychology.<sup>17</sup> These duties often required travel, most frequently to New Orleans, to lead retreats or teach at Loyola, also frequently further abroad: to Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, to Grand Coteau, Louisiana, and to Taylor and Fort Worth, Texas, and even, on occasion, to Ireland. Once he and Arnold met, he also regularly visited Loyola University in Chicago, and Barat, just outside Chicago.

From a reading of Arnold's life based only on secondary sources it would be possible to mistake Gasson for an occasional collaborator of Arnold. In addition to *The Human Person*,<sup>18</sup> they co-authored just two other publications, one for the journal *Thomist* (Gasson & Arnold, 1963) and one for a collection on Logotherapy (Arnold & Gasson, 1979). Indeed, in her comments on Gasson in her oral history, Arnold reinforces this impression. She says about their meeting at Harvard simply "from then on we worked together" (Arnold, 1976, p. 50), and makes it sound as though her move to Spring Hill was primarily motivated by the nice climate, rather than her desire to live near Gasson, as was clearly the case.<sup>19</sup> Despite this reticence, it is clear from her correspondence that Gasson was Arnold's most significant intellectual influence. It was

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<sup>16</sup> Gasson defines a retreat in one of his chapters of *The Human Person*: "The term *retreat* is a technical expression from asceticism denoting a period of time of varying length (three, eight, ten, thirty days) during which a person in silence, solitude, and recollection of spirit ponders the truths of Revelation in a systematic way so as to shape his life in accordance with them and make his interior life more vigorous and effective" (Gasson, 1954c, p. 550).

<sup>17</sup> Gasson wrote that he had "More than thirty years of experience of making retreats of three, eight, and thirty days—some seventy retreats in all—and almost twenty years' experience in directing men and women, both lay and religious, in the making of them—to the number of two or three each year" (Gasson, 1954c, p. 549).

<sup>18</sup> In addition to co-editing *The Human Person*, they co-authored two of its chapters.

<sup>19</sup> There are multiple possible reasons for this reticence: two likely reasons are the sensitivity of a close friendship existing between a single woman and a Jesuit priest and the desire of Arnold, as a woman, to emphasize her own intellectual accomplishments rather than her partnerships.



through him that she learned of Thomistic philosophy, and it was through his interpretation that she learned much Catholic teaching.

Years later, in a letter to her daughter on the topic of friendship, Arnold was most open about Gasson saying, “He was the best and truest friend I ever had or expect to have” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992). In this letter she recalled their first meeting in an even more personal manner than in her autobiography:

He had another class right after mine, so he didn’t come to see me until the end of the course. I had been surprised he hadn’t come because he always took part in the discussion and was head and shoulders (literally and figuratively) above the rest. But once we started talking, we wanted to go on, and pretty well did until he had to give a retreat somewhere, a week or two before the end of the course. (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992)

Arnold’s first impression of Gasson was clearly warm: “He was so nice, so good, so kind, and he seemed to know everything there is to know about philosophy and theology” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992).

Although they wanted to continue talking, it seems that Arnold did not initially feel they knew each other well enough to write or call him. But after they apparently saw each other again at the American Psychological Association meeting that summer, they began corresponding, first rather formally, addressing each other as “Dr. Arnold” and “Fr. Gasson” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 1, 1948; Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 27, 1948). In September Gasson thanked her for an article she had sent him, sent her one in return and wrote “You have been much in my mind (and on it) since August. I find myself reflecting in the reading I’ve been doing: ‘This is something Dr. Arnold would like’” (Gasson, 1948, J.

Gasson to M. Arnold, September 27, 1948). The articles he named as having brought her to mind—“Hocking’s lecture on Psychology and the Cure of Souls in his “Science and the Idea of God”. Or Robles’ book *The Main Problems of Philosophy*” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 27, 1948)—are a good clue to their previous conversations.

Over the next month the letters turned more personal with Arnold confiding her spiritual struggles and Gasson replying with advice and spiritual resources. Gasson sent Arnold a copy of a short devotional he had published entitled “A Way With Mary,” on which he inscribed the following dedication: “Dr Magda Arnold/May this serve to remind you of J.A.G. S.J./who was, at least, not a usual student” (Gasson, n. d. a). At this point it was clear that already Arnold was wrestling with how her faith ought to impact psychology. She sent Gasson two articles, “The Analyst and the Confessor” by a Jungian, Fr. White, and “Faith and Psychopathology” by Fr. Mailloux. Showing her independent streak, she remarked about the latter, “I don’t agree with his particular solution, but he does make the combination ‘Catholic Psychoanalyst’ a credible one” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 1, 1948). Arnold’s skepticism of Catholic adaption of Freudian psychoanalysis would only grow stronger once she thought more about Catholic psychology.

Arnold was also wrestling with what her role ought to be in academia, wondering whether she ought to stay at Bryn Mawr. She had an offer to join a team of research scientists at Cornell, which would give her less than half-time teaching, and had the tantalizing directive to spend the first year “clarifying their thinking about theories of human behavior, methods of research, and the nature of significant problems for investigation” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 1, 1948). She mused, half-jokingly to Gasson:

I wonder what would happen if I suggested a Christian theory of conduct as a basis and the processes of sanctification as experimental verification? That process to start with the experimental team, to be sure. And yet, incredible as it sounds, how do I know that somehow, somewhere in the discussions or the discussants, a spark might not be struck? (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 1, 1948)

But she was not certain Cornell was the right decision, noting that, “by Spring I hope the Lord will have made it quite clear what he wants me to do” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 1, 1948). Gasson replied, “Your scheme for that Cornell research team is quite in keeping with the atomic age.<sup>20</sup> It would rock that group to way below their foundations, I betcha” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948). But he urged discretion, advising her to keep such aims secret until the other scientists were “quite hardened to the feel of sanctity” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948).

In that same letter, Gasson shared some good news—he was going to the Mooseheart Symposium in Chicago after all!<sup>21</sup> He knew Arnold would have many things there to occupy her time, but “Nevertheless let me ask you to set aside a little of it for me because I do want to see you and talk” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948). There were so many topics that “we have just begun on,” such as the “Twelve Fruits” of the Holy Spirit—from Aquinas,<sup>22</sup> and Marian adoration. But most of all Gasson was concerned for the peace of Arnold’s soul, given her previous letter in which she had depicted herself trudging on, uncertain

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<sup>20</sup> Gasson’s mention of the atomic age, although playful, is a good reminder of the social context. Boyer (1985) recounts that the advent of the atomic age provoked ethical and eschatological discussion by religious Americans. For many the threat of atomic war provoked soul searching and increased religiosity.

<sup>21</sup> The Mooseheart Symposium was the second International Symposium on Feelings and Emotions and brought together top researchers from diverse fields, such as Arnold Gesell, David Katz, Rensis Likert, Margaret Mead, Albert Michotte, Gardner Murphy, Carl Rogers, and David Shackow. Arnold’s was one of the 47 papers (and the only female psychologist) included in the resulting book *Feelings and Emotions* (Reymert, 1950).

<sup>22</sup> See *Summa Theologica*, Question 70, Article 3. Aquinas reckons that there are twelve fruits of the Spirit, based on Galatians 5:22-23 and Revelation 22:2. Aquinas names these fruits as charity, joy, peace, patience, longsuffering, goodness, benignity, meekness, faith, modesty, contingency and chastity.

if she was even heading in the right direction. He saw that she was “in darkness and uncertainty” and was distressed that she did not have the spiritual gifts of faith: “Peace and security of soul, assurance and quiet of heart are so much the need of God’s children, for me not to wish them very strongly for you and pray you find them soon” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948). He begged her pardon for speaking bluntly, but noted, “In God’s family we are both children of the same Mother so please do not feel that I presume when I offer you what I have to help you” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948). He ended his letter “Tell me, quickly, where will I find you in Chicago. I’ll see you there” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948).

This meeting in October of 1948 was pivotal. Gasson asked Arnold what was keeping her from the Catholic Church and, as she later put it, “that brought me in at express speed” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992). She continued:

And from then on, I knew I could talk to him about anything, that he would be there for me and never against me. That has proved true for over forty years. He was always there for me if I wanted to talk over some problem in my writing that I couldn’t settle for myself. When I was still in Chicago, and my students and I had a philosophical problem, we would discuss it on tape, send it to John and he would send an answer back on tape.

(Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992)

The letters, too, reflect their new found intimacy: after Mooseheart Gasson addresses her as Magda, rather than Dr. Arnold. In his first letter after the Symposium Gasson wrote fondly: “I almost prayed your plane would be socked in so I would see you again on Monday” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 5, 1948a). He was writing to give her the address of his friend, Father Quigley, a professor at St. Charles Seminary, near Bryn Mawr, who Arnold could

meet with about returning to the church. He offered to send her a rosary, and exhorted her to put her knowledge of the human mind to good use: “just remember to be a good psychologist when doubts assail you” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 5, 1948a). She replied, letting him know she had already arranged to meet with Father Quigley, and thanking him for all his guidance:

You must know how very grateful I am for all you have done and are doing for me.

When I went to Chicago I was fairly sure Rome was the end of the road for me, and was uncomfortable enough to wish I would reach it soon. But I have a suspicion that without your help I wouldn't have had the courage to face for some time to come, and there is always the danger that an uncomfortable decision might be put off indefinitely. (Arnold, [1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November [1948])

When Gasson received the news that she was to be received back into the church, he was overjoyed: “Te Deum Laudamus; Te Dominum confitemur!!<sup>23</sup> Your letter made me very happy; welcome home!” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948). He told her to stop worrying that she was in his debt: “It's all in the family, Mary's family, my dear” and “I am humbly very grateful that Mary found me useful to lead you some little way on your road from exile” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948). He was very pleased to hear that Father Quigley had been kind to her:

Of course I knew he would be; I know his Christlikeness. But just the same it is a joy to me that he made your way easy, swift and sure. And he will be a friendly guide over the roughnesses that will come. For cheer up, honey, there will be roughness enough for you to develop [sic] your courage in. (Forgive me if my thoughts seem to be scooting off in

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<sup>23</sup> “You are God: we praise you; You are the Lord: we acclaim you!!” This is the first line of an ancient Latin hymn, Te Deum, traditionally sung on occasions of rejoicing, such as a baptism.

every which way - I guess I've a right to bubble over without apology). (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948)

He would not be there the Sunday she was received back into the church, but he promised to be there in spirit, and to say a mass for her.<sup>24</sup> They would meet before too long, he was sure: "Mary will provide opportunity and leisure for us to talk, you can rest assured" (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948). In the meantime, he sent a book on God's love so "you can kindle it a little more intensely in your heart" (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948), a pamphlet on prayer by Archbishop Alban Goodier, and recommended she read his *The Inner Life of a Catholic*.<sup>25</sup> He closed the letter: "God bless you, Magda, God love you. My best love and biggest blessing/In the Heart of Jesus" (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948).

Before considering the changes that returning to the church wrought in Arnold's life, we ought to consider briefly what exactly attracted her to Rome. This seems important, given that she seemed to find it a difficult decision—it is clear she found the prospect of returning to the church "frightening" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13). Also it seems important to assess her religious practice and convictions prior to joining the Catholic Church. Was hers a conversion from general Christianity to the Catholic Church specifically, or from unbelief to faith?<sup>26</sup>

The best evidence on this comes from Arnold's professional autobiography and her oral history; in each she explains what faith meant to her prior to 1948. In her autobiography she calls the religious instruction she received in Austria "superficial," which resulted in "no strong

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<sup>24</sup> As a Jesuit priest, Gasson celebrated the Eucharist daily. In this instance Arnold was the intension or object of Gasson's mass—the intercessory prayers offered as a part of mass, since the Eucharistic Sacrifice is the highest form of Catholic worship, are thought to be particularly efficacious, and are often devoted to specific people in need.

<sup>25</sup> Gasson had once gone on a retreat in Ireland in 1936 led by Goodier, which he called "one of the most important formative influences of my spiritual life" (Gasson, 1948, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948).

<sup>26</sup> Confusingly, the term conversion is used for both types of change.

convictions” on her part, and says that she was “repelled” by the “intolerance and sheer bigotry” of the priests and nuns she encountered (Arnold, n.d. c, 10). In the early part of her marriage, Bertl was strongly religious, while her faith was “at best lukewarm” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 10). As we have seen, she and Bertl initially went to church for social reasons when they arrived in Canada; Arnold then went to church for intellectual stimulation and friendship when their marriage was dissatisfying. Although she continued to attend church with friends after her divorce, it seems that until her conversion, she was a nominal Christian only, with a very weak sense of faith, if any. At the time of her conversion she had “no particular church affiliation” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 10-11).

The theme of Arnold’s need for intellectual stimulation in the church comes out even more clearly in her oral history interview. She says the Catholicism she encountered in her teens in Austria was “a very narrow-minded kind of religion, very old-fashioned. Nobody ever answered my questions. I had all kinds of questions – nobody answered them – and so I just simply drifted away from it” (Arnold, 1976, p. 6). It was this failure of the Austrian Catholic Church that made it easy to leave the church upon marrying Bertl: “I had drifted away, I was completely indifferent. I had lost my faith when I was about 18 – and Freud incidentally had nothing to do with it. It was just a matter of nobody giving me any kind of reasonable answers as to why I should believe this rather than that and so forth and so on” (Arnold, 1976, p. 7).

When asked to expand on this point, Arnold said that this lack of intellectual stimulation in her childhood experience of the church was mostly due to the fact that priests were from small Czech villages, poorly educated, and were expected to preach in German, their second language. So they preached fire and brimstone sermons and “murdered the German language” (Arnold, 1976, p. 8). As a result “there was this feeling that everything that stood for the Catholic religion

was uneducated, poorly thought out, absolutely no rhyme or reason, just tradition, and I wasn't going to have any of that" (Arnold, 1976, p. 8). Like her response to a question about the support of education at home, when asked if there was any intellectual stimulation from the church, she replied, "No, none whatsoever" (Arnold, 1976, p. 7).

The reason for Arnold leaving the church is significant, and points to her reason for returning to the church. When recounting her return to the church, Arnold highlights her discussions with Gasson at Mooseheart. What appealed to her was the intellectual resources of the church: "Soon I realized that the Thomistic synthesis offered a firm foundation for the psychological views I had slowly formed over the past years" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13). That is not to say that there was no emotional component to Arnold's return to the church. She herself admitted that after her EPA experience, "I had often felt that the break-up of my marriage would not have been so devastating if I had had the faith to fall back on" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13). But the Catholic Church, as presented by Gasson, was primarily appealing because of its rich philosophical heritage. Thomistic philosophy solved one of the problems that Arnold had previously been stumped by, namely: "where is the source of [human] behavior and conduct? I came back again and again to the soul as the source of activity but did not know how to go on from there" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 12). The conversations with Gasson "opened up new vistas for me" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 12) and required "a great deal of rethinking" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13) of her theory of emotion. It seems it was this intellectual fruitfulness, no doubt in addition to Gasson's warmth and his complete lack of intellectual backwardness or intolerance, that made Arnold willing to take the drastic step of putting herself under the authority of the Catholic Church.

However, Arnold, in her letters to Gasson, showed no sign of waffling, simply an eagerness to return to the church as quickly as possible. She told him his letter "was a great



comfort in what would otherwise have been a very dark hour just before the dawn” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948). It was not that she had any doubts about her course of action but

...it did seem at one point that nothing would be of any use, that there was neither help nor hope for me after so many wasted years. You see, the more I came to realize the essential holiness of the Church, the more I also saw that obedience is not only safe but necessary. And my past rebellion which had led me so far astray began to appal[1] me.

(Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948)

Thus it was that on a Sunday late in November 1948, Dr. Magda Arnold, having previously gone to confession, officially returned to the Catholic Church, going to Mass for the first time since childhood. Just before the distribution of the elements, Arnold, with the rest of the congregation, recited “Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum: sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea” (“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed”).

### **A New Life**

The letters that Gasson and Arnold exchanged late in 1948 and the beginning of 1949, show that in the months following Arnold’s return to the church her life was marked by a number of changes, both great and small. Although outwardly things might have seemed the same, as she continued teaching at Bryn Mawr, Arnold was inwardly busy, growing spiritually and wrestling with what her new Catholic identity meant for her. These changes are worth noting, as these results of her conversion would be formative professionally.

### *Catholic Community*

The first major change was in Arnold's social life. In the letter Gasson wrote upon receiving the news of Arnold's conversion, he comments, "isn't it about time for you to have some of those comforts of spiritual sociality that have been denied you for so long" (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948). Gasson was right; Arnold found the "comforts of spiritual sociality" almost immediately, as the Catholic community in Philadelphia enfolded her. Just four days after her return to the church Arnold replied to Gasson's letter: "I discovered a Catholic living in the same building (or rather, she discovered me)" (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948). Angeline Lograsso, a professor of Italian at Bryn Mawr ("Study without books", 1943), filled Arnold in on the Catholic situation at the school. It was a somewhat discouraging prospect—"the students scattered and uninterested, very few among the faculty" (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948) but it was very pleasant to have a new friend. Just a day later a Bryn Mawr graduate student, tipped off by Arnold's Father Confessor, Father Lambert, found Arnold:

She was all bubbling over with enthusiasm and carried me off in triumph to Rosemont College to meet Rev. Mother Boniface (the President) and Mother Mary Lawrence. It was a great pleasure for me - I don't think I feel lonely any more. I was glad to hear that several people are getting concerned about Bryn Mawr, maybe between us we can do something....As you can see life at Bryn Mawr promises to be a great deal brighter. (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948)

Arnold also was finding community at her church, Our Mother of Good Counsel. She reported that one of the curates had "been taking care of me in the most touching way, bringing

me books, introducing me to Fr. Diehl who teaches psychology at Villanova,<sup>27</sup> and inquiring every now and then what else he could do” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948). Later she mused:

And that is one of the most surprising things among the many surprises I have had: to find myself suddenly among the most generous of friends, not only here but wherever there are Catholics - the Cenacle,<sup>28</sup> for instance, felt like home the minute I stepped inside the door. Truly this is a supernatural society. (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, January 15, 1949)

When she thought of the people she loved who were not in this society (such as her daughter Joan and her friend Dorothy), she found it very difficult not to “try and tell them in so many words just what they are missing” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, January 15, 1949), but the thought of how patient Gasson had been with her restrained her. Also, Gasson had reminded her that Joan and Dorothy were in “our Lady’s work-basket” and she could trust that Mary would mend them and draw them to faith in her own time (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948).

There was a social downside to her conversion, however, which Arnold discovered when she returned to Toronto with Joan, for Christmas, and stayed with Dorothy. She wrote to Gasson:

You were right enough when you said that becoming a Catholic would eventually mean breaking away from all my old friends. That became apparent enough in Toronto: those to whom it mattered seemed to assume a fundamental change in me which made friendship impossible. (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, January 15, 1949)

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<sup>27</sup> Villanova University is a Catholic university near Philadelphia.

<sup>28</sup> Cenacle is a religious community (the Cenacle Sisters) whose ministry is to host spiritual retreats on their various locations. It seems Arnold made a retreat at their property at Ronkonkoma, Long Island just before Christmas 1948 (Gasson, 1949, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 14, 1949; Arnold, 1948, M. B. Arnold to J. Gasson, January 15, 1949).

Dorothy was one of the friends offended by Arnold's "desertion" and gave her a very hard time. But, Arnold reported to Gasson, "your prayers must have been very effective and I am deeply grateful to you and to the Infant Lord Who in his mercy kept my heart peaceful and free from hurt" (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, January 15, 1949). Gasson had previously assured her of his prayers as she returned to the dreaded Toronto and had wished her a Christmas like the one Joseph, the father of Jesus, had experienced: "to be all absorbed in Him, Who is All in All" (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 14, 1948).

As it turned out, things had turned out rather differently than planned: Arnold and Joan had been meant to celebrate Christmas with family in Waterloo, but Joan fell ill with a rheumatic fever and had to be hospitalized at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. So Arnold spent her Christmas nursing Joan and staying with Dorothy and her mother, with Gasson's Christmas card to her the only reminder in the room of the "real" Christmas. Nevertheless it was a good Christmas, as Arnold spent "the first real Christmas of my life" attending her first High Mass at St. Michael's Cathedral, next door to the hospital. She thought it "altogether right and fitting" that the first mass she heard should be in Toronto "which had always seemed so devoid of warmth and color" (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 14, 1948) and had been the site of such painful events in Arnold's life. She wrote, "Watching for the advent of the Infant Savior and adoring His presence on the altar seemed to wipe out the effect of all those long and dreary years and took away the last of my irrational dislikes, that of the city itself" (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 14, 1948).

In the glow of her conversion, Arnold seemed not to mind the strained and lost friendships; when she arrived back at Bryn Mawr she was consoled by her Christmas presents from Gasson: Frank Sheed's *Theology and Sanity* and a reproduction of Raphael's *Alba*

Madonna in a frame lovingly hand-crafted by Gasson (she had sent him a carved Madonna). Yet the neglect of her nonCatholic friends in favor of her blossoming Catholic community, was nonetheless a consequence of her conversion that would have an impact on her professional life. Although she continued to build friendships with the eminent secular psychologists she encountered in her career, her relationships with Catholic psychologists, John Gasson especially, were most influential in her thinking and theorizing. Although she did not approve of a ghetto mentality, Arnold was herself at times deeply embedded in the Catholic ghetto.

### *Vocational Questions*

In January of 1949 Arnold wrote to thank Gasson for the beautiful Madonna and Sheed's book, which she said was "exactly what I need at this point" (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, January 15, 1949). Then, in reference to the book, she mused on a topic that occupied many of her letters: how she ought to shape her life now that she had faith, specifically, how it should affect her work in psychology:

The further I go the more I become convinced that there are untold riches waiting for the explorer, and the only problem is how to reconcile one's secular duties with this all-absorbing quest. But maybe the very urgency of such duties is a blessing at this point - when there was time, during the three days I spent at the Cenacle before Christmas, the realization of the distance I had to travel nearly knocked me out. In this spiritual as in physical life, growth must have its appointed time, I know, and it's just a little funny that the same agonized desire to grow up I used to feel as a child should hit me again now.

(Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, January 15, 1949)

We can see here the mix of feelings that Arnold's conversion stirred up in her. On the one hand, she was happier at Bryn Mawr, enjoying her new Catholic connections and plans for

serving the Catholic community at the school. On the other, her conversion made her a little impatient with her mundane duties, wanting only to focus on her spiritual development, or else embark on a much higher academic task like joining the Cornell research group. But when she returned to Bryn Mawr after Christmas, she found a letter from Cornell informing her that they had wanted someone to start immediately, so they would look elsewhere, since she was committed until the fall. She cheerfully reported to Gasson that this was “very pleasant [news,] for Bryn Mawr suits me fine and I have a deep dark suspicion that I’ll probably do better outside a team, no matter how congenial” (Arnold, [1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, [November, 1948]).

So in the meantime Arnold focused on making a difference at Bryn Mawr. She told Gasson that they hoped to restart a defunct Newman Club, and that there was a newly endowed philosophy and religion chair for which the school was looking for “a first rate scholar - denomination no obstacle” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948). She told Gasson to send any promising Catholic candidates her way: “Bryn Mawr would be a real mission to the Gentiles” (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948).<sup>29</sup>

This last comment captures her attitude towards Bryn Mawr. Very shortly after her return from Mooseheart (“The students all rallied round as if I had returned from an expedition to the North Pole - I hadn't realized I had been here long enough for anybody to miss me” [Arnold, [1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, [November, 1948]]), she gave a well-attended talk at the school on the topic of “Psychology and Religion.” Although the title was generic enough, (it should more properly be ‘The Psychology of Religious Experience,’ she said), her aim was clearly evangelistic. She was asking “whether a psychologist could admit religious experience as a valid mode of experiencing reality,” whether religious experience is “objectively real” (Arnold,

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<sup>29</sup> “Gentiles” meaning unbelievers; this language is likely borrowed from Aquinas’ work *Summa Contra Gentiles* (translation: *Summa against the Pagans*) (McGinn, 2014).

[1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, [November, 1948]). She was a little apologetic when describing her talk to Gasson: she had written the initial version of the paper 10 years prior and said “maybe if I let it lie around for another 10 years I might get somewhere” (Arnold, [1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, [November, 1948]). But she had seen that for Bryn Mawr it was radical: “[my paper] doesn’t go very far, being mainly concerned with showing that Leuba, Starbuck et al were all wet, which I always thought everybody knew anyway. Since I have come to Bryn Mawr I have learned to doubt that” (Arnold, [1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, [November, 1948]).

While the students were somewhat puzzled, and thought her argument by analogy “unpsychological” and unscientific she was pleased that their discussion centered on the question “How can we come to know the love of God?” (Arnold, [1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, [November, 1948]), with some of the girls seeming almost desperate for the answer. She wrote, “I wish I weren’t always so helpless when it comes to answer that question - again, by analogy, how does one come to know beauty? It’s all around, we merely have to learn to see it” (Arnold, [1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, [November, 1948]). Still, it was progress from a previous discussion in which students had only asked “How can religion help me in my college career?” (Arnold, [1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, [November, 1948]). This letter makes plain Arnold’s motivations for her choice of psychology of religion for her talk; it was not only that she genuinely thought that “after so many years of a “scientific” psychology that problem is the one that ought to be faced” (Arnold, [1948], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, [November, 1948]) but that she wanted to open up conversations on spiritual topics with her students.

But despite the fact that she had determined to stay at Bryn Mawr for the time being and could see great spiritual need there, Arnold could not help being tempted when other offers arose. In February of 1949 she apparently had another offer, this time from Harvard, for a 3-year

research program on projective techniques under Gardner Murphy (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 5, 1949). Arnold asked Gasson for advice on the offer, but he was reluctant to comment until she told him she was leaning towards declining. She was hesitant to commit to a 3-year research project that might be a distraction from her main interests and felt that “the next few years ought to be kept free for clarification” (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 5, 1949). Then Gasson wrote, advising her to follow her inclination to “stay put for a while” but for spiritual rather than academic considerations:

But it is not from that point of view that I look at it, so much as from the point of view of your interior life which is just beginning. You need a spiritual director - would you find one like Fr. Lambert in Cambridge or Boston? The external helps you have at Bryn Mawr (the vicinity, not the college) for getting yourself well established in the path of holiness and accustomed to the going therein won't be found, generally speaking, elsewhere, quite as easily or quickly. I am inclined to think Bryn Mawr is better for you[r] soul. (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1949)

Arnold had apparently been attracted by the prospect of better students and co-ed classes at Harvard, and so Gasson gave her his thoughts on that subject as well:

O.K. so you don't like to teach girls! education is not just the stuff they get in lectures and class hours nor even the stuff you give them in courses; education, my lamb, is the imprint that you make of your inner self upon your girls, not as students but as human beings; the mark that will not begin to show until a dozen years from now, when they being to raise their children. What's so very precious about a scholar?! So what's the difference if the girls don't get a thought until the third go 'round; the very patience you have with their perverse opacity may be the means of planting the seed of Grace in one of



them. But, you'll say, with mixed classes the imprint might stick better and go farther.

All I say is: Never underestimate the power of a woman! (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1949)

In summary he concluded, "Where you are now, your soul has a chance to grow in Grace; it will take something more than another year for it to become sturdy and sure; let it be a strong spiritual reason that moves you to transplant it" (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1949).

Arnold responded, agreeing with his assessment of her need for spiritual advising:

That I need a spiritual director, I have known for the last two years and have put in frequent and urgent petitions. When you turned up in Cambridge I thought it was an answer to prayer, but then - look at the distance between Mobile and Bryn Mawr!

(Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949)

But she was confident that Mary would provide for these needs no matter where she settled; instead what had decided her against Harvard was a weekend retreat at Rosemont College. There she had talked with Mother Mary Lawrence:

She knows Bryn Mawr well and pointed out that for one reason or another none of the other Catholics on the faculty had as good a chance to do something for the students as I have. At Harvard, the situation is much more favourable for any student who really wants to get the right kind of information. She is right, of course, and however little I may be able to do, it would not be done if I left. So I am staying and am very happy about it.

(Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949)

As evidence that she would be useful at Bryn Mawr, Arnold told Gasson that she was helping to lead a small Catholic group recently initiated by students. They were enthusiastic but ignorant,

Arnold reported: “The need certainly is great. I was rather amazed to find so much confusion in the girls’ minds, and the same old relativism one meets with everywhere else” (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949).<sup>30</sup>

Yet Arnold continued to struggle with teaching at Bryn Mawr, and to wonder whether she ought to be somewhere more congenial to a Catholic perspective. She felt herself out of step with the faculty and sometimes found her students hostile to her unusual perspective. In November of 1949 Arnold reported to Gasson that Joan (who was making rapid progress towards the church) shared her own aversion to the school’s atmosphere: “Just now she is waging a one-man war against Bryn Mawr’s secularism and will no doubt upset the faculty just as much as I upset the students” (Arnold, [1949], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 17, [1949]). Arnold had earlier worried that her convert’s zeal would alienate others, and it did seem that her enthusiasm for her faith made her an alien force at Bryn Mawr.

But rather than her zeal decreasing, it seemed to be increasing. In November of 1949, just a year after she had rejoined the church, Arnold was contemplating a more drastic commitment: joining a religious order. The backdrop was, once again, her dissatisfaction at Bryn Mawr: “For weeks I had a real aversion to teaching and thought I would have to go on indefinitely taking myself to classes by the scruff of the my neck” (Arnold, [1949], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 17, [1949]). But then she visited with Gardner Murphy in New York, and while talking with him she had the insight that it wasn’t Bryn Mawr or teaching girls that was the problem: “the restlessness I had felt all last year wouldn’t get any better if I went to another

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<sup>30</sup> What Arnold meant by “the same old relativism” can be gleaned from a 1950 letter to Allport in which she described her students: “Seriously, the plight of the modern college generation as represented by Bryn Mawr seems to me pitiful: they are so sure that all knowledge is relative, that ethical standards are no more than cultural taboos, that the human mind cannot ever grasp the truth – in fact they are sure that there is no truth to grasp... That state of mind seems to result in an unwillingness to do any thinking, for no conclusion, they think, can be any more than one man’s opinion. If that is what social science has taught them, doesn’t it make them unfit for science?” (Arnold, 1950, M. Arnold to G. Allport, February, 16, 1950).

college or university” (Arnold, [1949], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 17, [1949]).<sup>31</sup> She had apparently talked to Gasson about this idea of joining an order before, and he had told her to put off considering it until after Easter of 1950, when she would be more spiritually mature. But she had made another retreat at a convent at New Orleans and the idea had recurred. Although her initial response to the convent had been “yes, this is the life all right, but not for me” she now felt:

I can't stay away either, everything else seems tasteless, insipid, second best. There are too many non-essentials, too many distractions day in and day out, it's almost like being caught in brambles and not caring for the berries on them. (Arnold, [1949], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 17, [1949])

Her feelings about Bryn Mawr were: “For the time being, I am all right here and when I leave it isn't another college I want to go to - not even Tulane” (Arnold, [1949], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 17, [1949]). She wanted to discuss the issue with Gasson, and thought he might reconsider his prohibition on her considering it in light of her new insights on the retreat. Her only worry was about Joan, who had just begun her Junior year at Bryn Mawr. If Joan did enter the church, as Arnold expected, she would certainly lose any financial support from her father. Arnold asked herself, “have I the right to withdraw and leave her to fend for herself even if she is 21 by then?” (Arnold, [1949], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 17, [1949]), and so thought she would have to stay at Bryn Mawr at least another year longer, until Joan was able to graduate.

Gasson wrote, urging her to continue to wait and rest quietly in “our Lady's hands. She will work it out with you in due time” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17,

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<sup>31</sup> Arnold does not specify what in their conversation made her realize this.

1949). He told her not to be hard on herself when considering her motives for entering a religious life, and reminded her of her age:

Remember, honey, you are not much more than a year old, spiritually. Forgive the seeming slight to your interior life and spiritual experience but advanced as you are you are a retarded child. And though you are expected to grow more quickly and mature more perfectly now that your soul is free of retarding factors, it will not be done all at once.

(Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949)

“Sure your soul feels exile[d] in a strange land in the surroundings that your present academic life provides” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949) Gasson said, but living in exile is the calling of faithful Christians, just look at Mother Duchesne’s discouraging work with the Potawatomi Indian girls,<sup>32</sup> or the Virgin Mary’s years exile in Egypt with the Christ Child.

“Circumstances are God’s instruments, too,” Gasson reminded Arnold, so she should not feel guilty by being “bumped and chivvied along a way by circumstances” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949). She did have a real duty to see Joan “settled securely in her interior religious life and her earthly one” as well as her other daughters. Then, too, there

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<sup>32</sup> St. Rose Philippine Duchesne (1769-1852) was a French nun in the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who traveled to America to do missionary work among the Native Americans. Arriving at a time when the policy had switched to Indian resettlement, rather than integration, Duchesne was involved in missionary efforts to make the Potawatomi Tribe effective farmers of their new land in eastern Kansas. She worked with other nuns to teach Native girls Western domestic arts and manners, as well as Catholic devotional practices, to make them fit wives for male Indian converts (Curtis, 2010). Today this effort appears paternalistic and culturally insensitive. However in terms of Gasson’s invocation of Duchesne, the work was certainly frustrating and her living conditions difficult, particularly in comparison to France, which Duchesne voluntarily left. Duchesne had particular significance for Gasson, since she was the founder of the Convent of the Rosary in New Orleans where he frequently visited; he sent a reliquary containing “a first class relic” to Joan Arnold on the occasion of her reception into the church (Gasson, 1949, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949). Gasson introduces Duchesne as “Mother Duchesne, foundress in this country of the Society of the Sacred Heart... Mother Duchesne was a strenuous and holy lady, twin to St. Francis Xavier as St. Madeline Sophie Barat was twin to St. Ignatius, whose Indies was the mid-west U.S.A. in the 1930’s and 40’s” (Gasson, 1949, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949). The following quote attributed to Duchesne probably sums up Gasson’s meaning in invoking her here: “We cultivate a very small field for Christ, but we love it, knowing that God does not require great achievements but a heart that holds back nothing for self.”

was “the very prosaic consideration” that she might not be accepted at all since “ladies of 45 and up are not usually accepted, even by the contemplative orders, because the recasting process can be too much for them” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949). He counseled to put all her spiritual energy into waiting and trusting: “And so, my previous mentor, focus on letting our Lady have her way - and let go” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949).

But while the question of a religious life was put off, Arnold and Gasson continued to dialog about her future. In February of 1950, just after a visit to Gasson and the Convent in New Orleans, Arnold had two job possibilities in New Orleans, at Tulane and at Loyola. Gasson wrote Arnold, “All this clamor for you in New Orleans is a bit breathtaking!! You can’t keep a good guy hid!” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 8, 1950). At the first opportunity, he headed to New Orleans himself, to talk with the people at Loyola and discover what he could about their plans for establishing a distinctively Catholic graduate program in psychology. Although the plans were still sketchy and the graduate program would not begin until 1951, it was clear that Arnold was a shoo-in as the director of the program: “as surely as anything can be in the circumstances, you have a job waiting for you at Loyola” (Gasson, [1950], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]).

But as attractive as the Loyola position seemed, Gasson could see good reasons for her to accept Tulane. He assessed its spiritual need as the same as Bryn Mawr, only “the Church would be on the same side of the tracks,<sup>33</sup> at least” (Gasson, [1950], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]). But it was this very need that made it attractive:

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<sup>33</sup> This could be a reference to Tulane’s proximity to Loyola and other Catholic institutions, or it could refer to the greater societal acceptability of Catholicism in New Orleans compared to Philadelphia.

... there is the consideration of its capacity and opportunity for promoting God's cause (and the cause of human happiness) among those who are training themselves for careers of service - teacher, social workers, psychologists, counselors, psychiatrists - but who have little else than warped ideals and false ideas offered to them to fit them for the professions they aspire to. The salvation of souls as you see so poignantly, is not the work exclusively of religious and priests but is each one's duty and prerogative, according to each one's skill and t[a]lents; the academic world and the academic mind needs redemption the more urgently because it is the most potent factor in forming those who profess service. The opportunity Tulane will offer you for getting students to stop and think; to question, doubt, reflect on the easy and biased formulas of the current texts; above all the chance you'll give them to let their minds alone to work the way the mind was designed to work, is supernaturally attractive, anyway. The little in the right direction that you could do there would seem to be utterly lost in the welter of confusion and misdirection (even malice) of thought and action but it would be one candle in the darkness. The opportunity to bring Christ in the academic world - the idly curious, mentally darkened, intellectually groping, morally confused, sentimentally wracked, spiritually futile, whistling-past-the-graveyard academic world - at Tulane would be greater than at Bryn Mawr simply because it's a larger and more diversified place.

(Gasson, [1950], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950])

In summary, he thought she ought to accept Tulane because it offered “a wider opportunity for promoting God's greater glory” (Gasson, [1950], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]).

The existing correspondence does not explain why Arnold ended up at Barat rather than Loyola or Tulane,<sup>34</sup> but this last paragraph of Gasson's is telling in understanding all her career moves post-conversion. Gasson's perspective, which we have every reason to believe that Arnold shared, was primarily spiritually focused—on determining where Arnold could do the most good to forward the Kingdom of God. It could be in a “mission to the Gentiles” where Arnold would be but one small candle in the darkness, or at a weak Catholic school that needed strengthening. Either way, Arnold was called to “the salvation of souls” according to her talents, talents all the more valuable because of the desolate state of the academic world, and the centrality of that world in forming young souls. Thus, rather than the usual considerations one would use to decide such a career move—such as pay, prestige, departmental fit, or personal preference—the factor that trumped all others was what would bring God most glory.

This is not to say that practical considerations were not important in the decision—Arnold's concern for Joan's future, for example, seems to have been the overriding concern in the move to Barat. A location that would facilitate Arnold's own growth as a young Catholic, was similarly a significant consideration. But, as Gasson said, these circumstances could be God's instruments, which would point towards his will. Discerning where Arnold might do the most good also helped point the way. The ultimate question was where did God want Arnold?

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<sup>34</sup> On March 30th, Arnold was still apparently waiting to hear back from Tulane (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 30, 1950); by May 5th she had decided to go to Barat (Gasson, [1950], J. A. Gasson to M. B. Arnold, May 5, [1950]). Gasson's May 5 letter indicates that the Barat decision happened quickly: “This newest development has come so quickly I almost feel it really hasn't happened” (Gasson, [1950], J. A. Gasson to M. B. Arnold, May 5, [1950]). A clue as to why the Tulane position fell through can be found in the following passage: “Mother Lapeyre, by the way, had occasion to talk to Mrs. Hull recently. Seems like your appointment struck snags somewhere on the higher levels. I guess if you don't hear soon it will mean that top level policy didn't jell good” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 4, 1950). Mrs. Hull may be Mallory Page Hull, the wife of Edgar Hull, Jr., a medical doctor and one of the founding faculty of the Louisiana State University Medical Center. Although the reference to the well-informed Mrs. Hull could refer to either school, since Edgar Hull was a graduate of Tulane's medical school (1927), it seems more likely that the reference was to the Tulane job.

This can help us make better sense of Arnold's move to Barat. Given her other, better options, and how ultimately bleak the Barat environment turned out to be, the decision seems somewhat of a mystery. But in the context of her correspondence with Gasson, we can at least be clear that Arnold chose Barat because somehow between her concern for Joan and her desire to contribute to Catholic education, she was convinced it was the right thing to do in order to serve God. Although one could read this move as an inevitable withdrawal from the world, a new convert drawn by the appeal of the protective ghetto, it is clear that that was not the case either. As dismal as Gasson's assessment of the "intellectually groping, morally confused" secular academic world was, he still considered it an essential place for Christians to live and work. Yet the fact that Arnold chose Barat was a sign of how deeply her conversion had affected her. She was willing to follow God even to somewhere as barren as Barat.

### *Uncovering Psychology's Philosophical Foundations*

Another important theme that emerges in the early Arnold-Gasson correspondence is the importance of identifying philosophical foundations. In his November 1948 letter congratulating Arnold on her return to the Catholic Church, Gasson also wrote, "Your paper came, thank you; if I can catch sufficient time I am going to dig out and reveal the metaphysical foundations of it, which will be interesting" (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948). This reference is the first sign of what would become a regular practice for Gasson and Arnold, exchanging their academic work for each other to edit and critique. But it is also a further indication of Gasson's intellectual influence on Arnold. For Gasson, with his Jesuit background, uncovering the philosophical assumptions of any given piece of writing was as natural as breathing. At first, it seems, Arnold was not quite so sure that exposing these foundations was the right approach. She replied:



To see the metaphysical foundations of my paper on emotion freed from scientific encumbrances would be fun, though it's probably just as well the said foundations are not obvious to the general reader. As you know I believe that it is possible to have a theory of personality (of which a theory of emotion would be a part) which rests on the right metaphysical foundations yet is scientifically acceptable and indeed scientifically more adequate than the present theories. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if that weren't the easiest way of converting scientists. Once they have discarded the wrong foundations, once they have started on the right road, they would end up with God almost without knowing it. (Arnold, 1948, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948)

There is much that is worth noting in this paragraph. First, this passage is striking for its resemblance to what Arnold actually achieved in her lifetime: a theory of emotion resting on Catholic metaphysical foundations which was not only scientifically acceptable but “more adequate than the present theories.”<sup>35</sup> Secondly, it is surprising to note that this career goal had as one of its expected outcomes the conversion of secular scientists—a sort of stealth evangelism. Finally, and most importantly for our purposes here, the passage underscores the importance of philosophical foundations for Arnold. This would eventually become a theme in her writing; she and Gasson would emphasize these all-powerful philosophical assumptions in *The Human Person*. She never tired of reminding her readers that “every method of analysis or psychotherapy pre-supposes a philosophy” (Arnold, n.d. d, 6).

For Arnold this underlying philosophy was vital; if it was wrong it would lead one desperately astray, if it was right, it would lead towards God. But as a minority—a believer and a

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<sup>35</sup> See Gasper and Bramesfeld (2006) and Mooren and van Krogten (1993) for positive evaluations of Arnold's emotion theory.

Catholic in a secular, materialist<sup>36</sup> scientific world—there were real challenges with Arnold highlighting the pre-scientific assumptions. Such an analysis could easily backfire on her, resulting in Arnold being attacked for her own assumptions. This theme comes up again, just a few months later, when Gasson writes in response to Arnold’s account of a talk on cybernetics she gave at Bryn Mawr:

You were wise to keep from goading you[r] questioners into thinking of God, the maker of the human machine. It would have caused grave concern about your ‘scientific attitude’ for you to enquire [sic] into the designer of organisms or the nervous system. McCulloch<sup>37</sup> would welcome an enquiry into the intelligence and ingenuity of the designer of a scanner that gives out with a sound for every letter of the alphabet; he would even nod delightedly at your agreement that the best Eniac<sup>38</sup> hardly rivals the nervous system of a flatworm but he would growl as fearsomely as Korzybski...at the suggestion that somebody, as much more intelligent than man, who designed the Eniac, designed the flatworm - and man. (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1949)

This sort of critique of the close-minded materialist assumptions of scientists was a common refrain in the letters between Gasson and Arnold. While it was not always wise to disclose their own scientific assumptions, there was nothing to prevent Gasson and Arnold from taking issue with secular psychologists’ inflexible adherence to the materialist orthodoxy and unwillingness to look beyond that towards questions of meaning and purpose. Gasson wrote that Arnold’s account of the discussion after her talk made him very much wish he could have been

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<sup>36</sup> Materialist meaning that most people emphasized the materiality of the world as opposed to its metaphysics.

<sup>37</sup> Warren Strugis McCulloch (1898-1964) was a neurophysiologist who did pioneering work on cybernetics.

<sup>38</sup> ENIAC refers to Electronic Numerical Integrator And Computer, an early computer, completed by the US military shortly after WWII.

there—he might have embarrassed her by bringing up the “elbow distinction”<sup>39</sup> or calling the idea of universal ideas as composite pictures a “superstition” that had “died with Titchener” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1949). “At the very least, I would have outdone your whole department in the ardency of my partisanship” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1949).

But what really bothered him was the obsession scientists had with quantifying things. In his letter he continued:

Isn't it symptomatic of our preposterous (in its root meaning) generation that our scientists should try to explain unity by piling in more and more numbers? As if a thing were one because it is many; or is solid because it has so many holes; or is stable because it changes so frequently; or is alive because it is made up of so many dead things.

(Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1949)

In this rant one is reminded in this paragraph of Arnold's first, summer school impression of Gasson, when he asked, like the little boy from Hans Christian Andersen's *Emperor's New Clothes*, “But where is the emotion?” (Arnold, Arnold, n.d. c, p. 11). Gasson seems to have had a knack for spotting logical leaps or unwarranted assumptions. Following his fellow summer school student's lame rebuttal, “Everyone knows that perception and emotion are the same!” Gasson's calm “I don't. If two things always go together, does that mean they are one and the same?” demonstrates his long familiarity with logic. As a well-educated Jesuit, he was certainly trained quite early to distinguish between Aristotle's four different types of causality and to spot logical fallacies. Thus he was exasperated when psychologists pursued only the efficient cause, refusing to address the final cause or even worse, conflated the two, thinking they could answer questions of meaning by simply heaping on more data.

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<sup>39</sup> See explanation to follow.

Ultimately this was frustrating because there was so much potential for psychology if it did not insist on aping positivist sciences. Gasson had a vision for psychology that was more open to other methods, where for example, philosophy and metaphysical questions were not banished, but used to focus psychology on what was important. This vision for psychology comes out in a letter in which Gasson responds to Arnold's report on what she had learned about Catholic University,<sup>40</sup> yet another possible job offer for Arnold. Although Catholic University was attractive because it was the only place that at that point was training Catholic psychiatrists and clinical psychologists, Gasson thought Arnold ought to refuse the offer because they were doing it wrong—"why do they persist in trying to make bricks without straw?"<sup>41</sup> he asked (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949). Arnold's report "confirmed what I had suspicioned" (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949).

It seems that the missing "straw" in this case was philosophy: "I suspect that there is a wider gap than just two floors between the first and third floors of St. Thomas Hall" (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949). While the Catholic University people were obsessed with teaching clinicians the "right kind" of psychology, Gasson thought they were on a wild goose chase: "Is it Moore,<sup>42</sup> or Jung, or Wertheimer, or Horney, or Fromm, or Boring or any man or system?" (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949). When psychology was looked at from a purely "scientific" perspective, all that needed to be taught was a technical process: "Scientific psychology studies man's activities - all you need for that, really, is a correct

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<sup>40</sup> Although Gasson only calls the university "C.U." in his letters, the identification of this as The Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. seems certain, given the mention of Thomas V. Moore (a professor at Catholic University until his retirement in 1947) later in the letter.

<sup>41</sup> This is a biblical reference to Exodus 5 when Pharaoh made the Israelite slaves' mud brick-making task harder by no longer supplying straw.

<sup>42</sup> Presumably the reference is to Father Thomas V. Moore (1877-1969), an influential Catholic psychologist. He studied under Wundt and developed the clinical program at Catholic University.

technique, sufficient material and no more skill than a butcher needs to carve a carcass or a chemist to run a reaction” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949).

But when Arnold used the term in connection with her concerns about Catholic University, she meant something different, according to Gasson: “When you speak of a right kind of psychology, you refer to something else again” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949). Arnold meant a more metaphysically-informed psychology:

That kind of psychology studies man in his activities. It is a wisdom that not only knows and understands the being that is beneath the surface manifestations that are activities but grasps the central idea that makes of man an ordered unity and gives man meaning according to which all ‘facts’ pertaining to man are to be judged and ordered. (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949)

Recognizing man as an ordered unity was critical, and any psychology lacking this perspective would ultimately be fruitless, making Catholic University not the place for Arnold.<sup>43</sup> Gasson summed up what was missing from the school’s approach: “A clinical psychologist needs skill, surely, but he needs wisdom more; and not only the wisdom that even philosophical psychology can give him but the Wisdom that is the Gift of the Holy Spirit” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949).

Gasson revisited his idea of psychology’s reliance on wisdom rather than technique more than a year later, when Arnold was just settling into teaching at Barat and had complained about the shocking ignorance of her students. Gasson encouraged her that there was “fine scope” in a “mind innocent of psychology” and suggested that she begin with “psychology as a wisdom to

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<sup>43</sup> Catholic University had the oldest psychology program of Catholic universities in the US and well established programs in both experimental and clinical psychology, including an on-campus child guidance clinic where students were trained in psychiatry (founded in 1916 and expanded in 1939, thanks to a Rockefeller Foundation grant) (Kugelmann, 2011). What Gasson objected to at Catholic University was likely their tendency to assimilate into mainstream psychology, rather than creating a uniquely Catholic approach.

know rather than a skill to use” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950). This pedagogical technique was to act as a corrective to the prevailing trends in science:

Isn't it odd that at the present time, right in the middle of the Age of Science, all the things that go by the name of science are not sciences at all but a species of art (or skill)? The psychologist is trained so he can either train others by teaching or writing or to engage in clinical practice; the physicist is trained to measure, compute, imagine and construct according to the rules in order to train others in the same skill or to use the skill in designing machines and instruments - all the sciences are the same, if you think about it. The scientist studies his materials, even the theoretical scientists, in order to get results and establish control; is he any different from the cook the seamstress, the gardener or the ballplayer? (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950)

A Baconian control of nature was the wrong approach; instead psychologists ought to study “what nature has within and from within” by submitting to, by obeying this order, a return, in other words, to a more Aristotelian model of inquiry.<sup>44</sup> “Think about this:” Gasson explained, “the way the contemporary [sic] academician hunts for truth means that he can only bag his game by killing it; the wise man ought to seek to capture it alive” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950).

This was the point of Gasson's favorite “elbow” distinction. About psychology as “wisdom to know,” he wrote: “One requisite for that wisdom is the capacity to distinguish between your elbow and third base” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949).<sup>45</sup>

The implication is that modern psychologists were terrible at distinguishing between something

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<sup>44</sup> For evidence that contemporary psychologists (particularly behaviorists like B. F. Skinner) were intentionally modeling their work on Baconian ideals, see Smith (1992).

<sup>45</sup> Gasson is drawing on the popular saying that someone ignorant “does not know his ass from his elbow.” Variations which can replace elbow are “a hole in the ground” or “third base” (Kipfer & Chapman, 2007). Gasson therefore is blending two endings of this saying to create a less scatological (and arguably more humorous) maxim.

human and an inanimate object, at discerning when they had missed their live game and captured something dead. This interpretation is supported by a playful poem Gasson wrote (after Lewis Carroll's *The Mad Gardner's Song*):<sup>46</sup>

I thought I put my elbow  
 Into giving Science chase;  
 I looked again and saw it was  
 A woebegone third base.

(Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950)

The target here is scientism<sup>47</sup> (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 14, 1949), a psychology that sets out to study human nature only to capture mere behavior. Arnold would later develop this idea in "Basic Assumptions in Psychology," the first chapter in *The Human Person*. A good psychologist, Arnold said, ought to be investigating "the unique factors" which account for human behavior, not obsessed with discovering how a human is like a piece of iron or "his likeness to a white rat" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 45). If the psychologist neglected to look for the uniqueness of humans he would lose his explanatory powers: "He very soon realizes that he has not *explained* a human person, he had merely equated him with an object or an animal" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 45). If psychologists assumed that humans were "only an intelligent mammal" they would come to the end of their research only to find that they had "described a mammal and

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<sup>46</sup> This poem (from Carroll's 1889 *Bruno and Sylvie*) depicts a mad gardener making very strange mistakes. For example:

He thought he saw a Argument  
 That proved he was the Pope:  
 He looked again, and found it was  
 A Bar of Mottled Soap.  
 'A fact so dread,' he faintly said,  
 'Extinguishes all hope!'

Gasson concludes his poem "cf. Bruno and Sylvia, passim," meaning that this sort of mistake happens throughout the work (a nonsense work similar to Carroll's *Alice* books), not just the poem.

<sup>47</sup> This term was used by many in this era to critique the social sciences (see Pandora, 1997).

failed to describe an intelligent one” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 45). Ultimately the point was that without wisdom, gained from posing and answering metaphysical questions that would correctly orient psychology, psychologists were doomed to be mere technicians, butchers mechanically chopping up a carcass according to their training. This philosophically-grounded wisdom was not optional but critical to the correct interpretation of phenomena, to keeping psychologists from making category errors or other basic logic errors.

This argument highlights another significant change that resulted from Arnold’s conversion—she adopted many of Gasson’s ideas about psychology. Although Arnold had already been critical of behaviorism and Freudian psychology on her own, after her conversion she became even more so, picking on secular psychology for logical lapses and questionable philosophical assumptions. Too, she adopted Gasson’s logical precision to watch her own work for consistent logic and firm metaphysical foundations, and was willing to change her theory where he found it wanting. She did her best to choose and conduct her research based on wisdom, in a manner that looked “beneath the surface manifestations” to find the unique characteristics of human nature.

Thus it was not only Gasson’s introduction of Thomism that was formative in Arnold’s thinking, but Gasson’s (Thomistic-influenced) perspective on psychology. Arnold herself acknowledged Gasson’s influence, and the great help he had been to her thinking. In February of 1949, she mused longingly about how wonderful it would be if they could both end up at Harvard for summer school again—“just think how much good it would do me to get all my issues nicely sorted out and licked into shape!” (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949). As an example of how important the previous summer had been to her, she told how she had recently given a talk on emotions at a faculty colloquium at Swarthmore. Wolfgang



Köhler “who really deserves his reputation” had “very neatly” identified two issues in her talk that deserved further consideration. Arnold concluded: “What I would have done with [Köhler’s] question without your careful analysis last summer, I don’t know” (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949). Gasson’s influence in her life is hard to overstate.

### **Gasson and Arnold: An Intimate Friendship**

It should be clear from the forgoing accounts that Arnold’s friendship with Gasson was deeply significant for her, both professionally and personally. This deserves further exploration, to establish just what sort of relationship they had and understand what their mutual influence was. This would be an impossible task, were it not for their surviving correspondence, from which we can glean much about their relationship. The letters are particularly informative since they date from the very earliest years of their friendship, and thus document Arnold and Gasson’s developing relationship.<sup>48</sup>

As we have already noted, the correspondence began rather formally in August of 1948, in which Gasson and Arnold shared articles that they thought the other would be interested in, based on their conversations in Cambridge. There is a significant increase in intimacy in November, following their meeting at the Mooseheart Symposium—“Dr. Arnold” becomes “Magda” in Gasson’s letters—no longer a professional colleague only, but a friend. They grew still closer following Arnold’s return to the Catholic Church—they stayed in frequent contact in December and January, as Gasson gave Arnold various resources and advice for growing in her faith and was anxious to hear how her difficult trip to Toronto went. Although Gasson was in

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<sup>48</sup> As numerous as these letters are, they are not complete—since they were preserved (and ordered) by Arnold, the majority are Gasson’s letters to her. Although there are enough of Arnold’s letters to get the flavor of her missives, we are left primarily with Gasson’s perspective. This will necessarily shape our perspective on their relationship. Since the collection was curated by Arnold, there is a very real possibility that she destroyed some letters. However, to all appearances, Arnold retained the majority of Gasson’s early letters because they were meaningful to her, and perhaps with an eye towards future biographers (the fact that she wrote two autobiographical accounts of her life suggests an interest in preserving her history).

Palm Beach, Florida for Christmas, visiting a friend (“prince of hosts ((and beautifully devoted to our Lady))” [Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 14, 1949]), Arnold was on his mind. He met up with Father Quigley so as to hear firsthand about Arnold’s spiritual progress and although Quigley had only ten minutes to spare, “it was sufficient for short Te Deum antiphonally and a long wish that I could have been in New York to give you your retreat” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 14, 1949).

### *Visiting Patterns*

But that update was not enough to satisfy Gasson. “Just now I am struggling with an impulse” he wrote on January 14, 1949 “to which I am going to yield” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 14, 1949). The weather was fine in Mobile, “the camellias are all in bloom and the azaleas beginning to”; “why don’t you come to Mobile for the semester holidays?” In case she needed convincing, he talked up the benefits:

I have long ago prepared a place for you with somebody nice who has a big house all to herself;<sup>49</sup> she would love to have you; and you can come to see the campus and we’ll talk and we’ll go to see the flowers and talk and then we’ll see the city and talk and go visit two perfect jewels: the Woods<sup>50</sup> and talk and you’ll enjoy it so much and so will I and everybody/ I almost persuade you? (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 14, 1949)

Arnold apparently needed little persuading: she flew to Mobile for the last week of January to visit Gasson, and made a retreat at the Convent of the Rosary in New Orleans.<sup>51</sup> In

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<sup>49</sup> The friend was later identified only as Loretta.

<sup>50</sup> Captain Wilbur and Solange Woods were close friends of Father Gasson (Arnold, 2014). Captain Woods was, as of 1949, shipping commissioner at Mobile.

<sup>51</sup> Arnold was introduced to the Convent of the Rosary by Gasson; the convent’s Mother Superior, Odile Lepeyre, was an old friend of his, and he seems to have regularly led retreats there. There are regular references in the correspondence to “Remother”, who it seems often had strong opinions about Arnold’s vocational decisions. Odile Lepeyre, R.S.C.J. was Cajun French, born in Tennessee in 1895, and one of ten children in a strongly Catholic

addition to all of the attractions Gasson had advertised, Arnold also gave a talk on Jung to Gasson's Scholastics students<sup>52</sup>, met Father John Moreau, Gasson's closest Jesuit friend,<sup>53</sup> and arranged to have Moreau include a lecture to her graduate students at Bryn Mawr in his schedule of a planned visit to Philadelphia (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949). But what was most precious to them was the opportunity to talk. They talked and talked—about psychology, about faith, and about their own chronic worries and problems.

On February 5th Arnold wrote to Gasson from “back in familiar surroundings and in the middle of mountains of work” (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 5, 1949):

Well, it's a funny feeling being back again, like waking up from a dream and not being quite sure which is dream and which is reality. But dream or reality, last week was a gift straight from heaven, of that I am sure, and though I know once again that the only adequate way to express my thanks is to address them to the Lord and His dear Mother who prepared it for us, still I want to thank you as well for your share in it. (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 5, 1949)

Gasson replied “For me the last week in January was not a dream - it was a reality, all too short. Hurry back!!” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1949).

Arnold was still musing on how nice the trip had been at the end of February:

It's very nice that Spring Hill is now more than a name. I like to think back and see it all: the impressive courtyard and chapel, the library, and all those paths which I always think

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family (three of her siblings also belonged to religious orders). Joan Arnold remembers the convent as an old, well-built brick building, molding because of the humidity, which was home to about 30 nuns. “It must have had good insulation, because it was relatively cool” she remembered, nevertheless “We slept with fans, wearing as little as possible, I don't know what the nuns wore” (Joan Arnold, personal communication, January 26, 2015).

<sup>52</sup> Arnold wrote “And what do your Scholastics think about Jung? I hope you have given them a little more than I was able to. I am still sorry they didn't get a chance to talk, I am sure I would have enjoyed their questions” (Arnold, 1949, M. B. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949).

<sup>53</sup> Moreau was a fellow philosophy professor at Spring Hill, who was the same age as Gasson, and like him began teaching at Spring Hill in 1938 (‘Jesuit Cemetery’, 1999).

I've got sorted out and then I get lost again. Best of all, I like to remember Mass at the Sodality Chapel.<sup>54</sup> Please give my love to Our Lady there. I owe Her a big debt of gratitude. (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949)

The trip only increased their desire to see one another again. Gasson wrote:

Your visit was much too short. I am sure that even had it been several weeks longer it would have been still too short. I enjoyed it so much. But I guess there is no need for me to talk, you know how it was with me without my saying it. (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 7, 1949).

Gasson closed that letter as follows: "Stay good. And you might discuss with Mary how much good it would do me to be in Cambridge in the summer. God bless you, I bless you" (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 7, 1949). They both clung to the hope of seeing each other at Harvard in the summer, a possibility dependent upon Gasson getting the approval of his superiors for his summer plans. Arnold closed her own letter from this period:

I must tell Rev. Mother she isn't the only one who is homesick - the only consolation is that even loneliness and separation come from God's hand and so it doesn't really hurt. May His love and blessing be with you always. (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 5, 1949)

After this point longing to see each other becomes a hallmark of the Arnold-Gasson correspondence. In March 1949 Gasson wrote that although his letter would "say all that need be said just now in answer to your letter I am going to phone you just the same. Lent and all I won't deny myself hearing your voice" (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 14, 1949).

Arnold was worrying about whether she ought to join a convent but he ruled this out "until you

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<sup>54</sup> This was a small Greek Revival-style chapel at Spring Hill that was built in 1850, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The name Sodality refers to the student society who constructed the chapel—students who dedicated themselves to the cultivation of virtue and academic excellence to honor Mary.

and I can talk it over at some length” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 14, 1949). For this reason he thought “Our Lady just has to bring me to Cambridge this summer” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 14, 1949).

It was with great delight, therefore, that Gasson wrote “for all that I feel that there ought to be a flourish of houtboys<sup>55</sup> to accompany my opening lines, I must let my ebullience be conveyed by these plodding words: I will be with you in Cambridge this summer” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949). He was not yet sure whether he would take any courses other than Arnold’s (although one on prehistoric man looked appealing), because “we will only have a month” and he wanted to make sure they had all the necessary time at our disposal to do all the things we want to do” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949). They compared summer schedules to see if there was any more possible overlap, but were stymied by Gasson’s August retreat obligations. However, they were able to coordinate a day together in early June, when Gasson would pass through Philadelphia on his travels. They made plans for Arnold to meet his train, and show him around Bryn Mawr, and the next day before leaving Gasson would say Mass for Arnold at her parish church (Gasson, [1949], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, Spring [1949]). “Try to keep cheerful now that summer’s here” (Gasson, [1949], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, Spring, Monday [1949]), he wrote her in April, they would be together soon.

Their month together in July must have been delightful, even with the rigorous course in Thomistic Philosophy that Gasson gave Arnold. In turn she introduced him to “coordination,” a system of stretching exercises, which might help with some of his chronic health complaints, which she suspected had to do with poor posture and lack of muscular relaxation. When Gasson had to leave for Fort Worth he immediately wrote Arnold, reporting on his travels and on the

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<sup>55</sup> A corruption of hautbois, an early French name for the oboe.

first day of the retreat. Although his accommodations at Our Lady of Victory College were quite luxurious, he missed her. He was faithfully doing his exercises and felt “light,” “But there’s really nothing like your skilled hand!” (Gasson, [1949], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, August 8, [1949]).

Arnold had apparently arranged to attend Gasson’s retreat at the convent in New Orleans at the end of August, so they would not have long to wait. Nevertheless, in late August Gasson wrote her, “Do you think my writing is more relaxed or less tense than it was? And do you think I could be relaxed - missing you like I do? But then, I’ll see you in about a week, won’t I?” (Gasson, [1949], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, August 21, [1949]). He inquired how her hand was: “I’m sure it needs some of my therapy. I know I could do with some of yours” (Gasson, [1949], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, August 21, [1949]). He would meet her at the convent on the 30th: “I’m grateful, need I say, that you’ll be with me for retreat. It will be, as you say, the nicest kind of way to finish the nicest kind of summer I’ve ever had” (Gasson, [1949], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, August 21, [1949]).

At the end of this week Gasson drove her to the train station, and apparently had to take his leave more quickly than he meant to. He wrote: “But abrupt or not, the leaving did nothing to bring me joy. I began missing you even before I said good by so hurriedly. Write to me from B.M.” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 12, 1949). He continued, affectionately:

If there is anything I should have said before leaving, and didn’t say, tell me. I’ll hasten to say it, or should have done, or anything; remember my sievelike head in so many things. I need not tell you how much you are in my mind, my heart, my prayers. (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 12, 1949)

This visiting pattern repeated the following two years: Arnold arranged to visit Gasson in Mobile in January of 1950 and 1951. “Won’t it be wonderful?! I’m going to have my Christmas in the middle of January this year!!” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 15, 1950), Gasson wrote when Arnold told him of her plans. “I almost wish I could sleep for 3 weeks solid, so Jan 14 would come quicker” he wrote (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 15, 1950), and then impatiently on January 5, “Jan the 14 is a long time coming!!” (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 5, 1951). Instead of spending time at the convent in New Orleans together, Arnold would come to Mobile, then go to New Orleans herself because it would allow them “more time to ourselves and by ourselves” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 15, 1950). Once she left for the convent during her winter 1950 visit Gasson wrote her there:

I hope you are finding the time at the Rosary going by as quickly as it flew in Mobile - such swiftness is a matter for rejoicing, like I said. To say that I had much joy while you were here is a gross understatement - but then no words would suffice to say how much I enjoyed your visit. You’ll just have to come back to N.O. in the summer. (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 1, 1950)

Gasson said he wished he had more business that would take him to Chicago (where Arnold was now at Barat) but “In these times one mustn’t hanker for egg in his beer” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 15, 1950).

It was the summer of 1950 that Arnold and Joan would spend in New Orleans, ostensibly for Joan to take a summer philosophy class from Gasson at Loyola. But with the relationship the correspondence documents, clearly the primary motive was that it allowed Arnold and Gasson to

maximize their time spent together that summer.<sup>56</sup> This pattern of at least twice a year visits (January and summer) is accompanied in the correspondence by frequent expressions of longing to be together and (as soon as one visit was finished) yearning for the next visit. The sentiments “I wish you were here” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 27, 1949) and “Stay happy; we’ll be together before you know it” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 29, 1950) are typical.

Since the correspondence only extends until 1956, it is not clear how long this pattern continued. However, Arnold’s comment in her 1976 oral history interview that she “had been visiting at Spring Hill College in Mobile off and on for 20 years” (Arnold, 1976, p. 50), and her mention of her “annual Easter visit to Mobile” in her autobiographical writings (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 23) indicates that regular visits continued in some form in these years. With this in mind, Arnold’s move to Mobile in December of 1971 must have been a great relief—after more than 20 years of trying to coordinate visits, she and Gasson could finally be together as much as they liked.

### *Correspondence Patterns*

Part of the problem with living apart was that Gasson did not write nearly as often as Arnold wanted to hear from him. After a letter in which he exclaimed, “Dear me! if I don’t send this off now it will never get away; it has been in the machine a whole week now,” Arnold gently chided him:

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<sup>56</sup> As evidence of how involved Gasson was in the mundane details of Arnold’s life that summer, consider the following letter, written after Arnold and Joan left for Daphne: “Your last minute fears were all equally real!: Jaon's [sic] glasses and pen were in the grip; The back door was closed and locked!! I emptied the milk - but having had a worse tussle in the station wagon getting out than I had had getting in I was not in condition to eat the melon; I put it into the ice compartment (I didn't find a garbage can outside anywhere) so that if it spoils, it won't rot. As a reward I took a cake. I'll keep the keys until you get back - sure you'll have no need for them in Daphne” (Gasson, [1950], J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, [1950]).



What a life your typewriter must lead, immobilized for days with a half-finished letter stuck in its maw! It can't even bark to remind you that a letter really doesn't want to rest until it has reached its destination. (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949)

In October of 1949, Arnold wrote wondering if anything was wrong, since she had not heard from Gasson since their August New Orleans visit: "Bryn Mawr can't very well have disappeared from the Postal Guide" could it, she wondered? (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 22, 1949). But nothing was wrong, Gasson was simply busy: "The days go by so swiftly! Weeks go by in the interval from my sitting down to the typewriter and my landing in the chair there in front of it!" (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949). For one thing he was kept busy preparing new courses: "my 'good fortune' of the past dozen years is continuing: every semester I have at least one course that I have to cross-breed, plant and bring to fruit in one growing season" (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 15, 1950). He was also on a number of committees.<sup>57</sup> Life at Spring Hill seemed to be a constant stream of interruptions for the would-be letter writer:

I've been interrupted about every paragraph - so there is more than a chance I'll be like Admiral Rault, who read out a page on parasitology in the middle of his graduation address here last May, before he noticed that one manuscript had invaded the other. (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 3, 1950)

But Arnold was not to be put off by such humor; she felt insecure and lonely when Gasson didn't write. He tried to comfort her:

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<sup>57</sup> Gasson served as Chairman of the Department of History and Social Sciences, and was on the Library Committee and the Curriculum Committee. He was also one of the trustees of the college.

It is manifest that the matter of my letter writing (to you) is important - and it is also manifest that you do not have much confidence in me (at least not as much as I have in you) in the matter. Since actions speak more expressively than words I have only this to say just now: "Cheer up (and relax), you'll see.[""] (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 1, 1950)

Two letters later he blamed the holiday postal schedule (Mardi Gras, Ash Wednesday, and George Washington's birthday) on his tardy writing: "This time I stand before you an innocent man!!" (Gasson, [1950], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]). But it was no good, 7 months later he ended his letter:

Darling, if I don't send you this now, who knows how long it will be before [I] do!! It's been too long getting to start as it is. You might suggest to our Lady that She slip a atom bomb or something into my back pocket one of these days to jolt me out of the rut I seem to be in. (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950)

Although Gasson joked that his busyness "keeps me out of other mischief" (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 15, 1950) and that he was merely lazy ("Be of good heart, my dear, I ain't sick I'm just no account" [Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 4, 1955]), he was frequently unwell. His letters are full of reports on his latest medical tests, which consistently found him in "excellent condition from stem to stern; keel to mizzentop" (Gasson, [1950], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]), despite his chronic pains. He wrote in February of 1949,

As for the other doctors' reports they are all negative. As Sam Nadler elegantly put it: I am dying of improvement....The only therapeutic course prescribed is: "grin and bear it,

if it gets annoying take an aspirin.” So you see I’m quite in good shape. (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 7, 1949)

Three years later it was the same, persistent symptoms but no diagnosis: “To look at me, though, I never in all my life looked healthier, rosier and plumper. Ah! The irony of it!” (Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 11, 1952).<sup>58</sup>

Arnold was concerned at the inconclusive doctor’s reports: “after all, a pain is a pain, and there must be a reason for it” (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 5, 1949). She did all she could, which was recommend a program of vascular coordination (to treat tension) and homeopathic medicines, in which she was a great believer (Arnold, [1949], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 17, [1949]; Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 3, 1950). Gasson took to it enthusiastically, although in those pre-air conditioning days, the sweltering humidity tended to make him less faithful in his exercises than he meant to be: “I’m sorry that Mr. Lee did not live in the deep South for a half dozen couple of years, maybe he could have cooked up something to take care of the climatic components of coordination” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 27, 1949). He asked Arnold to hold him accountable to doing his exercises regularly: “Any verbal scourging you might think salutary will be accepted gratefully” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 27, 1949). So convinced was he of coordination’s effectiveness, he recruited six of his tense Scholastic students to learn the exercises under him.

When Gasson did not write regularly, Arnold worried that it was because he saw her as a “stern taskmaster”: “It hurts that you wouldn’t write unless and until you could report success. (There is another explanation, too, but I like it even less.)” (Arnold, [1949], M. Arnold to J.

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<sup>58</sup> At least some of the problem appeared to be an allergy to the dust and mold spores of Mobile; he felt better in Grand Coteau and Dallas but “two days back at good old Spring Hill and the old spell works its charm (or vise versa). When it isn’t blazing hot it is dripping wet here” (Gasson, 1956, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 10, 1956).

Gasson, November 17, [1949]). She certainly would not blame him for being unsuccessful, “I know just how much laziness it takes to do vascular relaxation and coordination” she wrote, especially with students and “in your climate” (Arnold, [1949], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 17, [1949]). She knew his selfless character too well:

And why should I blame you for preferring charity to what is, at most, only an obligation towards yourself? I have long had a suspicion that you won't be able to convince yourself of the importance of something that only profits yourself. It will be a lot easier now you have to keep coordinated so you can teach coordination. (Arnold, [1949], M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 17, [1949])

Gasson reassured her:

Please stop thinking that in this matter I am looking upon you as a task master. You ought to know it is not that. My long failure to write previously (just as at present) was due to sheer laziness with no kind of overtones in it, except perhaps that of: “I'll have more time tomorrow.” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949)

Although he and his students were rather inconsistent in their practice he had seen an improvement: “my health has been as good as my letter writing habits have been exasperating” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949). But regardless of any health improvements, the dynamic of Gasson constantly owing Arnold letters persisted. In 1956, near the end of the existing correspondence, he complained, “My typewriter is surrounded by a force field that requires an unbelievable amount of energy to break though; I slip up to it at those times when they shift generators” (Gasson, 1956, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 21, 1956).

### *A Mutually Supportive Relationship*

But as much as Arnold worried about his health, Gasson worried about her, too. He wrote: “Please, for yourself, stay out of drafts and don’t get your feet wet or catch cold or anything. Be good to yourself for me. I miss you. ...God bless you, I do” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950). Arnold had occasional attacks of thrombosis which required bedrest, and concerned Gasson. Upon learning that two of her daughters would be visiting, Gasson wrote that he was pleased because “you will be more closely supervised and won’t let thrombi or other debbils sneak up on you” (Gasson, 1956, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 10, 1956). Sometimes he was even more directive: “From the evidence given by the last two envelopes, I firmly believe that the next time you go to Alice’s you should stay the week, if she’ll have you. You have been working too hard and you need a longer leaf [sic] than just the week end” (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 11, 1954).

But it was not illness that Arnold primarily suffered from, but melancholy. There are regular references by Gasson to her “morale” (e.g., Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 15, 1952; Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 11, 1952) and even more frequent exhortations to “try to keep cheerful” (Gasson, [1949], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, Spring, Monday [1949]) or “Stay good & keep cheerful” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 12, 1949).<sup>59</sup> Or even the religious version “Sursum corda,<sup>60</sup> darling, the sun is bound to come out” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 18, 1950).

These were not blithe platitudes; Gasson seems to have a keen compassion for the hardship Arnold had experienced in her life. Although there is little mention of Arnold’s painful

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<sup>59</sup> This encouragement often took the form of reminders of how soon they would see each other again, as in “Cheer up, it’s less than two weeks” (Gasson, 1956, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 21, 1956).

<sup>60</sup> Sursum corda is the command “Lift up your hearts,” taken from the opening dialogue to the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer.

married life in the correspondence, Gasson does allude to it, introducing Saint Philippine Duchesne as “a sympathetic patron with a wonderfully understanding heart” who Arnold will love because “Mother Duchesne had her share and more of the back of the world’s hand in her life” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949). He shared in Arnold’s concern for her daughters, for example when 20-year old Katherine (her father’s favorite and the child that Arnold had always had least influence over<sup>61</sup>) was acting wild he wrote: “I can’t say you shouldn’t be so anxious or tell you not to worry because that kind of worry can’t be turned on or off like a spigot and secondly I am not very cheerful about Kay myself” (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 11, 1955). As always, he urged trust in Mary, with whom he fervently wished “Kay were better acquainted” (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 11, 1955).

A month later, when Arnold wrote with the upsetting news that Kay was pregnant, and seemed unconcerned about it, Gasson shared her distress and was supportive: “Your news about Kay distressed me terribly. I can well understand how shaken up it has left you” (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 2, 1954). He told her not to blame herself: “Just remember that all opportunity for any kind of satisfactory relationship with Marg and Kay was long ago denied you by their father’s pigheadedness,” and commiserated, “I do think it was an awfully awful

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<sup>61</sup> Katherine apparently had to give up the baby (Arnold, 1992, January 30). Arnold called Katherine my “Sorgenkind,” her problem child or source of concern; in an unsent letter to Katherine, Arnold wrote “You have always been a source of great concern to me” (Arnold, 1992, January 30). The letter gives some insights into the dynamics of Arnold’s separation: “You have had a raw deal, I will admit, being first Dad’s favorite and then being dethroned without any reason that made sense to you. But favorite or not, you were a very difficult child. As long as you were Dad’s favorite you were practically inaccessible to me. You knew quite well that I had no power, anything I would suggest, Dad would promptly veto, and you made full use of that knowledge. And after you fell from favor, you were so resentful that again I didn’t have the chance to be friends” (Arnold, 1992, January 30). Regarding leaving her daughters to pursue psychology, “What were my alternatives?” Arnold asked. “I know it was hard on all of you, but I know it would have been worse if I had stayed because Robert would have used you to fight me every step of the way. This way, at least, he knew he had got you all to himself and could, at least at times, be a reasonably good father” (Arnold, 1992, January 30). After Arnold’s move to Arizona in 1989, their relationship became strained—Katherine constantly borrowed money and never repaid it. While Arnold almost always gave the money (even helping Katherine buy a house), she resented being treated as a “cash cow” (Arnold, 1992, January 30). Katherine would commit suicide in 1995, an event that was deeply painful to Arnold (Arnold, 2014).

ending of a hard summer for you” (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 2, 1954). It was the jubilee celebration of the psychology department at Loyola, and Gasson wished he could be there, “not so much for the celebration but to be in closer support of you during these trying days. Maybe next week’s activities will serve to dull the edge of your worries and lift you a little out of your sadness” (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 2, 1954). He would be “praying doubly hard for you for our Lady to be extra special loving to you”; “Leave all your troubles in our Lady’s care and let her keep you happy. All my love and more than that all my prayers ily<sup>62</sup>” (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 2, 1954).

Their personalities (Arnold—intense, passionate, opinionated, apparently prone to depression and anxiety, Gasson—easy going, humorous, witty, apparently tending to overschedule himself and work slowly) seem to have been perfectly complementary. She spurred him into getting work done (“I had a most wonderful time with you - so wonderful the effect will last for some to come. I won’t begin to miss it until next week maybe. I even feel like working. No fooling!!” [Gasson, 1956, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 1, 1956]) and provided the intellectual stimulus sometimes lacking at Spring Hill. He was emotionally supportive (“Be good as you are. You are, you know” [Gasson, [1950], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]]) and calmed her down when she got worked up about someone who was getting psychology wrong. For example, early in their friendship after her cybernetics talk at Bryn Mawr, Gasson wrote a riled up Arnold: “Don’t get too upset about Cybernetics it will only sweep before it those who have closed their minds to anything but scientism”; in due time it would waste away into just one of the many ““superstitions” of science” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 14, 1949). He reminded her to pray about her worries and that he was praying for her: “I do not need to assure you that you are very much in my prayers and always will be. I commend you to our

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<sup>62</sup> “Ily” presumably means “I love you.”

Lady's care **every** day; She will continue to cherish you as She has done till now" (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 3, 1950).

Gasson's encouragement and support extended to Arnold's academic life. Much of their correspondence consists of his detailed comments on her work; she seems to have sent him whatever paper she was working on for comment. For instance in 1954 Gasson was reading an early chapter of *Emotion and Personality* and wrote, "it is good stuff. Most of what I note is tightening logical connections in your argument and cracking wider the loopholes in the other guys's" (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 11, 1954). But not only was Gasson a help in the editing process, he had encouraged her to start writing 4 years earlier:

Have you thought of resuming working on "Emotion" auctore MBA?<sup>63</sup> In spite of your feeling that you are not quite ready for writing the book yet, I would ardently urge you to go ahead and write it anyway. The experimental part of it is sufficient; the systemetization of it does not need to be perfectly complete i.e. you don't need to present a complete theory of all emotion. You have the foundation and the first storey; the upper floors are not going to change the architecture; you have enough for a serviceable building - start. (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950)

Of course the support was mutual, Gasson also benefited from Arnold's knowledge and help: when volunteering for a talk on psychoanalytic free association, he wrote: "I am going to lean heavily on you" "for that job" (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 2, 1951), and about a paper based on the transcription of a talk he had given, he wrote: "When the opus comes I'll edit it in small chunks and send the chunks to you for you to apply your blue pencil...and

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<sup>63</sup> Auctore is Latin for "one who gives increase" or "originator, author". MBA are Arnold's initials. A rough translation, given the ablative sense is "By author MBA."



maybe we will make something of it that reads as well as it sounds” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 18, 1950).

But evidence of Gasson’s support of *Emotion and Personality* from beginning to end is clear: in April of 1955 he wrote Arnold that he had not asked for a second retreat out East so that they might have more time together in Cambridge since “By that time we can give the ms of Emotions the final cent of polish” (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 5, 1955).<sup>64</sup> He was enthusiastic about the manuscript:

I pencilled in some doubts and objections people might have - most of them a matter of expression more than anything else - and if I have misunderstood some of the things you have said and queried them it only means that you should say them in a way to make the point quite clear to people less sympathetic (and knowledgeable) than me. I am not at all surprised that Allport and Cobb and all those people are impressed and praise your work as the definitive statement on the emotions. (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 6, 1954)

Reading between the lines of this letter it seems that Arnold believed that Gasson had played more of an authorial than an editorial role in the manuscript since he had introduced her to many of its ideas and had been a consistent intellectual partner in working out her ideas about emotion. But Gasson disagreed:

I don’t agree with you that a lot of it is going to be my stuff. Maybe I gave you some hints about how to fit experimental evidence together systematically but the whole works is going to be much more yours than it could ever be mine. What you say is going to be “what every woman knows” sort of, but the way you say it is the main thing and that is

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<sup>64</sup> Gasson even wished he could help more than he did: “I wish I could be of some help to you in Neurology. It is a pity that tedious chore of going over all the stuff must be done before you can find out how little of it is pertinent or useful for your purpose” (Gasson, 1953, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 29, 1953).

going to be all yours, darling. I wish I could say it the way you can. Your [sic] really are wonderful; and I'll expatiate on that theme Mar. 18. (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 6, 1954)

### ***Romantic Endearments***

Gasson's affection for Arnold sometimes interfered with his objectivity as an editor. He wrote Arnold about her first chapter of *The Human Person*, "Your chap I must read again (on first reading it sounds awful good but I remember that anything you write usually sounds wonderful to me ily so I got to be strict with myself)" (Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 22, 1952). Gasson's use of "ily" <sup>65</sup> here is a variation on "ily," which is a frequent part of his letters to Arnold. Given its usage here and elsewhere it seems clear that this was a crypto "I love you." Gasson first used ily in January 1952 (Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 28, 1952), and at about the same time began signing himself "Johnny" rather than "J. Gasson, S.J."

The abbreviation ily frequently occurs at the conclusions of letters, which Gasson had previously signed "In the Heart of Jesus" or "In Corde Jesu." Instead (or sometimes additionally) he ended his letters in the following ways: "All my love and more than that all my prayers ily" (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 2, 1954), "The mail is leaving ilyliy + Johnny See you in my dreams xx" (Gasson, [1955], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, [1955]), and "Sept 5 is so far away yet. I wish I were leaving here for you. However, it 'il [sic] come. Meanwhile ily" (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, August 19, 1955). The plain "ily" was occasionally

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<sup>65</sup> Presumably meaning "I love you so."

joined by variations such as “ilyimy Johnny”<sup>66</sup> (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 31, 1954), and the query “Ily lm? Johnny”<sup>67</sup> (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, July, 1954).

The use of ily is closely connected to his longing to be with her: “I do keep you much in my prayers May time fly until we want it to stand still. In Corde Jesu ilyl” (Gasson, 1953, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 19, 1953) and “The azaleas are gorgeous now here. I wish this were already next month, I’d be where I need to be. The oak is turned to pine. God love and bless you, I do, most strongously Johnny ily” (Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 5, 1952). “I’m still savoring your visit— I’ve not been as happy for I don’t know since when as when you were here. You’re wonderful andily” (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 4, 1954). “I haven’t begun to realize that you’re gone yet and I hope the “after-image” will stay long and strong to fill some of the vacancy. **Your visit was WONDERFUL.**<sup>68</sup> aily aly<sup>69</sup> and everything. Stay happy and be good As ever ily (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 31, 1954).

Gasson frequently ran together other words with ily, as in: “Relaxily. I very muchily ‘d like to have you hear [sic] right now. xLoveandprayersx Johnny” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 11, 1954). This could result in rather dramatic, passionate statements: “Stay happy and welcome the robins for me when they begin to arrive. Oh!! to be in NEW england now that April’s there! My rememberncesily are stillily green. iLY” (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 5, 1955); “Be good I long for Mar the 20ily moreily every minuteily. Love and prayers and everythingiLy, Johnny” (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 28, 1954).

Regardless of the exact construction of ily the sentiment was the same: “Be good. Give me some news about you and believe me ily to be ily mostly your ily or most yoursly x Johnny

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<sup>66</sup> Presumably “ilyimy” means “I love you, I miss you.” Elsewhere Gasson wrote “Dear Magda: - immmmy” (Gasson, [1953], J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, March [1953]).

<sup>67</sup> Presumably “ily lm?” means “I love you Love me?”

<sup>68</sup> In the original the bold text was in red ink.

<sup>69</sup> Possibly “always I love you” and “always love you.”

xx” (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 14, 1955). Johnny’s heart belonged to Magda. This interpretation of *ily* is supported by other romantic forms of address Gasson used for Arnold: “Dear heart:-” (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, July 6, 1955), “Leibchen:”<sup>70</sup> (Gasson, 1956, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 21, 1956), “Honey:” (Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 26, 1952), “Darling” (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, July 26, 1951), and “Magdut:- (being in the vocative, meaning a much loved somebody)”<sup>71</sup> (Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 5, 1952). Gasson was not shy about expressing his affection for Arnold (“I’ll think about what I’d like for my birthday - besides yourself, I mean” [Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 21, 1954]) or his longing to be with her (“I have you much in mind (I haven(t [sic] dreamed of you often yet) and find many occasions when I’d like to have you nearby. Just like you do - so with this unanimity of mind and affection I say *ily bis nachsten immer*<sup>72</sup> soon. Be happy and stay cheerful and *lm*.<sup>73</sup> Love and all and everything and stuff Johnny” [Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 11, 1955]). Gasson also emphasized how well they worked together. About a talk on mental health and mental illness that they would be giving jointly he wrote, “The first two talks will make a nice unit since I will talk about how we get into the troubles we have and you tell them what trouble is and how to get out of it. It will be a nice performance. But anything we do together is a nice performance” (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 6, 1954). Gasson hand wrote “*ily*” above the word performance. There are few surviving letters from Arnold in this period, but there is one that

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<sup>70</sup> A romantic endearment in German meaning “Love, little love, or sweetheart.”

<sup>71</sup> Likely the language of the term is Lithuanian. Gasson knew Lithuanian thanks to his parents (Gasson, 1952, J.A. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 5, 1952).

<sup>72</sup> “*Bis nachsten immer*” means “Until next [time] always.”

<sup>73</sup> Possibly “*lm*” means “love me” after Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*’s “Serve God, love me, and mend” (Act 5, Scene 2).

begins “Dear Johnny” and ends “Love and prayers, in Corde Jesu, M. Ily.” (Arnold, 1952, M. Arnold to J. Gasson. October 6, 1952), indicating that the practice went both ways.

### *A Secret Affair?*

These romantic endearments naturally raise the question of whether Gasson and Arnold had a sexual relationship. While there is no firm evidence of this there are some parts of Gasson’s letters that are ambiguous, and could be interpreted as indicating their sexual intimacy. In one note, in which he addresses Arnold as “Mielisusia (superlative degree of the adjective ily):- No joke” (Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 24, 1952), Gasson warns her: “This will be one of those nose-wrining [sic] ten-minute notes you don’t praise highly enough. Shh!!! I am helpless, so far way, to keep you from talking in my most effective way, so hush!” (Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 24, 1952). The letter ends “I wish I could do for you what would help you relax.” “Idlly”. Gasson’s frequent references to his longing to see Arnold could similarly be interpreted sexually. For example in one note he complains that his homing instinct will be goalless if she is not in Chicago, his “reasonably close surrogate for home,” when he passes by. He tells her to read between the lines and adds, “What I mean is, gee whizz, you know how it is with me” (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 20, 1951). In another letter he jokes that there is an ancient homeopathic remedy to cure his ills that his doctor has not thought of: “According to the rule: similia similibus curantur what I need is a little bit of the stuff that is most like me. Now what is the most like me in all the world? Gimme” (Gasson, 195[2], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 7, 195[2]). In one brief note he includes a Valentine’s Day-themed Peanuts cartoon and asks her to be his Valentine. He notes that he said mass for her on St. Valentine’s Day and says “While I was in bed in the hospital I missed you so much!!! I never,

anytime, missed you like that” (Gasson, 1956, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1956). He signs the letter “I love you. Johnny”.

This last is the only surviving letter in which Gasson spells out the phrase “I love you”—in every other letter it is rendered “ily” or some variation. Their adoption of this elementary code is another factor that could be read as pointing to an illicit affair (illicit in Catholicism both because of Gasson’s vow of celibacy and because they were not married). There does seem to be some attempts at secrecy in the use of the “ily” code—at least there appear to be ways in which Gasson tried to make “ily” not obvious from a cursory read of the letter. He frequently appended it to other words (as in “Relaxily”) or put it after his signature or at the end of his more acceptable farewell “In Corde Jesu.” In one instance he uses pen to turn a series of typewritten forward slashes and dashes into a practically invisible “ilyilyily” (Gasson, n.d., J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 15, n.d.).<sup>74</sup> Arnold seems to have been even more careful: her “M. Ily.” (Arnold, 1952, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 6, 1952) was rendered in light pencil and is spaced with the “M.” so that at first glance it looks like merely her signature. Arnold’s more cautious use of ily could be explained simply by her temperament but it could also be that there was greater need for secrecy in her letters, which could conceivably be opened and read by one of Gasson’s superiors. Of course, a desire for privacy in correspondence is a common sentiment and does not necessarily indicate that Gasson and Arnold were having an affair.

But there is good reason to doubt that Gasson and Arnold had a sexual relationship: Arnold’s surviving daughters, Joan and Margaret believe their relationship was “totally platonic”

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<sup>74</sup> This is prefaced in the letter with “Be good, my dreams have been very soothing lately- and yours? Here’s all that I can reach out to you at this distance” (Gasson, n.d., J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 15, n.d.).

(Arnold, 2014), meaning nonphysical. As evidence Joan Arnold<sup>75</sup> offers conversations that she had with her mother that indicated that Arnold found this physical abstinence difficult. Robert Arnold proved to be as inconsiderate and authoritarian a father as he had been a husband and so Gasson became “sort of like a second, a loving father, which my father was not” (Arnold, 2014) to Arnold’s daughters.<sup>76</sup> But when Gasson was physically affectionate with them, Arnold talked to her daughters, asking them to tone it down, and “expressed how hard it was for her to see that, because she said if they had been affectionate like that, they couldn’t have maintained the platonic relationship, that was the implication of that” (J. Arnold, personal communication, January 14, 2015). As far as Joan Arnold saw they were “strictly hands off,”<sup>77</sup> and Joan indicated that it was the fact that they had such a strict physical boundary that allowed them to be so romantically demonstrative in their letters (Arnold, 2014). According to Joan, the Jesuits knew about Arnold and Gasson’s close friendship, and did not care, since close male-female friendships were allowed as long as they remained non-physical. Indeed Catholicism has a tradition of intimate spiritual friendship between male and female monastics, most famously St. Francis and St. Clare—the founders of the male and female Franciscan orders. St. Francis and St. Clare were deeply affectionate in a way that appears romantic, but as sociologist Francisco Alberoni explains, while these relationships have “all the characteristics of falling in love,” those

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<sup>75</sup> In weighing Joan Arnold’s evidence, it should be noted that she seems to have little invested in the idea that the relationship was platonic. Joan is herself Buddhist with little stake in Catholic sexual morality and seems unperturbed by the prospect that Gasson and Arnold might have had an affair.

<sup>76</sup> As surrogate father Gasson wrote to and visited Joan in her convent in upstate New York multiple times, seemingly more frequently than Arnold herself. It seems Gasson tried to encourage Arnold to show her love for her daughters; in one case he urges a visit to Joan instead of to himself at Christmas: “Before I end let me say quietly in your ear as we are talking side by side: Even if Menlo Park is very far, farther than Mobile, and a trip would be expensive, Joan would love very much to have her mother for her Momma’s birthday and for Christmas. You would stay at the Convent, which would be some saving. And maybe coach rates on the plane have gone down; they were talking about that in the early fall. And I love Joan, too, and am partial to gladdening her heart” (Gasson, 1955, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 4, 1955).

<sup>77</sup> This does contradict references in the letters to Gasson and Arnold touching each other as a part of coordination exercises (see Gasson, [1949], J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, August 21, [1949]; Gasson, [1949], J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, August 8, [1949]).

emotions are “sublimated or transferred to the Godhead” (1979, p. 190). Given that Gasson and Arnold held traditional Catholic views on sexuality,<sup>78</sup> it seems most likely that their relationship followed this pattern of cross-gender platonic friendship.

### ***“Very Much in Love”***

But while they seem to have been physically abstinent, there is little doubt that emotionally Gasson and Arnold were in love. “Of course she was very much in love with John Gasson” (J. Arnold, personal communication, January 14, 2015), Joan Arnold told me, recalling that while Arnold loved her daughters, she had trouble expressing it, and “Her great love was Father Gasson” (Arnold, 2014). Arnold adopted Gasson’s close friends Wilbur and Solange Woods and Father John Moreau as her own “and she was so happy with them, it was like she was more happy with them than she was with her children, I mean she just lit up” (Arnold, 2014). Arnold’s student Eileen Gavin confirms Joan’s account, calling Arnold and Gasson “very close” with a “strong relationship” (E. Gavin, personal communication, January 2, 2013). Gavin remembers Gasson as “extremely bright” and “very funny,” who with 25 years of Jesuitical education “knew Aristotle inside out,” which made him a good match for Arnold: “He was sharp, she wouldn’t have tolerated him otherwise” (E. Gavin, personal communication, January 2, 2013). In fact they were so close that when she saw Arnold and Gasson together at the 1972 APA meeting in Hawaii “they struck me as an old married couple” (E. Gavin, personal communication, January 2, 2013).

But perhaps the best testimony about Arnold and Gasson comes from Arnold herself. In her unsent letter to Joan on the subject of friendship, Arnold spent some time discussing Gasson,

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<sup>78</sup> That is, they would have seen sexual relations outside of marriage a mortal sin that needed confessing. However Joan Arnold remembered that Arnold “used to complain that going to confession, she had nothing to confess...But she went to confession every week. I think she went down to a month, and I think John finally told her don’t bother” (Arnold, 2014).



“the best and truest friend I ever had or expect to have” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992). Later in the letter she reflected on friendship in general, but clearly had Gasson in mind:

Friendship, the love between two persons, is the best there is in life, it is an earthly image of God’s love for us and our love for him. Even a sexual relationship needs the particular kind of love we call friendship; but friendship does not need sex. If sex is added, it becomes something different, more hazardous, perhaps more fulfilling, I don’t know. You said once, Darling, that the ideal is a relationship on all levels, spiritual, psychological, sexual. I would certainly say that a friendship needs not only companionship on the emotional, intellectual, physical level, but on the spiritual level as well, in fact perhaps that is the most important ingredient of all. (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992)

Arnold’s valuation of the different elements of friendship can help to interpret her relationship with Gasson. Perhaps it is not surprising that after her disappointing experience with Robert, she was not inclined to emphasize the sexual element in a friendship, but regarded the spiritual as the most important. This is consistent with Gasson’s letters, in which the affectionate and romantic are intermingled with the spiritual: “Dear heart:- May the Lord be sweet when He comes to you on Christmas morning. It would be nice if I could be there with Him to Help Him” (Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 19, 1952). Gasson emphasized that their bond was a result of their mutual identity as members of God’s family. In a note Gasson sent to Arnold after she had left him to make a retreat at the Convent of the Rosary, he wrote: “I need not say that the week here was more than somewhat empty. I feel fully rewarded knowing that your heart is more light and your mind joyous. We both are more closely bound to our Blessed

Mother” (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 2, 1951). Many of the letters similarly demonstrate Gasson’s tenderness for Arnold, and his sincere wish for her spiritual and emotional wellbeing.<sup>79</sup>

### *Academic Collaborators*

Gasson’s love for Arnold translated into much practical help in her academic work. Arnold herself wrote of Gasson: “Throughout the years I have known him, he was always ready to help me untangle the snags that inevitably turned up in working out my theory and writing my books” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29). She did not have colleagues who shared her academic interests, she wrote, and Gasson (in addition to Line and Allport at earlier stages in her career) “made up for my isolation” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29). Or, as Gasson put it, “Stick with me, kid, and you’ll always have a head to beat knots on” (Gasson, n.d., J. Gasson to M. Arnold, Monday, n.d.).

Gasson’s support was particularly important as Arnold faced the sometimes hostile secular academic world. Even when academic environments were friendly, as Harvard was, Arnold needed the reassurance of Gasson’s identical convictions:

It’s peculiar, I enjoy the atmosphere (in the best sense of the term) and yet am painfully aware that I am skating on thin ice or rather, that the pleasant talk at lunch, etc. is strictly on the surface, that there don’t seem to be any roots to their convictions, almost like that stf<sup>80</sup> story where the earth suddenly disappeared as firm ground because somebody or other forgot to keep it in mind. So you can see, I do need a boost, it’s almost as if the ground were disappearing from under me on both sides, though for different reasons.-I

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<sup>79</sup> This selflessness could result in him rejecting Arnold’s offers of support, as in this letter written after he was hospitalized: “Empathy mein fuss [my foot]!! You know perfectly well that had I inked even a little coax for you to come you would have put yourself into a swivet and into three kinds of debt and in the end both of us would have been less happy about it. There wouldn’t have been enough time; you would have been behind in your work and worried; we would have had some several kinds of frustration. No, dear, it would have cost you too much” (Gasson, 1955, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 30, 1955).

<sup>80</sup> “stf” might refer to St. Francis of Assisi.

wish I could see you just for half an hour, just to convince myself that there is some firm ground left. (Arnold, 1952, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 6, 1952)

The fact that they were of the same mind meant that their academic collaborations were harmonious, and sometimes it was impossible to separate out their contributions. About a chapter of *The Human Person*, Gasson wrote:

I have added about ten pages to the Doing part and fitted them in quite slickly. I am not sending it [the manuscript] back with this because I want to finish reading it to my class - I was so amazed at when I read it Friday evening, I could not believe I had done it. An it was so good I could not deny it to my boys. I could not distinguish the parts you wrote and my parts... /Dear, dear, you and me belong so much together!!/ (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 21, 1951)

This is as true for the modern day reader as it was for Gasson: Gasson's influence on Arnold's thinking seems to have been so pervasive that is very difficult to separate which ideas were originally his and which hers.

In addition to editing her writing, Gasson was a behind-the-scenes adviser and cheerleader for Arnold's career progress. Even though he would have enjoyed having Arnold close by, he advised her to resist Reverend Mother Lepeyre's efforts to recruit her for a college at Grand Coteau. She ought not to sell her talents short: "But for you, it is clear, at least to me, the greater Service of God requires you elsewhere. What you have to offer for the spreading of God's kingdom is your pen (or your typewriter) as well as your teaching ability; neither of these would be used to much avail at G.C." (Gasson, [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 11, [1953]). And he appears to have been behind her request for a raise at Loyola: "administrative policy may deny you that, but you ought to get adequate compensation or salary...I do not think it is merely

the desire to ‘get ahead’” (Gasson, [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 11, [1953]). When Reverend Mother tried to convince Arnold that her phlebitis attack was a sign that God wanted her at Grand Coteau, Gasson did his best to relieve her of any guilty feelings: “For myself I am loath to believe that your illnesses and stuff are special signs or workings of Divine Providence. They all fit into a pattern, sure, but I think a quiet willingness to God’s way is better than searching events for signs of God’s will” (Gasson, [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1953]). He scoffed, “It would take more than fleabicitis [sic] to make me think that the Lord is calling you to G. C. (Gasson, [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1953]). Eventually he tried to protect Arnold from emotional distress by telling Lepeyre to stop crowding her (Gasson, [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 11, [1953]).

Despite Gasson’s contributions to her academic work, he seems to have done his best to dodge compliments and instead affirmed Arnold’s abilities. About his lack of knowledge of physiology he wrote, “I am glad, incidentally, that you have found a section in my “encyclopedic” knowledge that contains not even all that is wrote in the ordinary books. It is nice to be able to bow to you and it be acknowledged in good earnest” (Gasson, [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March [1953]). Gasson’s modesty surfaces elsewhere in the correspondence; he writes after a visit to Reverend Mother, “One thing, though, when you two talk about me please, as you love me, refrain from referring to me as ‘the holy man’; it is so much easier to live up to ‘Grumpy’<sup>81</sup>” (Gasson, [1950], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]). This was no false modesty; Gasson really did not want credit when it might detract from Arnold or hurt her chances of success. When Arnold was applying for a Guggenheim Fellowship in order to finish writing *Emotion and Personality*, Gasson told her not to mention him in the application:

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<sup>81</sup> Grumpy seems to have been one of Arnold’s nicknames for Gasson (Arnold, 1951, M. B. Arnold to J. A. Gasson, November 14, 1951; Gasson, 1951, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 14, 1951).

I am dubious about the value, in the eyes of the Guggenheim people, of Spring Hill as a place and Me as a guide in the projected work on the emotions. Both are unknown in the wider academic world. Of course, Fr. Yancy, S.J. biologist at Spring Hill, is on the board of Directors of the National Science Foundation by Pres. Trueman's [sic] appointment. This is some indication that the Hill is not just some jerkwater diploma mill. But my name will not be found in any list of American Men of Science. That could be a risk, hein!?<sup>82</sup> I'll give you my full support; physical moral and metaphysical (and how!!). However you[r] referents will vouch for the merit of the project and your competence to carry it through, whatever the caliber of your consultants. (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 14, 1951)

Gasson seems to have had very little ego invested in academic recognition; his primary interest seems to have been in supporting and promoting Arnold.

### *An Academic Couple*

It is enlightening to consider Arnold and Gasson's relationship in the context of other academic couples in psychology in this period.<sup>83</sup> They seem to have been one of the rarer mutually supportive scientific couples, using the analysis of *Creative Couples in the Sciences* (Pycior, Slack, & Abir-am, 1995). For much of the 20th century, when two psychologists married each other most frequently the male partner received more recognition and achieved more academic success. Many of these marriages originated in student-instructor relationships in which the husband was the instructor and the more senior professionally, and this inequality often persisted throughout their careers. In the first half of the century it was common for the

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<sup>82</sup> Hein is a French meaning huh or eh.

<sup>83</sup> While Arnold and Gasson were not married, the previous section demonstrates that they functioned as a couple, practically speaking.

wife to subsume her own academic interests to her husband's,<sup>84</sup> either by giving up her psychological work completely to tend to domestic duties (e.g., Ethel Puffer Howes) or by continuing only as his assistant (e.g., Lucy May Day Boring). Indeed, in many cases the wife's intellectual contribution went unacknowledged, as books which were in fact collaborations were published under the husband's name only (e.g., Ada Allport,<sup>85</sup> Lillian Moller Gilbreth,<sup>86</sup> Carolyn Wood Sherif<sup>87</sup>).

Sheldon Gardner in "On being a psychologist's wife" (Stevens & Gardner, 1982a) catalogs the many benefits that male psychologists historically<sup>88</sup> received from being married—all manner of unpaid personal and professional labor. Even couples with more egalitarian relationships generally prioritized the husband's career over the wife's, leading to less optimal employment and professional development for her (e.g., James and Eleanor Gibson). Male psychologists rarely recognized this operation of privilege, and remained unaware of how they contributed to the marginalization of their wives' work.

In this context Arnold and Gasson's relationship is remarkable. Not only did Arnold *not* sacrifice herself for Gasson's career but she actually seems to have been the greater beneficiary of support and labor. Joan Arnold confirms this impression:

He was the one that she talked over every book with, you know, all her ideas with, and he encouraged her. [It was] really quite extraordinary because he was always second fiddle, he had no desire to be first. So he appreciated her and encouraged her; she could talk about difficulties. (Arnold, 2014)

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<sup>84</sup> Of course this tendency continues in modern academia.

<sup>85</sup> Gordon Allport called Ada his "constant and loyal collaborator...from start to finish," yet did not consider her a co-author (Nicholson, 2003, p. 208).

<sup>86</sup> See Graham (1999).

<sup>87</sup> See Sherif (1983) for Carolyn Wood Sherif's discussion of her decision to give Muzafer Sherif the credit for her work.

<sup>88</sup> This effect likely persists to the present day. See Townsend (2013) for evidence that the careers of male, but not female, historians benefit from being married.

Indeed the correspondence shows Gasson frequently offering emotional and professional support to Arnold: he routinely talked through her thinking and writing, happily allowed her to use his ideas without crediting him, edited her work, provided career advice, and encouraged her. This was particularly important given that Arnold was often professionally isolated and faced all the challenges of a woman in mid-century psychology, such as “colleagues [who] didn’t appreciate her” (Arnold, 2014). Gasson’s completely supportive attitude is also remarkable given the rhetoric that was common in Catholicism in this period. Catholic writing in the 1950s tended to reinforce traditional gender roles by emphasizing the Virgin Mary’s surrender to God’s will and women’s role in the continuation of human existence through childbirth (Henold, 2008). One Catholic author went so far as to claim that “woman primarily denotes not personality but its surrender” (Henold, 2008, p. 26). As Stephanie Shields puts it, Arnold converted in a “particular historical moment when being a Catholic woman came with expectations of being deferential, self-sacrificing, and invisible” (Shields, 2010, p. 3).<sup>89</sup> But while Gasson frequently invoked the Virgin Mary in his letters to Arnold it was not to curtail her career but as a devotional practice that allowed her to let go of worries and emotional pain.<sup>90</sup> Far from asking Arnold to prioritize his needs or feeling jealous of her greater professional eminence, Gasson promoted Arnold and celebrated her achievements (see Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949; Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 8, 1950).

Indeed it hardly seems going beyond the evidence to argue that Gasson played the traditional “wife” role—he voluntarily engaged in supportive personal and professional labor

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<sup>89</sup> This seems not to have been Arnold’s experience as a Catholic woman. However her daughter Joan did have a negative experience as a Catholic nun which reflects these dynamics. Over the course of several years her superiors ignored her requests to pursue graduate studies and continued to give her menial teaching assignments instead. Arnold was reportedly “very upset” and angry about this, and offered to do anything she could to help make graduate school possible for Joan, including paying for her tuition. Eventually, in 1966, with Arnold’s support, Joan left the order and stayed with her mother before enrolling at Harvard Divinity School (Arnold, 2014).

<sup>90</sup> For example: “we’ll do like always: kiss our Lady’s hand lovingly and say: ‘Mama, you fix’” (Gasson, [1950], J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]).

that allowed Arnold to flourish; he was an uncredited collaborator, willing to sacrifice his own professional advancement for Arnold's sake.<sup>91</sup> This gender role reversal seems to have been made possible in large part because of Gasson's faith. In becoming a Jesuit at age 18 Gasson had renounced possessions and achievement and devoted his life to the service of God.<sup>92</sup> Gasson operated on the Christian principle: "he that loses his life, shall find it"<sup>93</sup> (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 14, 1948), following Christ's example in renouncing his own claims and engaging in a sacrificial, selfless love. Thus Gasson's religious beliefs allowed him to transcend and reject the sexist gender dynamics of his day. According to Joan Arnold, this selfless love was especially meaningful to Arnold because of her past experience with Bertl: "I think for her, because of my father, it was so good for her to feel appreciated by men" (Arnold, 2014). The contrast between Bertl and John Gasson is indeed striking. Where Bertl had behaved selfishly at every opportunity and ultimately abandoned Arnold, her priest friends (Gasson and later Father Dougherty) cherished and nurtured her. Joan Arnold noted how the family pattern of abandonment repeated itself,<sup>94</sup> but in contrast "the priests never left" (Arnold, 2014). Thus the stable, nurturing relationship with Gasson can be seen as an unexpected benefit of Arnold's conversion. As a woman, an immigrant, and a divorcee in science, Arnold was vulnerable, and

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<sup>91</sup> In their five official collaborations (counting the two chapters of *The Human Person* and the book itself as separate collaborations) in only one (Gasson & Arnold, 1963) is Gasson listed as first author. By the standards of the time it would have been much more typical to have the male psychologist listed first or at least to alternate first authorship across projects. See Rodkey (2010) for a discussion of "charming stubbornness," a strategy that many second generation women psychologists deployed to avoid threatening their male colleagues. In the case of co-authorship, this entailed flattering and charming their collaborators into cooperation, and might involve giving them first authorship. In contrast Gasson seems to have voluntarily performed some of the less glamorous but necessary academic tasks in their collaborations; for example he assembled the Index to *The Human Person* (Gasson, 1953, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 17, 1953), a task that took some time (Gasson, 1954, J. A. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 4, 1954).

<sup>92</sup> Jesuits make a vow of perpetual poverty, chastity, and obedience, in addition to pledging to submit to the pope's assignment of them to the work that will best further the church's mission in the world. These vows were reinforced by a daily regimen of spiritual practices, such as the early morning mass offered by the individual Jesuit. It is clear that Gasson adhered to this tradition; his letters frequently make mention of the dilemma of finding a place in which to celebrate mass while traveling.

<sup>93</sup> See Matthew 10:39.

<sup>94</sup> Bertl's father and brother also abandoned their wives.



her conversion to Catholicism only made her more marginalized. But Gasson's supportive friendship acted as a protective factor, allowing her an academic productivity and creativity that would not have been possible alone.<sup>95</sup> Her claim that meeting Gasson was "the greatest stroke of luck of all" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 28-29) was no exaggeration.

### **The Catholic World**

While Arnold and Gasson's relationship was a contributor to Arnold's success as a psychologist, what of Arnold's conversion to Catholicism itself? To some extent it seems to have had a negative impact on her career. Stevens and Gardner argue that Arnold's decision to teach at Catholic colleges is one of the reason her achievements "never received the public exposure that they deserve" (1982b, p. 126). Further, Stephanie Shields has applied the concept of

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<sup>95</sup> Indeed, Arnold missed Gasson terribly after his death. Several months after his death she wrote his brother, "I still miss him a lot. I am working on copying some articles into the computer and doing a lot of revising, and he isn't here to give me his opinion" (Arnold, 1988, M. 1988, Arnold to Louis [Gasson], September 3, 1988). To other friends she wrote, "I still can hardly believe John is gone. When the phone rings I still expect his voice; he called me a lot the last few months, he was so lonesome. Now it's I who is lonesome" (Arnold, 1988, M. Arnold to Lem and Jane, June 6, 1988). Gasson had been in great pain during his last months, with the doctors unwilling to allow him morphine too soon, so Arnold knew he was "far better off," "freed from all pain and infirmity," "yet that doesn't lessen my sense of loss. It has been wonderful having him as a friend for more than forty years, but now that the reality is gone and only the memory remains I feel bereft" (Arnold, 1988, M. Arnold to Marnee and Bob, June 6, 1988). The way Gasson spent his last days testifies to their intimate friendship. Once Arnold moved to Mobile in 1972, Gasson spent much of his day at her house, gardening and mowing her lawn (Arnold, 2014). In 1985, when Gasson's cancer began to affect his daily life, he received special permission from his Jesuit superiors to move into Arnold's house, so that she could care for him. He lived with Arnold until she was no longer able to manage his care, then he was moved to hospice care at the Little Sisters of Charity, where Arnold visited him frequently. She wrote: "It is very hard to see John suffering so much and see him getting a little worse every day. He is often confused, and lonesome most of the time. But he is still gentle despite of the pain. When I think of the extraordinarily brilliant man he was - and now it is an effort for him to answer a simple question" (Arnold, 1988, M. Arnold to Lem, April 4, 1988). Arnold's letters underline both his painful decline and the importance for them of shared religious practice: "gradually he was stripped of everything: he became unable to walk or stand and that meant he couldn't say Mass any longer; we had said the Rosary together, but that also become too much for him" (Arnold, 1988, M. Arnold to Lem, June 3, 1988). He could no longer read and was also losing his hearing "so one has to shout almost, and speak very distinctly, which does not make for intimate conversation. So, all that is left is to sit quietly, speaking to him in the heart and from the heart" (Arnold, 1988, M. Arnold to K. Arnold, April 15, 1988). Things were not always so peaceful: eventually Gasson forgot why he was in hospice and every time Arnold visited he pleaded with her to take him home with her. Gasson died on a Sunday morning, May 29, 1988, after Arnold fed him his last meal; "the aides told me he was asking for me, so I rushed in and he recognized me and smiled at me" (Arnold, 1988, M. Arnold to Lem, June 3, 1988). At the end of 1988 Arnold wrote, "Christmas was difficult for me, the first Christmas without him. I know that friendship does not end just because one friend has died. Where he is, there is no time or space, so there are no limits to love. It's only we, still earthbound, who suffer from the impossibility to see, hear or touch those we have lost" (Arnold, 1988, M. Arnold to Lem and Jane, December 31, 1988).

intersectionality to Arnold's life, noting that her identity as a Catholic compounded the discrimination she experienced as a woman and vice versa (Shields, 2010). We can see intersectionality at work earlier in Arnold's life in her comments about why she was thwarted in her academic ambitions at the University of Toronto: "I was an immigrant, a woman, and worst of all, I was separated from my husband" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 9). The combined effect of these factors was bad enough, so on face value it seems strange that Arnold voluntarily risked further marginalization by joining an unpopular and scientifically-suspect religious minority. Understanding just what Arnold lost and gained in converting requires a consideration of the Catholic world as it existed at mid-century.

Although Catholicism was considered one of the three great American religions, at the beginning of the 20th century it held a low social position relative to Protestantism and, at times, to Judaism.<sup>96</sup> In large part this was due to multiple successive waves of immigration that, beginning in the 1820s, brought more and more Catholics to America, and meant that they entered society "at the lowest occupational, intellectual and economic levels" (O'Dea, 1956, p. 263). These immigrants tended to stay in major cities in enclaves of their religious and ethnic peers, which both preserved elements of the "old-country" culture and supported the newcomers' assimilation into American culture (O'Dea, 1956; Orsi, 1988). These "ghetto-like" communities were obvious "to the unsympathetic eyes of the natives" (Herberg, 1955/1960, p. 141), and Catholics, particularly Irish Catholics, were the target of harassment and persecution. The anti-Catholic activities ranged from deadly violence in the mid-19th century (by the nativist Know-Nothing Party), to boycotting and harassment in the 1920s (led by the Klu Klux Klan), to regular

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<sup>96</sup> It is difficult to compare the discrimination that Jews and Catholics experienced in this period. Certainly there was significant antisemitism during these years. However, the Jewish community was on average better educated and wealthier than the Catholic community, and thus had access to certain opportunities denied Catholics as a result of their higher social status.

slander and stereotyping of Catholics in the popular press throughout the first half of the 20th century (Smith, 2010; Sparr, 1990). A consistent theme in this anti-Catholic sentiment was foreignness—it seemed incompatible to be both Catholic and American (Appleby & Sprows Cummings, 2012).<sup>97</sup> Democracy and Catholicism were seen to be “diametrically opposed: one must and will exterminate the other” (Beacher, 1855, p. 29).

Although there was definite improvement over the course of the century, in the late 1940s when Arnold joined the church, negative views of Catholics were still quite common. In 1949 Paul Blanshard published *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, which painted a picture of a vast Catholic conspiracy that threatened the American way of life (Blanshard, 1949). As the best-seller status of Blanshard’s book indicated, anti-Catholic attitudes were still widely accepted, even in liberal, educated circles. Intellectual independence was a particular sticking point; the fear that presidential candidates Al Smith (campaigning in 1928) and John F. Kennedy (elected 1959) would not be free from Papal interference captures the then-common attitude toward Catholic participation in society.

This attitude made life difficult for the would-be Catholic academic (Schmiesing, 2002).<sup>98</sup> That this dynamic was at work in Arnold’s career can be seen from a story she tells in her autobiography of a “friendly” Smith College psychology professor (who had not heard the news that Arnold had converted) who talked to her about a Catholic who was on faculty in the social science department of another school. Arnold’s friend remarked that this was an “impossible appointment because a Catholic could not possibly be objective. I did not want to embarrass him, so did not tell him that I was Catholic, too” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 15). Arnold shares

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<sup>97</sup> See Davis (1960) for an analysis of how 19th century anti-Catholic propaganda served to reinforce common American values.

<sup>98</sup> See Schmiesing (2002) for a discussion of the dilemma of dual identities faced by Catholic intellectuals in this period.

this story to illustrate her assertion that “the prejudice against Catholics was quite common in academia” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 15). No doubt Arnold’s career was negatively impacted by such attitudes; however, most instances of discrimination were covert. At the very least Arnold thought it limited her employment options: “As soon as I became known as a Catholic, it would be the end of invitations from prestige universities” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 15).

However bleak as such widespread anti-Catholicism made the Catholic world look, in 1948 there were also encouraging prospects for the would-be convert. With the end of mass immigration in the 1920s, the church suddenly had time “to take breath and take stock” and became increasingly concerned that it had “counted for astonishingly little in the formation of the American intellectual climate” (Brogan, 1941, p. 65). “Who are the great modern Catholic writers and thinkers?” (Sparr, 1990, p. 10) the church’s critics asked, and unfortunately Catholics had very few exemplars to hold up. This was problematic because it made for a poor witness; “the conspicuous dearth of scientists among the Catholics” could be read by those outside the church as evidence “that the tenets of that Church are not consonant with scientific endeavor” (Lehman & Witty, 1931, p. 549).

The causes of such a lag in cultural influence were clear to Catholics: in the past century the church had been “so absorbed in providing religious training and elementary education for the stream of immigrants which never seemed to slacken that it found neither the means nor the leisure to foster literature and the arts in more than a perfunctory way” (Ellis, 1969, p. 114). It was not too surprising that out of the 1,189 eminent scientists listed in the 1927 *American Men of Science*, only 3 were Catholic (Lehman & Witty, 1931). American Catholicism initially had virtually no upper and middle class membership; even its clergy had been recruited from the uneducated lower classes (Herberg, 1955/1960). However, the church possessed a tool with

which “to transform the proletariat into a bourgeoisie; to produce a faithful laity” (Waugh, 1949, p. 149): Catholic education. “Never in the history of the Christianity, including the height of the Middle Ages” one contemporary sociologist wrote, has the church had “an organized education program which even remotely compares with that in the present United States” (Herberg, 1955/1960, p. 154). Catholic colleges were bolstered after WWII, since there were no restrictions on how the G.I. Bill benefit was used—veterans could use their benefit to attend Catholic institutions and did (Edmondson, 2002).

Along with this new “zeal for intellectual excellence” (Ellis, 1969, p. 118) and for developing first-class Catholic writers and thinkers, came a wave of self-criticism (Halsey, 1980). John Tracy Ellis of the Catholic University of America, in his seminal 1955 article “American Catholics and the Intellectual Life,” called Catholics’ record of intellectual achievement deplorable, and attributed the failing not only to the disadvantages of immigration, but also to a “self-imposed ghetto mentality” (1955, p. 386). True, an “aloof and unfriendly” intellectual atmosphere had prompted Catholics to “assume the attitude of defenders of a besieged fortress” (1955, p. 354) in the past, but the current climate no longer justified such “separatism from their fellow citizens of other religious faiths” (1955, p. 385). Besides, good scholarship would inevitably escape such bounds: “the inescapable and exacting labor of true scholarship,” when “intelligently directed and competently expressed” will “win its way on its own merits into channels of influence beyond the Catholic pale” (Ellis, 1955, p. 386).

Ellis also critiqued Catholic colleges for their “mad pursuit of every passing fancy that crossed the American educational scene” (1955, p. 374), which had resulted in an imitative “athleticism, collegiatism, vocationalism, and anti-intellectualism” (1955, p. 375) and an “absence of a love of scholarship for its own sake” (1955, p. 376). Catholic schools tended to

overemphasize moral development at the expense of the cultivation of intellectual excellence, Ellis said, and as a result most of the few remarkable Catholic scholars were adult converts whose intellectual stature owed nothing to Catholic education. Now that Catholics had “moved up the economic ladder a rung” (1955, p. 363) and were becoming integrated into society in other aspects of life, Ellis argued, there was no excuse for Catholics not being at the vanguard of intellectual movements. Given the “radical change from the moribund philosophy of materialism and discredited liberalism” (1955, p. 387) that seemed to be underway in academia, Catholic scholars had “a unique opportunity” (1955, p. 388) to contribute to the good of the nation through their scholarly vocations.

As negative as Ellis’ assessment of Catholic intellectual life was, his critique was indicative of a sea change in American Catholicism. Even if the situation was as bleak as Ellis painted it, Catholics were concerned by their lack of intellectual accomplishments and were taking action. Ellis’ speech coincided with and even postdated a number of Catholic initiatives aimed at bolstering Catholic scholarship.<sup>99</sup> In 1938, for example, the symposium “Catholics and Scholarship” had brought together learned Catholics from many academic fields for a discussion on how Catholicism could help its scholarship better match its population (Sparr, 1990). In fact “American Catholics and the Intellectual Life” was itself first delivered as a speech at the Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs (founded 1946), an initiative which was intended to mobilize American Catholic intellectuals (Kugelmann, 2011). In the years between 1900 and 1950 there was a proliferation of Catholic intellectually-oriented voluntary associations. Halsey (1980) lists nearly 20 Catholic institutions formed in this period, ranging from the Catholic Press Association (1911) to the Catholic Theatre Conference (1937), the

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<sup>99</sup> Indeed, Schmiesing (2002) argues that Ellis’ self-criticism ignored the progress that had been made prior to the 1950s, and was less the beginning of a movement than sign of a movement in progress.

Catholic Economic Association (1941) to the Catholic Poetry Association of America (1931). In fact, the American Catholic Psychological Association (founded in 1948) was the last addition to the list.

So Arnold's conversion was actually well-timed; in the 1940s Catholics were emerging from of the ghetto,<sup>100</sup> and excited about intellectual engagement. While "discrimination against Catholics to keep them out of posts of leadership, regardless of their merits" (Ellis, 1956, p. 148) was not quite over, there was increasing acceptance, and Catholics were gaining recognition outside the fold.<sup>101</sup> This was a period of Catholic literary success, for example, with Flannery O'Connor, Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Walker Percy attracting secular audiences with writing that was distinctively Catholic (Elie, 2003). In his account of the Catholic literary revival that took place between 1920 and 1960 Sparr identifies the literary flowering as a part of a broader Catholic intellectual awakening after 1935, due in large part to the "the creative changes within the neo-scholastic synthesis" by Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson (Sparr, 1990, p. xiii). Their innovative adaption of the philosophy of Aquinas to modern contexts and challenges provided the Catholic intellectual world with "a maturity and scope by 1940 that was absent in

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<sup>100</sup> Such as it was, see Marty (1982) for the view that the description of Catholic "ghettos" was an exaggeration. Kugelmann (2011) notes that, while there was indeed some hyperbole in the language of "ghetto," Catholics did generally experience themselves as a group apart. Probably it is most accurate to understand Catholic usage of "ghetto" as a part of an ongoing debate within the American Catholic Church as to their proper relationship with society (Kugelmann, 2011).

<sup>101</sup> This was also the result of larger societal trends. The end of open immigration in 1924 coincided with a more unified definition of whiteness (under the designation "Caucasian") which created increased inclusion of non-Anglo Saxon whites, many of whom were Catholics (Frye Jacobson, 1998). Prior to this, with the explosion of immigration from Europe (notably Irish Catholics), the category of whiteness had fractured into a plurality of white races, that comprised a fluid hierarchy of desirability. After 1924 formerly "probationary" whites became increasingly seen as unambiguously white (defined against non-European immigrant groups), a development which allowed Catholics to be more fully integrated into society. In this same time period the increase of mass consumption (Cohen, 1990) and the social mixing that happened in the workplace (Barrett, 1992) also helped Catholic immigrants become more fully "American" (Orsi, 2012b). Strong loyalty to ethnic merchants and social groups, which, along with the church parish, had previously contributed to a separate identity and place for urban Catholics, began to wane (O'Toole, 2008). This integration came at a cost—as Catholics became more suburban and "American" at mid-century they also became less distinctively Catholic; there was an erosion of confidence in the Catholic Church's "alternative cosmology" and moral authority (Appleby & Sprows Cummings, 2012, p. 166). The popular religious practices that had once been a unifying social force in ethnic Catholic communities declined (Orsi, 1985) but also altered in order to endure in modern forms (Orsi, 1996).

1920” (Sparr, 1990, p. xiii). Thomism provided “philosophical support for Catholic activism” (Halsey, 1980, p. 167). This activism was aimed at spiritual and cultural renewal: “Outward looking and apostolic, it [anti-ghettoism] attacked Catholic mediocrity, isolationism, and exclusiveness while urging Catholics to exert an influence upon society and culture at large” (Sparr, 1990, p. 164). Arnold joined in this movement; her ACPA presidential speech in 1958, “The Psychologist in the Intellectual Apostolate,” drew on Ellis’ themes, applying his argument to psychology. While acknowledging the sad underachieving and “barren decades” of the past, Arnold called upon Catholic psychologists to witness to the world by producing academically excellent work: “Now is the time we can and should stand our ground in the arena of scholarship and science” (Arnold, n.d. i).

In fact Catholic anti-ghettoism changed in the 1950s, in part thanks to successful Catholic organizing in earlier decades. In the 1950s and 1960s many young Catholics began to be uncomfortable with any efforts that seemed separatist, even those which had been done with evangelistic aims in mind. Instead they advocated for complete integration with secular society, on a more pluralist model (Sparr, 1990). These concerns would, of course, be addressed by Vatican II in the 1960s, when a host of sweeping changes to the church were announced, many of them aimed at making it more outward focused and accessible. Many previously essential Catholic practices, such as regular confession, fell out of fashion as a result, and the church lost much of its cultural distinctiveness (O’Toole, 2004).

But in the meantime, in pre-Vatican II Catholicism, there was still a clear division between the religious and secular worlds. From within the church, this was not generally seen as negative but “a proud and glorious isolation” (Halsey, 1980, p. 180). As Catholic writer Hilaire Belloc expressed his feelings about the church: “outside it is the night” (cited in Halsey 1980, p.



14). That is to say, the church's orthodox creeds, philosophical riches, and aesthetic beauty illuminated it from within, creating such a glow that in contrast the secular world was but unattractive shadow. This attitude was bolstered by the rediscovery of the Church's history and philosophy. Gilson, at the 1929 opening of the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies at St. Michaels College in Toronto, expressed the enthusiasm for the past that characterized Catholics in this period: "A Catholic thinker should be, as it were, so wholly permeated with medieval thought that anything he says or does, even though it looks or is new, should be but a natural, immediate, and spontaneous expression of that everlasting tradition itself" (Halsey, 1980, p. 15-16). A love for the medieval certainly put Catholics out of step with modern society, never mind the belief that medieval thought had modern applications. In a world in which Darwinian evolution and higher criticism held sway, the reality was that "The whole temper of American life was, in fact clearly opposed to many of the fundamentals of Catholic thought" (Ellis, 1969, p. 114). But despite this Catholics were confident in their dissenting view, and followed in G. K. Chesterton's footsteps by asserting: modern thought is in chaos, man is restricted by materialism, and Christian orthodoxy is the way to reality (Jackson Lears, 1981; Sparr, 1990).

This sense of separation was not just in intellectual matters, but was reinforced by a common Catholic culture. "To be a Catholic, particularly in Protestant America, made one an expert at building the limiting, excluding fence" (O'Toole, 2004, p. 93) and distinctive devotional practices, such as praying to the Virgin Mary, provided one such boundary. Such practices set Catholics apart but also bound them together. Communal participation in a shared religious culture, such as writer Garry Willis remembers from his Catholic childhood: "prayers offered, heads ducked in unison, crossings, chants, christenings, grace at meal; beads, altar, incense, candles..." (Willis, 1972, p. 16-17), reinforced belief, and emphasized the sense of

mystery and awe. In this thriving community, Arnold found comfort, as she participated in soul-satisfying rituals, found intellectual companions, and learned to speak a common language of faith. While the language of “ghetto” may exaggerate the degree of separation that was common, still the Catholic world was distinct and offered unique “comforts of spiritual sociality” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948) to its members.

Yet emphasizing the separate nature of pre-Vatican II Catholicism risks falling into the traditional secularization narrative. This was still an era of widespread religious belief. It has been argued that the early 1950s “represent an all-time high in religious identification” (Herburg, 1960, p. 46), and religious expression in the public square was in many ways still acceptable in a way it is not today. Gasson’s letter to Arnold telling her who would be the audience for a popular talk on mental health they would be giving in Spring Hill in 1954, demonstrates the share in public discourse Catholics enjoyed:

The lecture will be designed principally for the Catholics of the city but there will be a number of specially invited non-catholic people: some of the brass from Keesler Field and the Air Force Training Command, city officials, and professional people of some prominence. (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 5, 1954)

While this complex picture of post-war Catholicism does not definitively answer what impact Arnold’s conversion had on her career, it does hint at some reasons that Catholicism would have been attractive to her. By the time Arnold converted, the Catholic Church in America was making a concerted effort to escape the ghetto and achieve academic eminence in a variety of fields, including psychology. As the church wrestled with how to respond to the challenges of modern society and science, a reinvigorated neoscholasticism provided a foundation for creative cultural engagement. While the state of Catholic education remained in

many ways sub-par (as Arnold unfortunately learned firsthand), Catholic intellectuals were at least distressed by this reality. Catholic belief also offered an attractive, confident philosophy that was a viable alternative to the “night” of secular theories, such as materialism, which Arnold found intellectually dissatisfying. Thus, in converting, Arnold was not simply opening herself up to another type of discrimination, but joining a lively world full of intellectual life and possibility.

### **Summary**

According to Arnold’s former student, Sol Littman, in her first years of teaching Arnold was something of a sensation. Sol recalled his first encounter with her as “Spitfire”: “In the Fall of 1945, Magda Arnold was the talk of the University of Toronto campus. In her second year of teaching she had developed a reputation as a boldly original, controversial psychologist who was challenging the university’s staid, mechanistic, behaviorist psychology faculty” (Littman, n.d.). It was not until many years later that Littman and his wife encountered her again, after her retirement to Tucson. He reflected:

Curiously, the Magda Arnold we knew in Toronto was not the same Magda we came to know in her later years in Tucson. The courage and idealism were still there, but the ginger, the combativeness were gone. They were now replaced by a serenity and grace that a hard life and difficult circumstances had prevented her from achieving earlier. It was clear to us that Magda had won her battle for recognition as a scholar and a woman and was prepared to move on. (Littman, n.d.)

This serenity seems to have been not only the effect of a long life, but also of Arnold’s faith, the result of her conversion. Arnold’s unsent letters to Joan in which she reflected on her experience of God show that she continued to believe throughout her life. Arnold wrote that she

felt very close to God during Mass, “But he seems still with me when I get home and in fact, seems in the background all the time” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, January 10, 1992). In fact she had “a sense of the presence of God, not just in prayer but practically throughout the day” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, March 19, 1992). There had been a real change from the anxious, bitter<sup>102</sup> woman to one who talked about love—her love of God and people:

I feel close to God also when I am with people I love...But even with people I don't know that well, that sense of his presence is not lost; it happens particularly when I bring communion to people who are homebound. It is such a mystery that faith is so strong that a small wafer can mean so much. Apparently, to us sense-bound mortals, something we can see and handle carries more conviction to the invisible godhead. (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, January 4, 1992)

Here we can see that conversion offered her not just a set of beliefs but the reformation of her personality.

The faith that she found that evening at EPA and in conversations with John Gasson was distinct from that of her childhood. Rather than judgment there was divine love; rather than ignorance and backwardness there was intellectual brilliance (as demonstrated by Gasson) and the resources for her further challenge and growth. She noted the contrast when she reflected about her Tucson church, St. Cyril's:

I also find that the more that feeling of unity grows, the more I enjoy the incredible diversity of people. It's perhaps most noticeable at the children's Mass. At the kiss of peace, there is such a joyful noise as all the kids try to get to their friends and parents (such as are there) to hug them and shake their hand. I hear that some people want the

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<sup>102</sup> Arnold's daughters recalled her as being quite bitter: “she was bitter for years,” about Bertl's treatment of her, according to Joan Arnold (Arnold, 2014). However, in her old age “all the bitterness from the past had just dropped away, just tremendous sweetness” (Arnold, 2014).

noise reduced - but that kind of exuberance is wonderful. I am sure the kids will remember those Masses all their lives with joy, not like the hellfire and damnation Masses I remember. (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 19, 1992)

Then too her conversion gave Arnold a sense of purpose, something to work for. She was no longer working for her own academic ends, but was part of a larger plan. She expressed this in terms of vocation, no doubt intentionally evoking the religious monastic meaning:

I know I have always felt I have a vocation, a vocation to find out as much about the mind as I can; and later, when I became acquainted with St. Thomas, to use his work as a basis for a theory of mind. That's the way I formulated it to myself, even at times when "mind" was about as unpopular as it could get. (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, March 19, 1992)

It is clear that the resources of Thomistic philosophy and Arnold's intimate friendship with Gasson led to an expansion of her intellectual horizon and allowed her to be much more innovative than she would have been on her own. Her faith both clarified her vocation and gave her the tools to pursue it.

Of course this sense of purpose came at a cost. Arnold's conversion also resulted in her exile from much of secular psychology; she became a wanderer in a once-familiar landscape. As she wrote to Gasson, this could result in a feeling of professional estrangement: "But at bottom, of course, I am as much of a stranger here as I was last year. Fortunately I know now that it's not Bryn Mawr that is at fault, it was the same at Harvard, and would be the same at any other secular college" (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 22, 1949). This sense of not belonging and not being able to teach as she wanted would drive Arnold to work at Catholic colleges, career moves which were both helpful and detrimental to her career.

But ultimately, as a result of her conversion, Arnold cared less about her career. Instead she cared about pleasing “God, the spirit, the creator and maintainer, the all-in-all” (Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, April 5, 1992). Her career or reputation were nothing compared to going where she could bring most glory to God. Or as Arnold might herself express it, in the language of her emotion theory, her conversion brought about a reorientation of her desires, the creation of a better self-ideal. In her conversion Arnold had learned to love the good:

I remember saying to John once: “Why was I named after a sinner?”<sup>103</sup> and he answered, “When you were named for her, she wasn’t a sinner, she was a saint. ...She loved much, and she loved the one whom no one could love enough.” ...it was Jesus whom she loved as soon as she saw him. It is said that we needs must love the good; and it is so true.

(Arnold, 1992, M. Arnold to J. Arnold, April 5, 1992)

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<sup>103</sup> The name Magda is derived from Magdalene. According to scriptural accounts Mary Magdalene was one of Jesus’ followers and was present at his crucifixion and was one of the first to see him after his resurrection. Her identification as a “great sinner” comes from her traditional association with the unnamed woman who anointed Jesus’ feet with costly perfume in Luke 7:36-50. Two of the gospels mention that Jesus cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene.

### Chapter 3: Magda Arnold's View of the Human Person

On June 9, 1951, Magda Arnold sat down at a typewriter in the Barat infirmary to write to John Gasson: "All kinds of last-minute gremlins have been busy the last days - I was laid up with a flu' cold and in the meantime the community went into retreat with some of the preparations for the workshop still in the air" (Arnold, 1951, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, June 9, 1951). She was busy, she reported, trying to recover from her cold, listen to as much of the retreat as she could over the infirmary loudspeaker, whittle down her overly-long second workshop paper, and make last last-minute arrangements for the workshop, which was to be held at Barat in only a week's time.<sup>1</sup> Gasson, too, was struggling to be ready; he would be coming straight from giving two retreats in Louisiana and he had the opposite problem: an overly condensed paper with "numerous multitudes of footnotes" (Arnold, 1951, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, June 9, 1951) that needed expansion in order to be comprehensible. The problem was the breadth of the task, he explained:

The longer I work on the three papers for the workweek the harder I find it to confine myself to a manageable area. It is so easy to go scooting off into clarification of basic misconstructions in contemporary "basic science", which are only remotely relevant to Psychology -but none the less relevant. (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 13, 1951)

He had all the material for his first two papers in mind, he was just having trouble getting it "on paper in connected discourse" and told Arnold, "Honey, I'll just have to talk it to you some night early on, with a recorder present" (Gasson, [1951], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 1, [1951]).

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<sup>1</sup> The Workshop participants were due to arrive Sunday, June 17th and the sessions would begin on Monday the 18th.

In organizing the workshop—The Workshop in Personality—Arnold and Gasson had set themselves a formidable task. Though the workshop’s participants were not well known outside the Catholic world, they aimed at nothing short of the complete reform of psychology. The workshop was meant to be a shot across the bow of secular psychology, a sign that Catholics were capable of first-class work and a resounding critique of mainstream psychology’s haphazard theoretical foundations.

Though their correspondence does not provide an origin point for this idea,<sup>2</sup> the topics of the workshop are clearly an outgrowth of Gasson and Arnold’s earlier dialogue—captured in their letters—about the problems of contemporary psychology as a science, and their alternative vision for the field. Gasson summed up one of the major themes of the workshop in his comment on a draft of Arnold’s introductory talk: “Psychology needs something different from mechanism and positivism for theory; certainly Personality psychology does” (Gasson, [1951], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 1, [1951]). Providing this alternate theory was what the workshop was intended to do, with a Catholic view of humanity to serve as the foundation for personality theory.

But with psychologists’ imagination so thoroughly dominated by a secular perspective Arnold and Gasson had their work cut out for them in their attempt to stake new ground and choose fresh terminology that did not reproduce materialist errors. In his comments on Arnold’s proposed introduction, Gasson apologized that he did not have much to say because “my mind has been so distracted by a flock things”—but he did object to her positive use of the word anthropomorphic to describe Catholic psychology, warning her that it had “been degenerated to a sneer word” (Gasson, [1951], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 1, [1951]). She responded “I know the term “anthropomorphic” is a sneer word but I want to point out that it would be a term of

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<sup>2</sup> The idea likely emerged in conversation during their visit in the summer of 1950 or January 1951.



contempt only if man were a machine and not a human being - but he is a human being so why shouldn't we use the term?" (Arnold, 1951, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, June 9, 1951).

This definition of man as a human being rather than a machine or animal was at the heart of the workshop and the book that would result, *The Human Person* (Arnold & Gasson, 1954a). By defining the human person as possessing powers that distinguished them from the animal world, Arnold and Gasson were rejecting the premise of most of 20th century psychology, and even contradicting many of their fellow Catholic psychologists, who embraced the animal-human continuity in the form of Freudian psychology and behaviorism. Although Arnold later saw *The Human Person* as a "first attempt" and "uneven" (Arnold, 1976, p. 49),<sup>3</sup> it is the work that best captures Arnold's radically human-centered psychology.

The choice of title was meant to indicate this distinctively Catholic emphasis on the unique quality of human persons. However it also marks the work's kinship with the then embryonic humanistic psychology movement (Decarvalho, 1991; Grogan, 2013; Milton, 2002). It is important to note that while the workshop was framed in terms of opposition to scientific psychology orthodoxy, Catholics were not alone in these reactions, but a part of a larger backlash. Other voices, including secular voices, would join them in critiquing psychology's denigration of human abilities. Later, post-Vatican II, Catholic psychologists would form alliances with secular movements such as humanistic and phenomenological psychology that seemed compatible with their own commitments. The beginnings of this trend are visible in *The Human Person*'s positive evaluation of Rogerian nondirective<sup>4</sup> therapy and Frankl's logotherapy.

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<sup>3</sup> Arnold's later objections to *The Human Person* appear to be primarily stylistic: "I was still at the time writing pretty much in jargon and I have really made a very determined attempt to get off from the psychological jargon and write just good English" (Arnold, 1976, p. 49).

<sup>4</sup> Rogerian nondirective therapy later became known as "client-centered" therapy (Kugelman, 2011).

The two main themes of *The Human Person*, however, are psychology's unstated and often unjustified theoretical commitments, and the distinctive characteristics of human beings. Tracing these threads—expressed in the workshop, *The Human Person*, and Arnold and Gasson's correspondence— in order to see how Arnold's faith shaped her vision for psychology, will be the focus this chapter. We will ask what Arnold's Catholic-informed perspective meant for how she responded to various trends in secular psychology, and attempt to discover her standards for judging the worth of a given psychological theory or therapy.

There was never simply one Catholic psychology—by mid-century psychology was culturally influential enough that Catholics thinkers and leaders had to respond to it, which produced a varied assortment of different approaches to secular psychologies. These ranged from enthusiastic acceptance (see Barratt, 1924) to outright condemnation (see “Sheen denounces psychoanalysis”, 1947). Most common, however, was a more nuanced engagement with psychology, in which some ideas were critiqued and others were embraced. In order to understand where Arnold's approach fits within this range, we must first turn to a brief review of Catholic involvement with psychology.

### **Catholic Psychology at Mid-century**

The best place to start in describing Catholic involvement with psychology is perhaps with an event that took place in 1948, the same year as Magda Arnold's conversion experience: the founding of the American Catholic Psychological Association (ACPA). The group had begun to materialize 2 years earlier, when, at the 1946 APA meeting in Detroit, a small group of Catholic scholars had agreed that there was need for a Catholic psychological organization, and appointed a committee to identify prospective members (Reuder, 1999). Letters were sent out inviting the potential members to a lunch meeting on the subject to be held during the 1947 APA

convention and at the meeting there was consensus among the 110 attendees that such a group was needed. The following year the ACPA was born, its stated aim “to interpret to Catholics the meaning of modern psychology and to advance its acceptance in Catholic circles” (Kugelmann, 2000, p. 234).

Understanding just why modern psychology needed interpreters and increased acceptance in the Catholic world requires delving into late 19th century papal politics. There are two major developments in Catholicism around the beginning of the 20th century that help explain why “the pursuit of scientific psychology very early became associated with defection from the Faith,” as one ACPA president put it (Gannon, 1960, p. 62). These two developments, in fact closely related, were the Thomistic revival and the modernist crisis.<sup>5</sup>

The Thomistic revival began in 1879<sup>6</sup> when the newly elected Pope Leo XIII called for a return to the teachings of Thomas Aquinas in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (Kugelmann, 2005). Aquinas’ synthesis of Aristotle and Christian thought was to provide theologians and philosophers with a robust framework with which to respond to and incorporate modern developments—Neoscholasticism.<sup>7</sup> As Kugelmann (2011) notes, this movement had two faces. On the one hand, it could mean a real openness to modern science, as demonstrated by the actions of Monsignor Désiré Mercier. In 1882, after meeting with the pope and Neoscholastic scholars, Mercier divested himself of his clerical garb and went to Paris to study under Jean-Martin Charcot in what was a clear “statement of his confidence in the Thomistic system to incorporate modern science while stripping it of its misguided philosophical presuppositions” (Kugelmann, 2011, p. 39). On the other hand, this embrace of a medieval philosopher at the

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<sup>5</sup> This account of Catholic engagement in psychology draws heavily on Kugelmann’s scholarship, particularly Kugelmann’s *Psychology and Catholicism* (2011).

<sup>6</sup> As Kugelmann (2005) notes, this was the same year that Wundt founded his Psychological Institute in Leipzig.

<sup>7</sup> Previously Cartesian philosophy had been most popular with Catholics (Kugelmann, 2011).

dawn of the 20th century was also a reaction to the anti-religious elements of the Enlightenment, particularly the French Revolution, and an assertion of Papal authority in the face of diminishing Papal political power (Kugelmann, 2011).<sup>8</sup> As such, Neoscholasticism could be used to quash dissent and views with even a whiff of heresy.

This was what happened with the modernist crisis.<sup>9</sup> The modernist crisis is difficult to summarize, as “modernism” remained a poorly defined concept, and Papal denouncements of modernists did not name names.<sup>10</sup> It is not even clear that there was in fact a rash of modernists; the crisis seems to have been precipitated by a single French priest and scholar, Alfred Loisy, who was using the new method of historical criticism to interpret the scriptures. But the controversy expanded to include other modern beliefs; later George Tyrrell, an Irish Jesuit accused of modernism, would define his objectionable beliefs as “the possibility of a synthesis between the essential truths of his religion and the essential truth of modernity” (Tyrrell, 1910, p. 5). At issue, according to the 1907 papal decree *Lamentabili Sane Exitu* was the idea that “Scientific progress demands that the concepts of Christian doctrine concerning God, creation, revelation, the Person of the Incarnate Word, and Redemption be re-adjusted” (Pope Pius X, 1999a).

Eventually the crisis culminated in 1910 with the papal letter *Sacrorum Antistitum*, which contained an oath against modernism, which among other things, affirmed that God “can be known with certainty by the natural light of reason from the created world”—a thoroughly Thomistic view—and denounced as heretical the idea that “dogmas evolve and change from one meaning to another” (Pope Pius X, 1999b). Catholic clergy and seminary professors were required to sign this oath. Although most quietly acquiesced, there were a few who refused, such

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<sup>8</sup> In 1870 the modernist Italian nationalists had annexed the Papal States (O’Toole, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> The dates of the pontificate of Pope Pius X (1903-1914) roughly correspond to the dates of the modernist crisis.

<sup>10</sup> See O’Connell (1994) for a history of the modernist crisis.

as George Tyrrell, who wrote of a papal encyclical condemning modernism as “the synthesis of all heresies” (Pope Pius X, 1907, p. 221) that while it “tries to show the modernist that he is no Catholic it mostly succeeds only in showing him he is no scholastic” (Tyrrell & Petre, 1912, p. 337). But such open opposition to papal decree was not tolerated; Tyrrell was excommunicated, and when he died a few years later in 1909, he was refused burial in a Catholic cemetery.

The modernist crisis left Catholics who wanted to pursue the new science of experimental psychology in an awkward position. Although officially psychology as a science was endorsed under the “neo” portion of the Neoscholastic revival,<sup>11</sup> psychology’s modernist character meant it could easily fall foul of the bishops who had been instructed to be on the watch for “whatever savors of Modernism” (Pope Pius X, 1907, p. 232).<sup>12</sup> This was further complicated with the equation of Scholastic theology with orthodoxy. In elevating Aquinas’ philosophy over any modern philosophy or science, Pope Leo XIII both established Thomistic philosophy as the coin of the realm, and emphasized philosophy’s proper place as the handmaiden or servant of theology. So in the years following the modernist crisis Catholic psychologists were aware that, to be acceptable, their psychology ought to be Thomistic in perspective, recognizing its subservient place to philosophy, which in turn was subordinate to theology.

This was the context of the founding of the ACPA. The comments recorded in the 1947 meeting that led to the group’s founding demonstrate that their efforts were often viewed with suspicion and hostility by lay Catholics and leaders alike. Sister Annette Walters CSJ, for example, said that she hoped that such an organization might make it “respectable for a religious to be a psychologist” (Roberts, 1947, p. 12). Reminiscing about the 1940s, Virginia Staudt

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<sup>11</sup> Scholastic refers to philosophy in the school of Aquinas, neo refers to the best of modern knowledge that was to be incorporated into the scholastic system (Kugelmann, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> As Kugelmann (2011) notes, while psychology was not condemned in the encyclicals, there were two negative mentions of psychology in relation to modernism in *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (Pope Pius X, 1907).

Sexton recalled: “At that time Catholic psychologists were engaged in a major struggle to extricate and emancipate themselves from the domination of Catholic philosophy and theology. Some Church leaders had a strong bias against psychology; others lacked the psychological sophistication to appreciate the way in which psychology could assist them” (Sexton, 1986, p. 76).

The ACPA was borne out a frustration with this state of affairs and a conviction that there was nothing dangerous about Catholic engagement with psychology—thus the organization’s dual goal of interpreting modern psychology and advancing its acceptance. However, one of the major concerns the potential members of the association voiced about organizing was that it contributed to a ghetto mentality, rather than alleviating it: “if it should lead to any isolation, then surely we do not want it” (Sister Mary Roberta Roberts, 1947, p. 9). Rather than staying in the ghetto, the ACPA “intended to lead Catholics out of a Neoscholastic ghetto and into the larger domain of natural scientific psychology” (Kugelmann, 2011, p. 279).

But in attempting to join scientific psychology, Catholic psychologists faced the additional obstacle of secular psychologists suspicious of their motives. This was not a new state of affairs. In 1891 Mercier had written: “Catholics live *isolated* in the scientific world; they are marked by suspicion and treated with indifference; their publications have great difficulty crossing the fortifications of the believing world, and, if they do cross it, they are usually received without effect” (Mercier, 1891, p. 344).

Despite the efforts of Catholic scientists in the intervening 50 years or so, at the founding of the ACPA Catholic psychologists still faced challenges in having their work respected outside the Catholic fold. The main question was whether their religious beliefs interfered with their intellectual freedom, “whether their philosophical position predetermined the results of their

empirical work” (Kugelmann, 2011, p. 93). Even someone with as impressive a pedigree as Thomas Verner Moore<sup>13</sup> was suspect. Reviewers of his 1939 text *Cognitive Psychology* were dismissive because of his Catholic identity, asserting that “it must be a foregone conclusion that all factual evidences coordinate with the original scholastic premises” (Kantor, 1940, p. 249). As a result Catholic psychologists “were thus forced to steer a wary course between a veritable Scylla and Charybdis,” that is, between secular psychologists suspicious of faith and Catholics wary of psychology (Moynihan, 1963).

Evidence of these pressures can be seen in Henryk Misiak and Virginia Staudt’s *Catholics in Psychology* (Misiak & Staudt, 1954). The book was intended to inspire Catholic students to become psychologists, and so held up the earlier Catholics who had achieved some level of eminence in the field, particularly Mercier, to show psychology’s compatibility with faith. They were also clearly aware of another audience and addressed themselves explicitly to “non-Catholic psychologists who sometimes wonder if faith is not a hindrance or a source of prejudice in scientific pursuits” (Misiak & Staudt, 1954, p. xiii). For the benefit of both audiences Misiak and Staudt attempted to establish that there was no conflict between religion and science by arguing that religious belief has no impact on science.<sup>14</sup> They wrote: “There is no Catholic psychology any more than there is a Catholic biology, Catholic physics, or Catholic medicine” (Misiak & Staudt, 1954, p. 13). Or as E. G. Boring put it in his forward to the book, the authors “conduct a gentle propaganda, for they believe strongly that there is no conflict at all

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<sup>13</sup> After receiving his PhD from Catholic University in 1903 Thomas Verner Moore studied in Wundt’s lab, worked in Oswald Külpe’s laboratory and received his MD in psychiatry with Adolf Meyer. He began using Spearman’s statistical techniques quite early, and although Thomistic in his philosophy, Moore’s approach to psychology was very much in keeping with the psychological trends of the time.

<sup>14</sup> Note the similarity to John F. Kennedy’s defensive separation of his beliefs from his politics in his speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association during his 1960 campaign.

and that the way to prove the fact of harmony is to show that Catholic psychologists do not feel the conflict and that their research does not show it” (Boring, 1954, p. xi).

This rather weak defense of Catholic involvement in psychology can be explained by the intense pressure Catholic psychologists felt to gain acceptance on secular terms. It is helpful to think of the psychologists of the ACPA as recent “immigrants” to the field, whose first concern was to be assimilated into mainstream psychology (see Gleason 1989, p. 67). The ACPA’s requirement that its members also be members of the APA, indicates how much professionalization was a pressing concern for Catholics. In this context, imitating secular psychological forms was an appealing strategy because it offered a measure of protection against accusations of bias, since as members of a marginalized group, originality was dangerous (Kugelmann, 2000).<sup>15</sup>

However, some Catholics braved the displeasure of mainstream psychology and attempted to articulate an “integration” of faith and psychology. For our purposes it is helpful to make a rough division between the Catholics who were assimilationists (“Catholics in psychology”) and those we might call integrationists (those producing a “Catholic psychology”). Although the division between these groups was fluid, and integrationists held a wide range of views about how faith ought to affect psychology, they were united in the conviction that being Catholic *ought* to have some impact on their psychology. There seems to have been a later trend towards integration, made possible by Catholics becoming more comfortable and accepted in psychology. In 1953 ACPA members approved the addition to the statement of purpose of the phrase “to work toward the integration of psychology with Catholic thought and practice”

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<sup>15</sup> Alternately we can differentiate between “Catholics in psychology” and “Catholic psychology.” That is, there were many Catholics in psychology, only some of whom produced a distinctive “Catholic psychology.” The advantage to this conceptualization is that not every Catholic psychologist had a desire to integrate their psychology and faith, and thus did not integrate because of inclination, not because of outside pressure.



(Kugelmann, 2000, p. 237). But by and large, integration attempts remained exceptions to the rule. At the 1960 ACPA meeting LeRoy Wauck bemoaned this state of affairs: “We do not have many who are capable of teaching a really integrated approach nor are there very many striving to achieve such an integration” (Wauck, 1962, p. 25).<sup>16</sup> Far more common was the sort of Catholic research programs that mimicked secular psychology (such as Catholic University), or which applied the insights of secular psychology to Catholic concerns (many of the presentations at the ACPA meetings fall into this category). This deficit kept Catholics from making a distinctive impact on secular psychology; in 1962 Misiak sadly assessed the Catholic contribution to American psychology as “meager and insignificant” (1962, p. 21).

Following Vatican II, as Catholics increasingly became well integrated into all areas of American life, the role of the ACPA became less clear. By the mid-1960s, the usefulness of the APCA was being questioned. In a 1967 piece in the *Catholic Psychological Record* Daniel O’Connell, S.J.<sup>17</sup> and Linda Onuska claimed that the ACPA “represents a divisive, sectarian, ghetto mentality on the American scene” and accused the group of retarding “the weaning of scientific from philosophical psychology among Catholics” (Connell & Onuska, 1967, p. 34). Also there were social trends that made Catholic psychologists less willing to toe the church line: when the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* was published in 1968, 60 ACPA psychologists signed a statement asserting that the encyclical’s ban on artificial birth control was based on “a false psychology of man” (Statement on Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, 1969).<sup>18</sup>

There was enough uncertainty about the value of the ACPA that the group conducted a series of surveys of its members. In 1970 the membership of the ACPA voted to drop the

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<sup>16</sup> In 1963 Wauck would join Arnold at Loyola.

<sup>17</sup> S. J. meaning Society of Jesus, the Jesuit order.

<sup>18</sup> I have not found any place where Arnold comments on this or any of the many Vatican II changes. Since she was a more traditional Catholic, she was unlikely to disagree with *Humanae Viitae*, or to be excited by Vatican II reforms.

Catholic from their identity, changing their name to Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues (PIRI), and becoming an ecumenical group, similar to other APA interest groups such as the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI). It was as one of the original founders, William C. Bier, S.J. acknowledged: “The need for Catholic solidarity which gave us strength in 1947, began to sap our strength after 1967” (Bier, 1975, p. 53). The group completed its transition to mainstream psychology in 1975 when they were approved as an APA division, Division 36.<sup>19</sup>

This history gives us some context for understanding Arnold and Gasson’s perspective in *The Human Person*. The workshop and the publication of the book took place in the same era that ACPA was founded, and shared the concern to be taken seriously by their secular colleagues. Indeed, Joan Arnold, who was present at the workshop and helped to type up its proceedings, recalls establishing Catholic intellectual credibility in the secular psychology world as being the main motive her mother articulated for the workshop (Joan Arnold, personal communication, March 1, 2015).<sup>20</sup> But despite the desire for professional recognition, *The Human Person*, and indeed Arnold and Gasson’s underlying philosophy, is unapologetically integrationist. Kugelmann (2000) identifies Gasson and Arnold’s work in *The Human Person* as one of a very few examples of successful integration of Catholicism and psychology. This was intentional, for far from aiming at quiet assimilation, *The Human Person* was meant to model how religious belief ought to result in a radically different psychology.

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<sup>19</sup> For a complete history of the ACPA and its transitions to PIRI and Division 36 see Kugelmann (2000, 2009) and Reuder (1999).

<sup>20</sup> Joan remembered two Jewish couples who had been good friends with Arnold in university and who were particularly dismissive when Arnold converted (Joan Arnold, personal communication). Further evidence that Arnold was interested in aiming at a mainstream audience can be seen in her comment to Gasson that “My own paper grew out of an idea that we might ask for a grant for the Workshop from the Ford Foundation” (Arnold, 1951, M. Arnold to J. A. Gasson, May 4, 1951).

Also, as was typical of the time, Arnold and Gasson were Neoscholastic in bent. As committed psychologists, this did not make them anti-science, interested only in philosophy. There was a Neoscholasticism in the tradition of Mercier—resulting in an even more enthusiastic embrace of science, including experimental psychology. Interestingly, Kugelmann (2011) identifies Arnold as the only Catholic psychologist who continued to use Neoscholastic concepts in publications after the late 1960s (see Arnold, 1977), indicating the genuine nature of Arnold’s affiliation with Aquinas. Gasson and Arnold’s use of Thomistic philosophy was not artificial, done out of a desire to comply with papal mandate, but the result of their appreciation of the advantages of Thomism. One of the major advantages that Arnold believed this offered was the ability to skip over the philosophical hand-wringing about the limitations of human reason that had cast doubt on religious and scientific knowledge alike since Kant. Instead the Thomistic Christian worldview gave Catholics “a firm conviction that the world is intelligible and that reasoning can help us understand it” (Arnold, n.d. d, p. 9). Catholic scientists could pursue their craft confidently, aware that the truth existed, and that the human mind could know it (at least partially).

### **Shaping the Workshop**

Despite the philosophical edge they thought Catholics enjoyed, Arnold and Gasson were convinced that the majority of Catholics in psychology were squandering this advantage by adopting secular psychological theories that conflicted with Catholic theology. In an undated letter Gasson asked Arnold to send her a talk that she had given because although he could guess what she was likely to say,

I am curious to see whether you were as hard on Freud’s “genius” as I daily am more and more inclined to be. And also whether you tax Catholics with selling out their birthright

for a ‘pot of message’<sup>21</sup> as they have been doing. (Gasson, n.d. b, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, n.d.)

This sentiment seems to have been one of the major motives behind *The Human Person*—a worry that in their hurry to assimilate, Catholic psychologists had lost their distinctiveness, producing work that was indistinguishable from secular psychology. Although there is no mention in the letters of what inspired the workshop, Arnold does give her reasons for it in her professional autobiography and her oral history interview. In her autobiography Arnold says:

...it occurred to me that one way of luring Catholic Psychologists out of the ghetto would be to have a symposium on personality and invite the best Catholic psychologists I could find. The published papers should be a spur to other Catholic groups to do likewise.

(Arnold, n.d. c, p. 17)

In this account it is Arnold’s experience of the ghetto mentality at Barat, as well as a desire to provide excellent Catholic scholarship in a critical area of psychology, that is the inspiration for the workshop. However in her oral history interview she says that she convened the workshop:

because I began to feel at that time that the profession was veering so far towards behaviourism that maybe it would be a good idea for the many Catholic institutions that had no use for behaviourism to have something that they could use as a text book or at least a book of readings in personality. (Arnold, 1976, p. 43)

These two explanations are not mutually exclusive. However the latter explanation may emphasize behaviorism more than was in fact the case; both in the letters between Gasson and

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<sup>21</sup> A playful reference to “a mess of pottage”—the King James Version translation of the bowl of stew that was the price of Esau’s birthright. In this story Esau, starving after hunting, carelessly sold his rights as oldest to his brother Jacob—a story generally used to indicate someone willing to exchange spiritual riches for material gain (see Genesis 25:27-34).

Arnold and in the book itself, behaviorism is not nearly as visible as psychoanalysis.<sup>22</sup> But Arnold's later emphasis on behaviorism makes sense given the transitional nature of the 1950s. Cornelius (2006) notes that Arnold's work:

took place against the backdrop of the waning influence of Freud and orthodox psychoanalysis, the increasing dominance of behaviourism in academic psychology in the 1940s and 1950s, and the reaction against the sterility of behaviourist conceptions of personality, the self, and emotions by the nascent humanistic movement. (p. 977)

By the 1970s, when Arnold gave her oral history interview, psychoanalysis was seen as outdated and behaviorism was more influential (although declining), thus her choice to emphasize *The Human Person's* relevance to behaviorism. But whether *The Human Person* was more aimed at critiquing psychoanalysis or behaviorism is beside the point; she had little time for either theory for the same reason—they were inadequate theories of the human person.

Thus we can reconstruct Arnold's many motives for proposing the workshop: She meant to tempt Catholic psychologists out of the ghetto and at the same time counter their obsession with assimilation by providing an event in which excellent psychologists were asked to think deeply about how Catholic thought ought to shape psychology. This integration of faith and science was to serve not only as a model for other Catholic psychologists in areas outside of personality, but to offer a strong alternative to the dominant secular narratives.

As a result, Arnold and Gasson had a particular vision for the workshop and worked to shape the week accordingly. The first way they did this was by careful invitations to Catholics whose work they respected, and who shared their Thomistic vision, as the major speakers. This was somewhat of a challenge, since they had to rely on the good graces of the Barat

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<sup>22</sup> In *The Human Person* there are 40 mentions of psychoanalysis and only 7 of behaviorism, 131 mentions of Freud and only 25 of Hull, 19 of Tolman and 4 of Skinner (excluding references and mentions in the index).

administration to put on the workshop, and although the college president was “enthusiastic,” she had some opinions about who ought to be invited (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 17). But luckily for Arnold, “Practically all the psychologists I had invited were eager to come” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 17).

Although no record exists of the speakers and attendees of the workshop, the contributing authors list of *The Human Person* provides the major speakers (although there were clearly more speakers than those listed, and more people in attendance than the speakers only, see Arnold, [1951], M. Arnold to J.A. Gasson, [1951]; Arnold, 1951, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, May 4, 1951).<sup>23</sup> Besides Arnold and Gasson the main speakers were Charles Curran,<sup>24</sup> Vincent Herr, S.J.,<sup>25</sup> Frank J. Kobler,<sup>26</sup> Noël Mailloux, O.P.,<sup>27</sup> Alexander A. Schneiders,<sup>28</sup> Walter Smet, S.J.,<sup>29</sup> Louis B. Snider, S. J.,<sup>30</sup> Annette Walters, CSJ.<sup>31</sup> This group, perhaps not surprisingly, is heavy

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<sup>23</sup> Arnold may have invited all ACPA members to attend; at least that is one interpretation of her comment to Gasson “I am sending you a tentative program from which you’ll see how many active members are coming” (Arnold, 1951, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, May 4, 1951).

<sup>24</sup> Curran had done post-graduate work with Carl Rogers, and attempted to fit client-centered therapy into a neoscholastic framework as well as applying the principles of client-centered therapy to education. At the time of the workshop Curran was teaching at St. Charles College, in Columbus, Ohio; in 1955 he became one of Arnold’s colleagues at Loyola (Kugelmann, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> Herr received his master’s degree at St. Louis University and his PhD from the University of Bonn in 1939. He studied under Charlotte and Karl Bühler and under a Catholic psychologist, Siegfried Behn, who was influenced by Külpe. Herr began working at Loyola University after receiving his PhD and became chair of the psychology department in 1945 (Kugelmann, 2011).

<sup>26</sup> Kobler was trained at University of Chicago and served as a clinical psychologist in the Army Air Corps before coming to Loyola in 1946. He served as the director of the clinical program at Loyola and had a particular interest in projective methods (Snider, 1953; Wauck, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> Mailloux was staunchly neoscholastic and had established a psychology program at the University of Montreal with that bent. Mailloux was interested in both applied and experimental psychology, and was a prominent Canadian psychologist, serving as President of the Quebec Psychological Association in 1945 and President of the Canadian Psychological Association in 1954. O.P. stands for Order of Preachers, a Dominican order (Kugelmann, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> Schneiders (1909-1968) was the founding editor of the *Catholic Psychological Record* (which went under because of his unexpected death) and one of the founders of the ACPA (and its fourth president in 1952-1953) (Bier, 1968). Schneiders was trained at Georgetown University and taught in Jesuit programs in four schools: Loyola (Chicago), University of Detroit, Fordham University, and Boston College. He had interests in applied and counseling psychology and authored of a number of books and articles dealing with adolescent psychology, sexuality, and counseling. At the time of the workshop he was associated with Fordham, where he established a student counseling and testing program (Wauck, 1980).

<sup>29</sup> Smet was affiliated with the School of Social Science in Brussels. I have not been able to find any other information about Smet.

<sup>30</sup> Snider (1913-1955) received his BA (1936), MA (1938, on “The Psychomania of Prudencius”), and PhD at Loyola, and then joined the faculty there as a child psychologist. He was involved in the “Loyola Language Study” which was a controlled association test, but his influence was cut short by his premature death in 1955.

on the religious (3 Jesuits, 1 Dominican, 1 priest, and 1 Sister of St. Joseph<sup>32</sup>) and drawn almost exclusively from Catholic universities. Only two main speakers were from non-Catholic schools—Mailloux and Smet—and they were also the only speakers from outside the US.<sup>33</sup> Arnold later recalled they had “some quite interesting people” (Arnold, 1976, p. 43) and at the time expressed herself “especially pleased” that Mailloux and Fr. Van der Veldt, of Catholic University had agreed to speak (Arnold, 1951, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, May 4, 1951).<sup>34</sup> Each paper was to be an hour long, followed by a half hour discussion and rest (Arnold, 1951, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, June 9, 1951).

By all accounts the event was a grand success. Shortly after the workshop Sister Annette Walters wrote to a friend that she and Sister Kevin O’Hara<sup>35</sup> had just attended “the best conference Sister Kevin and I had ever been to” (Mulderry, 2006, p. 297). In the introduction to *The Human Person* Gasson and Arnold commented on “the remarkable spirit of harmony and unity of purpose that characterized the discussions” (Arnold & Gasson, 1954, p. iv) and credited “the hospitality of Barat” as a major contributor to “the results that were achieved” (Arnold & Gasson, 1954, p. v). In the workshop and in editing the papers later, not only had they been “stimulated to work long and arduously,” they wrote, but “everyone enjoyed the experience of a most rewarding fellowship” (Arnold & Gasson, 1954, p. v).

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<sup>31</sup> Sister Annette Walters (1910-1978) received her PhD in experimental psychology from the University of Minnesota, where she studied optical illusions and took classes with B. F. Skinner. They remained close friends throughout her lifetime (Gillespie, 2001). She taught at the College of St. Catherine and St. Ambrose College and published *Persons and Personality* (1954) and *Readings in Psychology* (1963). Gillespie (2001) believes she was the first nun to receive a doctorate in experimental psychology at a non-Catholic university.

<sup>32</sup> A teaching order.

<sup>33</sup> This perhaps indicates that Arnold’s experience was common in the US—Catholic universities were the only place Catholic psychologists who wanted to integrate their religious belief into their science could do so in peace. Alternately this could simply be a sign of how deeply embedded in the ghetto Catholic psychologists were in the US.

<sup>34</sup> It is not clear whether Van der Velt did not attend, or whether his presentation simply was not included in *The Human Person*.

<sup>35</sup> O’Hara was later Walters’ co-author on the textbook *Persons and Personality* (Walters & O’Hara, 1953).

But behind the scenes, particularly before the event, there was a little anxiety. Although Gasson and Arnold were confident about their own abilities—“you and I are of a mind and can offer a solid structure that will be in the main scientific and adequate and acceptable” (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 13, 1951)—they were not so sure about the other participants. In the months leading up to the workshop Gasson and Arnold corresponded about the proper order of the talks and the strategic deployment of discussants to keep the workshop headed in the direction they intended. For example, in May, Arnold wrote Gasson:

You will see that I have wished another talk on you - the very last one, I have entitled it “Therapy and spiritual direction” and meant it to pull Fr. Curran’s enthusiasm for Rogers into the right perspective. Fr. Curran wants to work out the relationship between counseling and the moral virtues. I put you on as a formal discussant only once, where it was most needed, but of course I count on you to keep the discussion straight. (Arnold, 1951, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, May 4, 1951)

Later she elaborated on why Curran’s talk on “how counseling is the first step in or the basis of the spiritual life” (Arnold, [1951], M. Arnold to J.A. Gasson, [1951]) needed correction:

My reason for putting you on the program was the consideration that there ought to be someone who would show how and to what extent every method of psychotherapy really puts the patient on the right road, that road always being the road to salvation. Now some therapies, from that point of view, must be better than others - so if you would take the ones that were presented in turn and compare them from that point of view. (Arnold, [1951], M. Arnold to J.A. Gasson, [1951])

Arnold then proceeds to go through the various different therapies which Curran intended to cover, offering her take on how well they did under this Christian criteria. While Integral



Analysis met with Arnold's approval "because the life situation is seen with reference to a man's final end," Freudian psychology received a failing grade: "Freudian Analysis records a person's preoccupations, traces them back in memory, and rebuilds his emotional life in accord with moral precepts - if the analyst is a Catholic; if not, in accord with expediency" (Arnold, [1951], M. Arnold to J.A. Gasson, [1951]). This exchange indicates one of the main concerns Arnold and Gasson had about their fellow Catholics—that they were too uncritically accepting of secular psychology. Drawing the participants' attention to just how far astray a secular theory of psychology could lead them was one of the aims of the workshop. This can be seen in Gasson's comment: "I hope Fr. Van der Velt from C. U. comes; he has had much front-line experience with SSF (saint Sigmund Freud) infiltration. Maybe with him we could fix up a nice booby trap for the psychoanalytic innocents" (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 6, 1951). From Arnold and Gasson's perspective, it was critical that Catholic psychologists see that Freud was not the saint they took him for, that his psychoanalytic therapy was not neutral, even if it meant embarrassing them a little.

### **The Importance of Basic Assumptions**

*The Human Person* consists of 19 chapters, divided into five parts: The Science of Psychology, Personality Structure, Personality Integration, Psychotherapy and Self-determination, and Self-Integration through Religion. The Science of Psychology is the most critical part of *The Human Person*, as it lays the theoretical foundation for the rest of the work and provides the rationale for Catholic work in psychology. In this section Arnold's paper "Basic Assumptions in Psychology" strikes the first blow against psychology's complacent identity as an objective science. Gasson's "The Concept of 'Theory' in Science and in Psychology" supports and elaborates on Arnold's claims by putting them in the broader context of the mid-

century status of theory. The final paper in this section, Smet's "Existentialism and Scientific Systematization", takes a different tack, calling for a personalistic psychology shaped by the "I" and "Thou" relationship of therapist and client, between experimenter and subject. Arnold and Gasson's first chapters, as well as their commentary on Smet (most chapters are followed up by a "Comment" section in which the discussion at the Workshop is summarized)<sup>36</sup> are important to consider in some depth, as they provide us with their thoughts on secular psychology's scientific weaknesses and the potential for a distinctively Catholic psychology.

Arnold opens the book with a sharp critique of mainstream psychology's presumption of neutrality:

When we try to evaluate a scientific theory, we have to examine the evidence upon which it rests. But the evidence is not something naturally "given"; it represents rather an answer to some particular question the scientist has put to nature. The way he puts his question will depend on his basic assumptions concerning the nature of his object of investigation and the nature of reality. These prior assumptions will determine the way the problem is set for investigation, the method of investigation itself, and, of course, the final interpretation. (Arnold, 1954a, p. 3)

The reason these starting principles are not generally discussed in psychology, Arnold says, is that they have been adopted wholesale from other sciences, particularly physics. With such borrowed assumptions it is easy for the psychologist to forget that they are "not the result of his scientific investigation but the basis of it" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 3). But since these assumptions come not from the scientific process, but prior to it, they are "necessarily speculative or

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<sup>36</sup> I am making the assumption that the commentary in the Comments that "sound like" Arnold and Gasson was provided by them, either in discussions at the workshop, or in writing the summary of the discussion. Arnold's assignment of Gasson to discussant status of talks she had reservations about I believe makes this a reasonable assumption.

metaphysical” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 3), and therefore properly belong to the realm of philosophy. Arnold recognizes that this is hardly something psychologists are likely to embrace, since philosophy has served as psychology’s “bogeyman” since its birth as a science. But this is a problem with psychology, not philosophy:

Psychology still suffers from its early struggles to become a science and has not yet outgrown the aggressive and belligerent spirit it developed in its attempt to free itself from its philosophical heritage. (Arnold, 1954a, p. 4)

Arnold identifies one of psychology’s assumptions as particularly problematic: “that the scientist can investigate what is, without reference to its ultimate nature, origin, or destiny” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 4). This principle works to some extent in other sciences, but is “definitely harmful” in psychology, because of its subject matter, man.<sup>37</sup> With such a subject, “questions of origin and purpose” are unavoidable: “What man is and where he is going cannot lightly be dismissed” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 6). Possibly in purely physiological elements of psychology such questions are avoidable, but “when psychologists begin to study man in his daily living” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 6) such questions are inescapable. With such a subject matter it is vital to know such things as “whether man’s nature is such that he can know (differently from animals), that he can fashion purposes or even *a* purpose in life (as no animal can), and that he can be held responsible for his actions (as animals are not)” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 6). This is necessary to know in order to judge real life dilemmas, such as who should be considered responsible for their actions and “who can be declared insane and confined to mental hospitals” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 6).

But in spite of the fact that psychologists experience themselves as possessing knowledge, purpose, and responsibility, they “have insisted again and again that human beings

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<sup>37</sup> The authors of *The Human Person* use the language of “man,” “mankind,” and “he” generically to refer to human persons of either sex. I reproduce them here for the sake of historical accuracy despite being aware that this is today considered sexist language.

differ from animals only quantitatively and not qualitatively” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 6). As a result psychologists have shaped their research and language to avoid implying any animal-human difference, thus “reasoning has become problem solving, desires become drives or needs, willing turns into striving” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 6-7). This effort of psychologists to distance themselves from their own experience raises a question, Arnold says. Either experiential evidence is not admissible in psychology, or there is “a prior assumption that man and animal have like natures” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 7). The ruling out of experiential evidence is obviously problematic, as such a move would also make scientific observation questionable evidence, given that it too depends on human experience. But if there is an assumption of human-animal equivalence, it will certainly have an impact on scientific investigations, biasing experiments towards certain conclusions. If, for example, reasoning is reduced to mere problem solving, psychologists will devise “learning situations in which a solution by reasoning is not possible, such as mazes and mechanical puzzles, and then conclude with satisfaction that there is no essential difference in the performance of apes and men” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 7).

It is interesting to note Arnold’s move towards phenomenology here—rather than any other rhetorical move which would be possible at this point in the argument, she insists on the validity of human experience, on experience as a trustworthy proxy for reality. This argument is important for many of Arnold’s claims in *The Human Person*. But for the moment she lets the matter drop to pursue another argument: whatever psychologists might say, in practice they are not neutral; they are constantly making judgments about what humans are and should be. Experiments are intended to benefit humanity, to help with the prediction and control of phenomena for practical purposes. But this raises the question: “In whose favor are we going to exercise that control?” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 7). Psychologist usually answer this question based on

“a prior conviction of the value and dignity of man” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 7). But this raises still further ultimate questions: what truly benefits man? Is it “unhindered ‘living out’ of his drives, in their restraint for the sake of society, or in a self-perfection in which his every action is subordinated to his final goal?” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 7). Whatever the answer to this question, it implies a certain view of “the ultimate nature of man, his origin, and his destiny” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 7).

What generally happens in psychology, Arnold says, is that psychologists happily interpret their findings in the light of their extra-scientific assumptions, and confidently offer these interpretations as “science” for public consumption. In offering these moral prescriptions, psychologists forget that “science only provides factual evidence, only finds out *what is*, and not what *ought to be*” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 7). To be clear, Arnold’s problem with this state of affairs is not psychology having moral implications or being influenced by scientists’ pre-scientific assumptions, but that these assumptions are “always implied, but never stated explicitly” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 8). A knowledge of the ultimate nature of the human person is necessary for any application of psychological fact, in order to have “a model toward which a human being should aim or should be led” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 8). But if there is no explicit discussion of these assumptions, then the psychologist will simply “supply such a norm from his own convictions” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 8) but never question such norms, mistakenly believing they are “scientific” assumptions. Thus psychologists make what they consider to be neutral scientific pronouncements when in fact they are delving into metaphysics.

In modern psychology, Arnold argues, these unquestioned assumptions have distorted the observation of human activity. Returning to the subject of phenomenological experience, Arnold says:

A psychologist's conviction that he can avoid philosophy thus leads him to mistake philosophical assumptions for scientific conclusions in the light of which he is forced to disregard the evidence provided by his subject matter and look upon his human material almost as though it had a structural flaw. In what other science do men approach their subject matter with the conviction that it is not as it acts? (Arnold, 1954a, p. 11)

The example of a biasing assumption Arnold gives is determinism—the idea that human action is merely the sum of “external and internal forces in the same way that every natural object is” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 11). This account ignores evidence of “human convictions of freedom, responsibility, and purpose” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 11) and implies that anyone who believes they have free will is deluded.

Arnold's response to the subjectivity and reflexivity that characterizes psychology is unusual. She actually sees it as a strength, not a problem:

Psychology as a science enjoys an advantage no other natural science possesses: the observer is always one of the objects he is observing. Experimental fact cannot contradict our own experience, for it is our experience which registers the observation. (Arnold, 1954a, p. 15)

Since there is no escaping such observer entanglement, the best method is to be explicit about one's basic assumptions and to be aware that there is no such thing as a scientific finding that is pure fact. Make no mistake, Arnold says, the scientist's assumptions infiltrate science at every level: “Because basic assumptions determine the approach to scientific investigation and its method, and because scientific results are interpreted in the light of their basic assumptions, the

final conclusion will be a combination of prior assumption and experimental fact” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 15).<sup>38</sup>

### **Personalist Psychology**

Having established the inevitability and even respectability of basic assumptions and metaphysics in psychology, Arnold takes the next logical step and introduces her own starting assumptions. This she calls the personalist view, the word personalist being intended as “the antonym of ‘mechanistic’ or ‘robotic’” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 14). Personalist psychology is presented in contrast to physical naturalism, the dominant guiding philosophy of psychology. physical naturalism Arnold describes as the view that:

Man is the latest product of an evolutionary process which started from inorganic matter and ended with the human being; thus nature is continuous. Therefore, strict deterministic causality holds throughout the realm of nature and everything in man must be explicable by the same physical and chemical laws that hold for inanimate objects. (Arnold, 1954a, p. 11)

In contrast, personalist psychology sees the human person a compound, irreducible unit consisting of both material and organization.<sup>39</sup> Although parts of man are physical and biological, there is a uniquely human part, the rational: “he reasons, discovers the laws of nature, and reflects about himself as no other living thing can” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 14). So while man shares some things in common with animals, plants, and inanimate objects, such as growth and reproduction, or being subject to the laws of physics, rational and volitional acts are his unique

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<sup>38</sup> This view is very similar to later feminist critiques of psychology (see Unger, 1983). Yet Arnold expressed no interest in feminist work in psychology.

<sup>39</sup> In objecting to physical naturalism Arnold is not objecting to evolutionary theory per se, but only as it biases psychologists to only look for exclusively naturalistic interpretations of human behavior. She is not arguing that humans were not a product of evolution but rather that they are not entirely governed by physical and chemical laws. See Hess and Allen (2008) on the variety of attitudes toward evolution Catholic scientists had in this period.

domain. This is Arnold invoking Thomistic *scala naturae*, commonly known as the Great Chain of Being—a hierarchical conception of nature in which each level has a different principle of organization, and each level, from the inorganic to man, has an additional function over the lower level. It should be noted that this is why Arnold objects so strongly to the conflation of animals and humans. It is lumping together two distinct levels, which are as distinct as plant from animal; while animals have the advantage over plants that they can move to escape a hostile environment, the human can also “change the environment according to his plans” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 14).

Arnold freely admits that a hierarchical organization goes beyond describing nature, and speaks about metaphysical matters, positing the existence of God. The personalist view she is proposing holds that:

...the universe as we know it must have had a beginning, no matter how far back in time; and that beginning must be the creative act of One who had no beginning. The same creative act resulted in the development of life. The human being is one form of life, a creature who can know himself and his Creator, toward whom he tends as the goal of his specifically human capacities. (Arnold, 1954a, p. 15)

This articulation of human *telos* necessarily returns to humans the powers stolen by so many modern psychologies. Arnold affirms that “the human being can and does choose whether or not he will strive for this goal [God] or instead choose some other goal. This answer does include and justify our conviction of freedom, responsibility, and purpose” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 15).

Thus far Arnold’s personalist psychology is surprising only in its boldness and candor. While Catholic psychologists who harbored hopes of assimilating would not dare be as open about how Catholic assumptions might influence psychology, Arnold articulates a standard



Thomistic conception of the world. But Arnold is not finished. She says her readers will doubtless ask the question: “But is such an alternative scientific?” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 15).

Arnold’s answer: a psychology based on Christian assumptions is “no more scientific than the assumption of physical naturalism, for both answers are given prior to scientific investigation” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 15). She even prefaces this statement with an “of course”—given her premises about the inescapable nature of starting assumptions, the conclusion that personalist psychology has a status *at least* equal to physical naturalism is self-evident.

Arnold even goes further, arguing that there is good reason to suppose that personalist psychology represents a better foundation for psychological investigations than physical naturalism. The main reason for this is its better fit with the existing evidence about human nature, evidence gained from human experience of one type or another. Personalist psychology avoids the paradox of dismissing some human experience (the everyday) and privileging other human experience (the experimental) by the simple method of taking seriously what humans say about themselves. But evidence of human freedom is everywhere, and intrudes even into experiments designed with mechanistic assumptions, so Arnold identifies several instances of modern day psychology findings that fit poorly into a physical naturalism paradigm, and are more parsimoniously explained from a personalist perspective. One example is the finding that learning and remembering in humans requires their first having the intention to learn (known as “set”) (Meumann, 1912); the most reasonable interpretation of such findings is that humans can “*decide* to learn in a given situation or *refuse* to learn—that is, he exhibits freedom of choice” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 17). Similar is the evidence that adult humans’ response to conditioning differs from the responses of animals and small children (Razran, 1936). Adult conditioning depends on the subject’s attitude. The subject may resist the experimenter and therefore not

develop the desired conditioned reflexes, but if the subject cooperates and associates the stimuli, they do not need to be reinforced; only a change in the subject's attitude will result in the extinction of the reflex. Despite this evidence of human freedom, the experimenter in this case, Razran, "subordinates his experimental results to his mechanistic assumptions" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 18), and interprets this finding using the typical behaviorist paradigm.

It is not just behaviorists who refuse to recognize human freedom when they see it: Freud, according to Arnold, is also a major culprit. Arnold quotes his statement about free association that the near universal human "deep-rooted belief in psychic freedom and volition" is "a belief which is absolutely unscientific, and which must capitulate before the claims of a determinism that controls even the psychic life" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 19). In Arnold's view Freud's logic in dismissing human self-determination is faulty: "he takes the fact of a given decision as proof of its determination by past extrinsic causes" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 23). As Arnold points out, his system is overdetermined: "If one and the same cause can have two opposite effects, or the same effect can have two opposite causes" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 24), then causal dependence cannot be demonstrated. Freud's method of assigning causality to prior events is "simply the expression of a *philosophy* of determinism, and not a scientific inference or explanation" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 23). Rather than entangling himself in a complex explanatory system in which the same cause can produce opposite effects (e.g., "rejection by the mother results in compulsive desire for love in one person, in a rejection of love in another" [Arnold, 1954a, p. 24]), Freud ought to admit that humans can act rationally and freely. The simplest explanation for the great variety of human action is that the actor acts "because he has judged such action to be suitable, not because he was told to act this way in childhood, or because the present situation imposes such action according to the "reality principle"" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 23). In fact, far from a feeling

of freedom being a sign of delusion, Arnold cites Rogers' findings from nondirective therapy that the more normal someone is "the more he feels he can act reasonably, objectively, and the more he feels himself active, spontaneous, integrated" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 26). This is yet another finding that can be better interpreted "in the light of the personalistic concept of man" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 26).

How, given this evidence, to account for "the curious and persistent conviction of psychologists that a mechanistic deterministic philosophy in some way is more 'scientific' than any other" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 27)? Arnold makes reference to the long history of the idea that science is not concerned with final causes (dating at least to Comte). But, she says, despite its best intentions to leave interpretation to the philosophers, "science cannot do without assumptions about the nature of the thing it investigates" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 30). In addition to the fact/value dichotomy tradition, some psychologists advocate for determinism because it allows for the prediction and control of behavior. Arnold has no patience for this argument—she has already established that deterministic systems have no explanatory value but "merely affirm that the deterministic hypothesis must be chosen because it must be chosen because it must be chosen in the way Gertrude Stein affirms that a rose is a rose is a rose" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 28).

Despite psychology's shunning of final cause, Arnold identifies multiple situations in which psychologists allow purpose or design, if in mechanistic guise. For example, "Darwin merely substituted evolution as purposive agent" in his explanations, and modern biology uses the term purpose for functional systems (such as systems which help to maintain homeostasis). This is terribly inconsistent, since this means "purpose is allowed to the body but not to man" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 30). Moreover, attempts to explain human freedom often result in the need to posit "emergent evolution" which essentially means "the interference of a *Deus ex machina* at

each evolutionary step” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 18). At least the hierarchical conception of nature “postulates only one God and one creative act” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 18).

Arnold’s prescription for psychology’s confused ontology is that psychologists reclaim teleology. Investigating efficient causes is not enough, unless we are willing to regress indefinitely. What this regress looks like in psychology is that “human purpose becomes the effect of prior efficient causes which are called motives, motives again the effect of physiological drives, they the effect of the function of certain organ systems, etc., etc.” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 33). Although infinite series are all very well mathematically, they are not explanatory; they require looking for the final cause since “only a cause outside the series itself could bring it into existence” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 33). Arnold sums up her argument for teleology as follows:

...when the psychologist takes over the physicist’s antipathy to final causes and is influenced by it in dealing with human behavior where final causes (purposes) are the rule, then this antipathy will lead him to an outright rejection of factual evidence.

(Arnold, 1954a, p. 33)

In other words psychology’s reductionist tendencies actually make the field less scientific. Arnold recommends that the psychologist instead “take the human being as he finds him” and attempt to discover “the unique factors that account for the pattern of activities which characterize this individual in his uniqueness” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 46). It is only through understanding “distinctly human activities” that psychology will make progress. If psychologists continue to equate humans with rats, they will only ever succeed in describing humans’ animal nature, never the intelligence that distinguishes humans. If, on the other hand, psychologists assume “the human individual is an intelligent mammal and tries to discover wherein this

intelligence lies, he may at the end of his researches have come to understand a human being as a human being” (Arnold, 1954a, p. 46).

Arnold’s argument in “Basic Assumptions in Psychology” makes clear why Arnold and Gasson envisioned *The Human Person* as relevant for non-Catholics. Their conviction that philosophical assumptions were inseparable from experimental psychology allowed them to confidently promote a highly Catholic personalist psychology as a legitimate psychological perspective. In fact, not only was personalist psychology legitimate, but it was superior to physical naturalism, providing a better, more consistent interpretation of known psychological facts. Machine or animal-based models of understanding humans are completely insufficient; to be a good psychologist, Arnold is saying, you ought to adopt a personalist perspective, even if you are not Catholic.

While Arnold’s critique ran counter to the tenets of behaviorism and Freudian psychoanalysis, it also complemented psychology’s humanistic trends. In critiquing psychology’s theoretical assumptions, in particular its physics envy and antipathy to philosophy, Arnold joins a number of critics, including some contemporary ones (see Bergmann, 1951). For example for support she cited Allport’s statement that psychology has been so “stupefied by admiration of physical science that we believe psychology in order to succeed need only imitate the models, postulates, methods, and language of physical science” (Allport, 1947, p. 182). But within humanistic critiques of psychology, Arnold is certainly unique in using a combination of phenomenological principles and Thomistic philosophy to argue for a return to teleology. Arnold may have been influenced in this argument by Mercier,<sup>40</sup> who in 1910 had written that everyone has a “system of philosophy” (1910, p. 15)—the modernists unfortunately had a unsound system “based on the skepticism of modern philosophers. Better the realism of Aristotle and Thomas”

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<sup>40</sup> Arnold may have read Mercier herself or may have been influenced by Gasson’s interpretation of Mercier.

(Kugelmann, 2011, p. 54). Yet the modernists have “too blindly obeyed” (Mercier, 1910, p. 10) their philosophical systems, crippling their scientific research. Like Mercier, by critiquing mainstream psychology’s inconsistent reliance on questionable pre-scientific basic assumptions, Arnold carved out a space for Catholic work in psychology.

### **Theory in Psychology**

In the next chapter of *The Human Person*, on theory in science and in psychology, Gasson expands Arnold’s work to provide a theoretical foundation for a personalist psychology. Gasson had given much thought to this topic in the fall just prior to the workshop, when in addition to his usual course load, Spring Hill had given him “another charming little job” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950). He wrote Arnold: “I am to direct a seminar in Philosophy and The Sciences, Their Divorce and The Means of Reestablishing Their Happy Domesticity. Yikes!!” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950). Gasson was overwhelmed by the task because of the wide range of science he had to cover: “I gotta systemetize [sic] Einstein’s Field Theories on a proper basis of metaphysics; establish the metaphysics of Quantum Mechanics and sift the necessary from the superflous [sic] from Atomistics in general; not to speak of explaining the stoichometric properties of matter in terms of potency and act” (Gasson, 1950, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950). But Gasson’s recent excursion into theory for the class prepared him well for tackling the difficult material in a paper for the workshop. Whereas Arnold had largely made her attacks on science on its own terms (e.g., attacking science for not being consistent with its stated principles), Gasson’s critique cuts deeper, asking if we really know what science means.

Gasson begins by alluding to the difficulty of tracing “the semantic fortunes of the term ‘theory’ in the last half century” because of the confusing “innumerable multitude of meanings”

(Gasson, 1954d, p. 49). But the result of all of this development, according to Gasson, is in fact regression: in the concept of theory there has been “revolution, convolution, and involution to such an extent that science has become a quest without a grail, a voyage without a goal, a game without a victory” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 54). Gasson has multiple schools of thought in mind here, but singles out “the men of the Vienna Circle” who, “refined in the crucible of fifty years, renounce any hope of describing reality, and look for meaning only in the rules formally laid down for correspondence between names and symbols, symbols and sensation complexes” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 53-54). One of Gasson’s problems with positivists is that they are not realists; for them “theorizing is an exercise in “creative imagination,” and invention of a theory is a “free creation of the mind”” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 53). Their distrust in the observational powers of the mind makes it hard to understand how science is meant to proceed.

Instead of this skeptical confusion, Gasson advocates for a return to Aristotle’s conception of science as “a body of *demonstratedly* true and certain conclusions derived from *true and certain* principles” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 50). Echoing Arnold’s argument that the principles of a science cannot come from it but prior to it, Gasson posits that scientific principles have their origin in another science “that reaches deeper to the roots of reality” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 50). Science for Aristotle, Gasson explains, is “an acquired habit of mind that enables a thinking person to *understand* the objects that belong to the field of a particular science (e.g., chemistry, mathematics, philosophy), to *relate* them one to the other by demonstrating necessary connections, and finally to *unify* them by a single principle of order which will embrace all objects belonging to a specific field” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 50). Within this system a theory is “an insight into the relation between all the objects of a field of knowledge, couched in a statement expressing that relation” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 50).

Gasson reviews the most common types of theory (explicatory, classificatory, symbolic), and not surprisingly prefers explicatory theories, which rely on a combination of inference and actual experience or observation. As a part of this review Gasson identifies one type of theory that is particularly relevant to psychology, the dialectical. Dialectical theories present ideas in developmental order, without strict reference to logic, and progress occurs as contradictory statements confront each other and are synthesized. The dialectical approach to “the chaos of clinical data” is quite common in psychology (Gasson, 1954d, p. 60). This is why “certain theorists [namely Freud] are curiously indifferent to strict logical consistency or the objective validity of their theoretical systems” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 60). Gasson explains:

For the ordinary scientist, it would be a serious matter if the very foundation of his explanatory system were not verifiable and could not be used in formulating valid new hypotheses. But the dialectical thinker seems to value them for their stimulating effect, and so uses them even though they should be neither true nor verifiable... It is this feature of psychoanalytic thinking which has not been sufficiently appreciated by psychologists who have tried to find experimental verification for psychoanalytic concepts. (Gasson, 1954d, p. 60)

If psychoanalysis were in fact scientific, it would crumble under the weight of its contradictions, but its reliance on theories as stimulation rather than a source of truth makes it invulnerable to logic.

But on this view more logical theories that are common in experimental psychology are problematic, too. Like Arnold, Gasson argues that psychology cannot rely on other theories (such as physics) because of its subject matter: it deals with humans. For example, unlike these other



sciences, psychology cannot establish laws, because a scientific law “implies uniformity and constancy” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 63). Gasson says of Hull and Tolman’s formula  $R(f)S$ :

This simplicity is impossible, however, basically because in the living organism, and a fortiori in the human being, no unique function can be determined, whatever be the value assigned to R or S and whichever of them is taken as the independent variable. (Gasson, 1954d, p. 65)

In Gasson’s mind the behaviorist project is fatally flawed because it “fails to take into account the peculiar kind of indeterminacy that is proper to the organism and the indeterminacy that is proper to the human being” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 65). Evidence of human agency in behaviorist experiments, such as “the extinction of a conditioned response immediately the human subject makes up his mind to it; the failure to condition even over a long period when the human subject refuses to become conditioned” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 66) show that behaviorist laws fail to capture the reality of human behavior.

So, given these criticisms, what kind of theory ought psychology to be founded on, Gasson asks?

To begin with, the theory will have to be truly scientific. Let us take that to mean that it will deal with real things, not merely with “free creations of the mind.” Next, that it will give explanations of the way things change; finally, that the explanations, while not pretending to reach to ultimates, must be comprehensive, that is, must explain all the phenomena the theory is constructed to include. Put succinctly, we are looking for a theory which will express what is and how it changes in terms of a few simple hypotheses. (Gasson, 1954d, p. 67-68)

In other words, Gasson says, he is assuming “moderate direct realism as our epistemological base” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 68). In addition he assumes “the principle of intelligibility. That is, we take for granted that real things are and that they can be understood without involving contradiction” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 68). In the case of a theory that does not describe reality in a comprehensible manner, “we shall consider that our theory is defective and not that things are unintelligible”—if a theory is not understandable it is “simply *nonsense*” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 68). Finally, Gasson is assuming that there exists “substantially discontinuous natures in the organic world; that animals differ in *kind*, not merely in degree of organization, from humans” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 69).

In proposing these assumptions Gasson is well aware that they put him at odds with most contemporary theorists but he is not concerned. Although many theorists are very insightful, they cannot arrive at the truth because they have chosen wrong starting assumptions: “the fact remains that no baker’s skill will avail to make bread if sawdust is used instead of flour” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 70). True, Gasson’s proposed assumptions originate outside of psychology but Gasson cannot afford to be shy about exposing his theoretical assumptions because “unless we assume the right ultimates neither our data nor our methods will be of any avail for an understanding of the phenomena we presume to study in psychology” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 69). Some theorists seem to hold to the view that “This world is all a fleeting show for man’s illusion given”<sup>41</sup> and therefore “science is sheer amusement, disciplines are new games, and theories are new rules for games” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 69-70). But believing what they do about the nature of reality, Catholic psychologists cannot afford to be so flippant: “We hope that our science will be more than just a game” (Gasson, 1954d, p. 70).

Gasson sums up:

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<sup>41</sup> This is a quote from Thomas Moore’s poem “This world is all a fleeting show.”

...a theory in psychology should be real, simple, unified, comprehensive, capable of development, and verifiable in experience. It postulates certain ultimates from the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of man, or at least does not presume to establish such ultimates or contradict them. It is designed not only to describe what happens, but even more to explain why what happens could not possibly have happened in any other way. (Gasson, 1954d, p. 70)

In such a proposal for psychology's theory Gasson is simply doing what Arnold recommended in her chapter, that is, being explicit about his basic assumptions. Thus, together the first two chapters of *The Human Person* form the foundation for work in personalist psychology. Arnold achieved this by taking psychology to task for its lack of transparency about its pre-scientific beliefs and arguing for the inescapable nature of assumptions, Gasson by showing the insufficiency of current psychological theories, and, with his starting assumptions laid bare, proposing a robust realist theory of psychology. The two chapters complement and support each other.

### **Alternative Interpretations of Personalist Psychology**

The complete agreement of Arnold's and Gasson's thinking may make it hard to imagine what else a Catholic psychologist might propose. In this way Walter Smet's chapter "Existentialism and Scientific Systematization," which completes the first section of *The Human Person*, is instructive. Smet does not entirely disagree with Arnold and Gasson, but he approaches the topic with a humanistic rather than Thomistic perspective, calling for the "I-Thou" relationship to be the basis of psychology.<sup>42</sup> Smet begins by pushing back against the

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<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, since Smet is not mentioned in any of the Catholics in psychology literature, we have no concrete information about his training, background or any other publications. From his chapter in *The Human Person* he appears to find phenomenology and non-directive therapy particularly compelling.

logical theorizing of Arnold and Gasson, and instead highlights the psychologist-subject relationship:

Instead of concentrating on the *requirements* of our science in studying personality, we ought to emphasize the *attitude* the psychologist ought to adopt to do justice to the human relationship in which he is involved. Instead of methods and concepts useful in studying the human subject, let us emphasize and investigate the ideal conditions for the direct experience of the human person. (Smet, 1954. p. 85)

For example, it is not that the Freudian perspective is so wrong, it is simply that the Freudian perspective sets up its subjects for failure: “If a psychologist expects his client to behave as if he were the playball of impersonal forces, buffeted by id-impulses, and acts toward him as if he were, then his client will respond according to expectation” (Smet, 1954. p. 85). With such expectations, the subject will never dare to “reveal himself to us in his uniqueness as a human individual” (Smet, 1954. p. 85). The solution is an “I-Thou” relationship in which the psychologist follows Christ’s example by treating his fellow human being as “a person, a brother, and a fellow-creature” (Smet, 1954. p. 82). It is only through understanding and love that a personalist psychologist can hope to “awaken in the other the ‘person’ kept hidden in him because of our previous lack of respect and trust” (Smet, 1954. p. 86).

Smet recommends an attitude of self-examination, rather than blaming psychology for failings. We should ask: “Do we really wish to know more about the human person, and to come closer to him? Or do we find that we are actually more interested in scientific methodology, in experimental design, in diagnosis, in systematization?” (Smet, 1954. p. 86). Overall Smet is optimistic about the prospect of breaking out of old methodologies, because he identifies the present day as a critical time in psychology:

It seems to me that we have come upon the scene as Catholic psychologists at a moment when the basic postulate of deterministic science itself is being questioned, when there is no longer any agreement on the concept of scientific theory, briefly at the very moment when the epistemological chaos is nearly destroying the concept of science itself, almost without hope of salvation. (Smet, 1954. p. 87)

In response to this crisis Smet believes the existential perspective provides the key, and identifies Rogerian nondirective therapy and phenomenological psychology as movements that have taken the lead in crafting a less mechanistic psychology. But he warns against Catholic inaction:

Let us not lag behind refusing our help and merely looking on until the new approach goes astray like all the rest. Perhaps the reason why we prefer to stick to the conventional scientific and objectivistic approach is only the fear that, secure enough in psychology to claim our place, we are not yet secure enough to go our own way. (Smet, 1954. p. 87)

An existential perspective on psychology will provide the psychologist with “direct experience of the human being” (Smet, 1954. p. 87), which will be enough to challenge mechanistic, deterministic psychologies.

In the “Comment’ on Smet’s chapter,<sup>43</sup> Arnold and Gasson disagree with this last statement.<sup>44</sup> They object on the basis of their view of the human person: “Rigidity is not the exclusive property of the neurotic—it is present in all of us” (Smet, 1954. p. 94). While people are willing enough to be influenced by factual evidence on things they do not care about, what

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<sup>43</sup> The comment is a part of Smet’s chapter, so although it is cited as Smet (1954), what follows is actually the response to Smet.

<sup>44</sup> See Gasson, [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, [1953] for evidence that Arnold and Gasson disagreed with Smet. Arnold composed a note to Smet outlining their disagreement with his chapter during the revision process, but Gasson suggested that it was unnecessary to send it, and it seems they contented themselves with framing their concerns in the critical “Comment.”

about “truths that have implications for our daily living”? (Smet, 1954. p. 94). For those things that “concern us so deeply, we refuse to admit that they are open to demonstration and proof” (Smet, 1954. p. 94), for example, our basic assumptions. Even scientists fall prey to this tendency and refuse to hear evidence contradictory to cherished beliefs. Evidence pointing to a personalist view can easily be written off:

...the immediate person-to-person relationship, no matter how warm, no matter how real, does not of itself produce a view of man as a creature dependent on his Creator, therefore could not be counted on to effect a revolution in the scientist’s outlook. (Smet, 1954, p. 95)

Rather than waiting for secular psychologists to come around to their view, Catholic psychologists should take action: the psychologist “has the obligation to search for the truth as best he can and to present what he has found, whether or not the scientific world is ready to accept it” (Smet, 1954. p. 95). Thomas Aquinas’ example of formulating a revolutionary synthesis in the face of “violent opposition from friend and foe alike” (Smet, 1954. p. 95) is to be emulated.

However, Arnold and Gasson do agree with Smet’s point about the attitude of the psychologist for his subject. The psychologist has an obligation both as a scientist, to pursue truth, but also to care for his fellow humans:

As a human being who is aware of his relationship to his Creator, he knows that what is true must ultimately lead to God who is Truth. Therefore, any trifling with truth, any attempt to divorce science from human concerns, to cultivate science for science’s sake, any indulgence of idle curiosity, runs counter to his obligation as a scientist and a human being, and hence is morally wrong. (Smet, 1954. p. 95-96)

This does not mean practical problems trump speculative or theoretical questions, but simply that psychology should concern itself with questions that are “significant and not trivial,” which increase “our comprehension rather than at collecting more and more minute facts” (Smet, 1954, p. 96). Arnold and Gasson believe that research ought to be seen in relationship to a larger whole and that looking at a small area without reference to the total pattern “contradicts the obligation of the psychologist toward his subject matter” (Smet, 1954. p. 96).

The way that a scientist can treat its fellow humans well, Arnold and Gasson argue, is not by using an existential “I-Thou” methodology, but by giving them accurate and useful psychological findings. The point of science is that “truth is sought *for the use of human beings*” (Smet, 1954. p. 96) and, therefore, research must be aimed at their welfare. But this means that the first priority is theoretical accuracy: psychologists must take care that their work is built on “assumptions which will lead to the truth and therefore contribute to man’s welfare” (Smet, 1954. p. 96). Similarly, in the clinical situation, loving patients does not mean making them feel good but ensuring that therapy does not “achieve its aim at the expense of the patient’s moral standards” (Smet, 1954. p. 97). Therapy, Arnold and Gasson conclude, should help patients become more integrated by “subordinating wants to rational goals” (Smet, 1954. p. 97).

Noel Mailloux’s chapter in *The Human Person*, “Psychic determinism, freedom, and personality development,” similarly provides an alternative approach to personalist psychology, and gets a similar treatment from Gasson and Arnold—it too is followed by a dissenting comment. This disagreement is more surprising than their critique of Smet, since Mailloux is Thomistic in background: he deplores that the wealth of knowledge about human nature in Aquinas “is so frequently and lightly ignored” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 266). Further, he thinks that it is mistake that “the study of the most primitive or archaic strata of personality, now buried in the

unconscious,” has been valued over understanding “the creative processes taking place at the highest level of our rational consciousness” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 266). However, he says, this does not mean that we can just discard the insights of psychology.

Specifically, Mailloux thinks that rather than abandoning Freud, his theories need to be expanded—that his psychological insights are an accurate depiction of the abnormal mind, but that the “conflict-free sphere of the ego” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 267) of normal individuals needs further exploring. In fact, Mailloux sees some signs that Freud himself is open to development in this line, and that he recognized the existence of human freedom. The link between a conflict-free ego and human freedom is that the former leads to the latter. A tranquil mind is the norm and the relative lack of conflicts “favors the strenuous efforts of a personality which is in the process of creating itself as well as the powerful striving toward a strongly organized mental synthesis” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 268). In other words, while the mental conflict Freud describes does to some degree limit human freedom, the achievement of a peaceful mind “culminates in the acquisition of freedom” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 268).

Mailloux’s point is that the way the relationship between determinism and freedom has been understood is “entirely misleading” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 271) because “psychic determinism, far from being opposed to freedom, is a necessary step or condition for its acquisition” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 272). Freedom requires automatization of both biological and psychic functions:

The more complex the situation to which we have to adapt, the more necessary it is to surpass the gross and rigid determination achieved through mechanization or automatization. The extremely precise adaptability of the artist, of the craftsman, of the



professional player, requires nothing less than the plasticity of free determination—free because it has to be complete. (Mailloux, 1954, p. 273)

Ironically, free activity, “the most perfect activity of which man is capable” is in fact the activity in which “least is left to indeterminacy and unpredictability” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 273) and therefore highly predictable.<sup>45</sup> Free human activity entails “the ability to explore, invent, or create the means leading to the desired end” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 274)—in other words the ability to make the right choice (given the circumstances) and carry it out. Free behavior is “fully controlled precisely because it is fully determined,” meaning “it constitutes the most adequate and accurate answer one can give to the more or less complicated set of demands imposed by reality at a given moment” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 273). It is the neurotic individual who experiences a painfully limited sense of freedom, who fails to act rightly in light of reality. Thus Mailloux is proposing a strong link between virtue and freedom: “the only way to the acquisition of freedom consists in the courageous humility of the Saints, a humility which makes them capable of facing the reality of sin in themselves” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 276).

Gasson and Arnold have no objection to Mailloux’s discussion of human freedom; rather it is his use of Freud that they find concerning. In the Comment, they write: “The preceding paper raises the question whether Freud intended to leave open the possibility of self-determination in his system. As a matter of historical fact, he was a strict determinist, as numerous passages show” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 276). Given this contradiction, it is only by using a dialectical theory of science that it can make sense to expand Freud’s meaning so that “psychoanalysis will be understood as a theory of neurosis and not of the normal personality, and will be applied to man’s irrational but not to his rational motives” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 279). But

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<sup>45</sup> As Gasson and Arnold acknowledge, however, “it is not predictable in the same way as behavior which is the result of a deterministic process or of a repetition compulsion” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 274).

it is important to note, Arnold and Gasson say, that what is happening here is that the clinician “feels free to interpret the facts which Freud reports...on the basis of his own philosophical assumptions” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 277). Given “such different notions of the nature, development, and destiny of the human being” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 279) every psychoanalytic term will have to be given a new meaning. In order to illustrate how significant a change this is, Arnold and Gasson proceed to “isolate the basic assumptions” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 277) of Mailloux’s paper in order to compare them to Freud’s. For example, whereas for Freud “the end of man is the greatest possible biological satisfaction obtainable in his social environment,” for Mailloux, the final end of man is his free choice (and ultimate possession) of the highest good, which expresses itself in Christian charity (Mailloux, 1954, p. 276). Although Arnold and Gasson acknowledge that such a redefinition of Freud is possible if modern psychoanalysts are “more tolerant than their master” (Mailloux, 1954, p. 279), one can sense their skepticism.

### **No Mere Baptism: Arnold’s Model of Engagement with Secular Psychology**

Arnold and Gasson’s disagreement with Smet’s and Mailloux’s alternative conceptions of personalist psychology raises an issue critical to understanding Arnold’s thinking—namely her attitude towards secular theories of psychology. What Arnold seems to object to in the proposals of Smet and Mailloux is their acceptance of Rogerian and Freudian perspectives, respectively, and this objection, considered in the context of numerous examples of Arnold’s dismissive attitude toward Freud, produces the impression that Arnold may have ruled out secular theories as a whole, simply because she regarded them as incompatible with her Catholic faith.

Kugelmann (2011) has fruitfully analyzed Catholic engagement with psychology such as Arnold’s through the lens of “boundary-work” (the concept is from Gieryn, 1983). This

perspective holds that there is a constant maintenance and negotiation of the boundary between science and religion that is often marked by controversial incursions into disputed territory, as well as more positive dialogue and trading between the zones. On this view, Arnold and Gasson's dissenting commentary on Smet and Mailloux would be read as them policing the boundary—rejecting what they perceived as secular scientific incursions into properly religious territory.

While this interpretation is not entirely out of the question, the reality is at least more complicated, since throughout her life Arnold consistently rejected the idea of a rigid boundary between faith and science. Moreover, with its battlefield imagery of hostile incursions and contested territory (only somewhat softened by the addition of trade analogies), boundary-work is a model born of the more traditional “conflict” understanding of science and religion, and again, this narrative did not characterize Arnold's experience. For example, in a paper encouraging Catholics to engage intellectually, Arnold wrote: “Today, as perhaps never before in this country, we Catholics have a chance of convincing people that true religion and true science are not enemies but need one another to bring rich fruit ” (Arnold, n.d. i, p. 1).

So instead of assuming that Arnold dismissed secular theories simply because they were secular, we should ask whether she had particular rules for what constituted an acceptable, or good, secular theory. While she does not address this question directly, Arnold's approach can be gleaned from her writing. In several of her unpublished lectures, Arnold called for Catholic engagement with psychology and yet critiqued Catholic work that either indiscriminately jumped to embrace secular developments in psychology or clumsily baptized it, that is, gave it a superficial Christian reinterpretation. “Why” Arnold wrote, “should we continue to adapt or ‘baptize’ other people's systems and engage in the impossible task of disentangling scientific

concepts and methods from their invalid philosophical assumptions?” (Arnold, n.d. d, p. 9). Instead, Arnold argued, Catholics ought to lead the field with original research, which would then not leave them at the mercy of secular theoretical systems: “Why not take the facts where we find them and work out theories that will explain these facts in a consistent way?” (Arnold, n.d. d, p. 9).

In posing these rhetorical questions, Arnold was echoing Edward Aloysius Pace,<sup>46</sup> who in 1895 had called for Catholic engagement with psychology in very similar terms:

Either get hold of this instrument and use it for proper purposes, or leave it to the materialists, and after they have heaped up facts, established laws, and forced their conclusion upon psychology, go about tardily to unravel with clumsy fingers, this tangle of error. (Pace, 1895, p. 160)

The danger of relying on secular theories, according to both Pace and Arnold, was that their starting assumptions, which were problematic from a Catholic perspective, would inevitably shape the “facts” towards certain (erroneous) conclusions, as Arnold had argued in the first chapter of *The Human Person*. Thus, in critiquing Smet and Mailloux, Arnold and Gasson are simply practicing what they had preached, and taking philosophical assumptions very seriously. Their careful comparison of basic assumptions in Mailloux and Freud demonstrates the importance for them of awareness of biasing assumptions.

Pace and Arnold’s critique of the uncritical adoption of secular psychology theories did not come out of nowhere, but was born of a trend towards adapting secular theories, particularly

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<sup>46</sup> Edward Aloysius Pace (1861-1938) was a student of Mercier and Wundt and founded the experimental psychology program at Catholic University (Kugelmann, 2011). Pace was neoscholastic in orientation. Although Arnold did not cite him she would have been very familiar with his legacy and former students.

psychoanalysis, for Catholic use (Kugelmann, 2011). For instance Boyd Barrett<sup>47</sup> (1924) and Thomas Verner Moore (1924) had both written early positive Catholic assessments of Freud, and although they articulated criticisms of certain points,<sup>48</sup> they integrated Freudian perspectives into their view of psychology, and recommended psychoanalysis. Use of Freudian methods by Catholic therapists was common enough by 1947 that when Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen<sup>49</sup> gave a Lenten sermon in New York denouncing psychoanalysis as founded in “materialism, hedonism, infantilism and eroticism” (“Sheen denounces psychoanalysis”, 1947), it sparked a high-profile controversy. Leading Catholic psychoanalysts and psychiatrists publicly protested such a blanket condemnation (“Msgr. Sheen’s attack hit by psychiatrists”, 1947), and argued that there was nothing irreligious about psychoanalysis. There were a variety of opinions about how well Freudian psychology and Catholicism meshed, and the topic remained controversial until Pope Pius XII confirmed that psychoanalysis was acceptable in the 1950s (Pope Pius XII, 1952, 1953).

However Arnold might have been influenced by this debate, it is important to note that Arnold was critical of Freudian psychology even before her conversion. In Sol Littman’s recollections of Arnold’s reputation at the University of Toronto in 1945 as “a boldly original, controversial psychologist who was challenging the university’s staid, mechanistic, behaviorist psychology faculty,” he also remembered her negative take on more reductionist forms of psychology:

Her seminar on psychological theory was essentially an attack on every thing that had gone before. Under her guidance, students were primed to attack Freud, Skinner, and

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<sup>47</sup> Edward John Boyd Barrett (1883-1966) was an Irish-born Jesuit who studied under Mercier, Michotte and Charles Spearman. He was introduced to psychoanalysis by lectures at the Tavistock Clinic and eventually fell out with and left the Jesuit order over psychoanalysis.

<sup>48</sup> Barrett modified psychoanalysis to include will training; Moore found Freud lacking in empirical support and theoretically weak (Kugelmann, 2011).

<sup>49</sup> Sheen, in addition to being a philosophy professor, was a radio personality, the host of the popular “The Catholic Hour.” In 1952 he began a similarly popular television program, “Life is Worth Living.”

Watson. As best I can remember, only Jung survived her vigorous attack. In fact she placed Jung on a pedestal... (Litmann, n.d).

Similarly Arnold's fellow Toronto graduate student Mary Northway recalled Arnold in the 1930s as "one of a group of graduate students who had tea in the cellar of the psychology department" who were part of a "violent rebellion against the artificiality of the ivory lab and the unreality of mechanistic personality theory"<sup>50</sup> (Northway, 1955, p. 254). As Northway remembered it, for these students, "The search was on for a psychology that described life in terms approximating the way in which human beings lived it, felt it, and perceived it" (Northway, 1955, p. 254). In her oral history interview, Arnold affirms this, stating that it was Bill Line and her fellow graduate students who had given her courage to seek "a truly scientific and yet humanistic psychology," rather than feeling forced to choose between psychoanalysis and behaviorism (Arnold, 1976, p. 56).

With these complicating factors, which make it look less likely that Arnold's dismissal of Freud can be explained by boundary work, it is worth exploring how Arnold evaluates secular models of psychology for their value for Catholics in *The Human Person* and in her unpublished papers. Specifically, I will explore what criteria Arnold uses to judge the value of the contributions of Freud, Jung, and Frankl,<sup>51</sup> to see if the way she goes about rejecting or accepting these theories fits into any particular pattern.

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<sup>50</sup> To complicate the picture somewhat, this rebellion included an openness to Freudian insights: "There was even a low whispering that the clinicians were doing exciting things, and occasionally a surreptitious suggestion that Freud might possibly have had something worth considering" (Northway, 1955, p. 254).

<sup>51</sup> These are the theorists whose work she address most substantively. She also briefly comments on Adler, Rogers, and Maslow (Arnold 'The place of Logotherapy', n.d.).

## ***Freud***

In an unpublished paper titled “Psycho-analysis and the Catholic,” written between 1948 and 1950, Arnold wrote at length on the topic of whether psychoanalysis was compatible with Catholic beliefs. Referring to the Catholic discussion of psychology, Arnold says,

The consensus at this time seems to be that the philosophy of Freud is unacceptable for a Catholic because it is both atheistic and materialistic, but that the method of psychoanalysis is valid; in fact, that its use is not only harmless but indispensable to the understanding of human personality, provided only that the analyst substitutes the right philosophical and metaphysical foundations. If it can, then surely even an atheist could use it without doing any harm, as long as he does not force his own philosophy on the patient; in the same way a surgeon surely can operate successfully no matter what his religion or lack of it. But if the method of psychoanalysis cannot be used independently of its philosophy, then even a Catholic analyst will not be able to use it without doing harm. (Arnold, n.d. f, p. 1)

Thus, Arnold sets out to discover “whether or not Freud’s philosophy is implied in his method.”

The psychoanalytic principles, as Arnold outlines them, are: (a) human life is a compromise between the gratification of impulses and demands of society, (b) the purpose of human life is achieving sexual satisfaction and (c) psychological dysfunction is the result of childhood trauma. After exploring how these principles shape therapeutic practice Arnold concludes “On all three counts, then, the method of psychoanalysis is completely determined by the philosophical assumptions which have fathered it... Therefore, everyone using the psychoanalytic method will have perforce to subscribe to its philosophical postulates” (Arnold, n.d. f, p. 23). Given the

principles' stark contrast with Catholic assumptions,<sup>52</sup> this creates a problem for the Catholic analyst, as Arnold points out: "Should he not ask himself whether his assumption of free will instead of psychological determinism will perhaps require a different method of analysis?" (Arnold, n.d. f, p. 22)

At first glance this rejection of psychoanalysis for Catholics seems to be a typical example of policing the boundary between faith and science, for initially Arnold's objection appears to be that Freudian psychoanalysis presumes to be "a religion or philosophy of his own" (Arnold, n.d. f, p. 1). In other words, Arnold appears to object to Freudian theory because it trespasses on properly religious territory.<sup>53</sup> However, as one reads further, one sees that Arnold is far more concerned about the apparent irrationality and inconsistency of Freud, as she comments on the convenience of the concept of resistance and the never-ending layers of unconsciousness. At her most biting Arnold is critiquing Freud for not being scientific enough:

(In passing, it may be remarked how curious it is that Freud, who considered himself the apostle of reason against the irrationality of religion, has elevated three logical fallacies to principles of explanation and has played havoc with the law of contradiction by introducing a *deus ex machina* in his different levels of consciousness, so that contradiction can always be circumvented by a sheer act of blind faith.) (Arnold, n.d. f, p. 22)

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<sup>52</sup> Catholics would reject (a) as an exceedingly narrow view of human life, and would likely frame the dynamic in terms of the tension between free will and sin. (b) is objectionable not primarily for moralistic reasons, but because the purpose of life from a Christian perspective would have to include the maker of sex. And (c) may conflict with Catholic teaching on human responsibility if the childhood trauma explanation for dysfunction means that no one can be held responsible for their own actions.

<sup>53</sup> Although Foucault's argument that psychoanalysis usurped the sacrament of confession is the most famous way of conceptualizing the relationship between psychoanalysis and religion, other scholars have taken a different tack. Rieff (1966) has argued that the social restraint represented by religious belief has been replaced by a corrosive, uncommitted individualism, and that psychoanalysis helps people cope with this state of social detachment. Lasch (1978) argues that rather than psychoanalysis, a self-centered impulse for identity has replaced religion.



In other words, Arnold makes the criticism that many other (non-Catholic) psychologists have made, that Freud's theory is unfalsifiable.<sup>54</sup>

To be clear then, Arnold's problem with Freud is not that he has assumptions that improperly intrude onto his practice or into the realm of religion. Rather, she disagrees with the *substance* of his assumptions. Arnold held that every theory has extra-factual assumptions; naturally some will be more compatible with Catholic assumptions than others. Recall that Arnold emphasized that scientists' beliefs will inevitably influence their science; basic assumptions and interpretation of findings are the two places where scientists' opinions most clearly manifest themselves, and it is on these two factors that Arnold focuses when evaluating secular psychology. Of the two, Arnold emphasizes basic assumptions, because they influence science at every step: the formulation of the problem being investigated, the method chosen, and the interpretation of results. Arnold's analysis of Freud is a good example of how faulty basic assumptions can make a whole system untenable.

### ***Jung***

Arnold makes similar comments in her evaluation of Jung. Although she is much more positive about Jung than Freud, she still emphasizes Jung's questionable assumptions. Arnold described herself as having always been quite interested in Jung, going so far as to visit the Jung Institute in Zurich in 1962, where she attended classes and taught a summer course (Arnold, 1987, July 13). In a biographical note for a book on Catholicism and Jungian psychology Arnold explicitly connects her conversion to Jung: "...her psychological work and her reading of Jung had made her realize the necessity of a religious orientation" (Arnold, 1987, July 13). Even so, the note concluded: "She finds Jungian analysis of great value but has reservations about Jung's

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<sup>54</sup> See Popper (1959, first published in German in 1939) for the original and most famous rejection of psychoanalysis as unfalsifiable.

philosophical assumptions” (Arnold, 1987, July 13). Elsewhere she states, “the underlying world view is alien to the Christian” (Arnold, n. d. a, p. 3), because, for example, “The path to salvation does not require transcending one archetype after another but gradually coming to know God, love him, and serve him.” (Arnold, n. d. a, p. 1)

Yet while Arnold notes that Jung has assumptions that affect his theories, Jung is a case, in contrast to Freud, in which more neutral basic assumptions can simply mean the interpretation is at fault. As Arnold puts it:

Jung’s system is a method of therapy but also a philosophical world-view. It is very likely that in most cases the attempt at restoring effective functioning in therapy has led to valuable insights not only for the patient but the therapist; these insights led to larger hypotheses, and these finally to a psychological system. Hence the technique used to bring about healing is one thing and the therapist’s interpretation of the changes in the patient is quite another. Indeed the technique could in theory be used by disciples of any system and interpreted by them according to their own rules. (Arnold, n. d. a, p. 1)

Here we see why Jung is an improvement over Freud for Arnold—his less hostile philosophical assumptions and its closer connection to clinical observation mean that with some corrections of his mistaken interpretation and the substitution of Christian assumptions Jung’s can be a useful method. Arnold’s tone at the conclusion of “A Catholic looks at Jung’s Psychology” is friendly: “So we can see that Catholics cannot accept the Jungian world view. That does not mean we do not recognize the advances brought about by his techniques. Our interpretation will differ but as psychologists we are grateful for his genius in developing them” (Arnold, n. d. a, p. 6). The practical result of this evaluation was that Arnold used Jung’s

technique of “active imagination” in her own version of psychotherapy, while abandoning his archetypal interpretation (Kugelman, 2009).

### ***Frankl***

Arnold is even more positive towards Viktor Frankl’s logotherapy.<sup>55</sup> In *The Human Person*, Arnold and Gasson devoted a full chapter to logotherapy and existential analysis, which consisted of the summary and analysis of Frankl’s *Ärztliche Seelsorge, or The Doctor and the Soul* (Frankl, 1955). This work had not yet been translated into English, so the trouble they went to bring Frankl’s ideas to the public is a mark of their high value of his theories (Kugelman, 2009). In their analysis of Frankl’s ideas, they comment that his dialectical method often makes his meaning obscure; however, as far as they understand him, they like him.

His outlook is kindred to our own. In him we find a psychiatrist who in his writings portrays the human being as a rational creature—not as an animal whose natural condition is neurosis. In him we find a clinician who is willing to believe his patient is capable of self-control and direction—not the complete and abject victim of THE UNCONCIOUS. In him we find a professional scientific worker who is convinced that the proper perfection of the human being is to be found in the realm of the spirit, not within the confines of instinct or reflex muscle twitches. (Arnold & Gasson, 1954b, p. 481)

They do, at times, disagree with Frankl, however. For example they take issue with *The Doctor and the Soul*’s interpretation of a patient’s dream using existential analysis. The dreamer is looking for Dr. X in a strange city and is told by a child it is “Near the church! But you have

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<sup>55</sup> Arnold was not alone in this. American Christians resonated with Frankl, whose spiritual expertise was reinforced by his Holocaust experience (Heinze, 2004). His emphasis on meaning and his implication of mechanistic theories as responsible for the Holocaust struck a chord (he wrote: “The gas chambers of Auschwitz were the ultimate consequence of the theory that man is nothing but the product of heredity and environment” [quoted in Heinze, 2004, p. 325]).

taken the wrong way, *you must go back!*” The dreamer then experiences “*I am thirsty*. The child draws clear water from a spring, and now I am actually going back.... in the distance there is the church—a resplendent *cathedral, milky white*” (Arnold & Gasson, 1954b, p. 489). Frankl (unsurprisingly) interprets this dream as pointing to the patient’s need for existential analysis and transformation of her concept of God in therapy, while Arnold and Gasson (unsurprisingly) point out the centrality of the church imagery in the dream, and reinterpret the dream as reflecting the patient’s desire for the faith she knew as a child, which has been awakened by therapy. Arnold and Gasson see this disagreement in interpretation as a result of Frankl’s introduction of an extraneous interpretation, not justified by the dream, which they say is also a sign of a potential weakness in existential analysis, the unwillingness “to follow through the implications of the primary data of existential analysis, *consciousness* (or self-awareness) and *responsibility*” (Arnold & Gasson, 1954b, p. 491). The truth about existence that therapy uncovers must ultimately trump human feelings about those truths.

Arnold and Gasson judge Frankl’s basic assumptions as “more acceptable” than either those of Freud or Adler because “here the human being is considered in his basically human functions” (Arnold & Gasson, 1954b, p. 491). But “a near truth is still not truth” (Arnold & Gasson, 1954b, p. 491). As much as Arnold and Gasson find common ground with Frankl, they have concerns about his lack of a firm philosophical foundation. Arnold and Gasson write “Frankl tries to build ‘golden bridges’” “to tempt the patient out of his neurosis,” “but even golden bridges must lead to something and not stop short in the fog of subjectivism” (Arnold & Gasson, 1954b, p. 485). They continue:

If “golden bridges” are to be built let them go from solid ground to solid ground; from the human creature, dependent upon God his maker and responsible to Him for every

thought, word, and deed, to the need of the present moment and the opportunity it provides for living one's life. They are not to be raised on the neutral ground of a vague responsibility to a nebulous life... (Arnold & Gasson, 1954b, p. 485).

Logotherapy, they said, in summary, “stands and falls with the logic of its philosophical assumptions. While logotherapy could be used with any philosophical assumptions, its value will never be independent of these assumptions” (Arnold & Gasson, 1954b, p. 492).

This last quote is a good summary of Arnold's approach to secular psychologies. Arnold consistently stresses the importance of the underlying assumptions when considering their compatibility with Catholic thinking. Although the problem with some theories is less with assumptions and more with interpretation of data, making them easier to adapt to Catholic use, there is ultimately no escaping a theory's philosophical assumptions. While Arnold was alert to this reality, she was concerned that her fellow Catholics were naive about the power of underlying assumptions. Arnold noted how often Catholics were uncritical of psychological theories:

In his docile acceptance of everything that bears the stamp of authority, the liberal Catholic is quite willing to jump on every band wagon, to champion every modern theory in vogue regardless of the fact that these theories are built on shaky philosophical foundations and lead to conclusions he would repudiate.... That every method of analysis or psychotherapy pre-supposes a philosophy he cannot or will not see. (Arnold, n.d. d, 6)

But the reactionary conservative was not blameless either: “Often the conservative Catholic joins his liberal brother in the end by accepting what was once derided, as soon as it becomes the new orthodoxy” (Arnold, n.d. d, p. 7). The problem with both conservative and liberal was a fear of independent thought, Arnold said—resulting in an aping of secular

psychology rather than developing one's own theories. This was the reason Catholics had not made more of an intellectual impact, according to Arnold: "We are constrained to a defensive watching and waiting, either until we can find a way of baptizing a theory or until it has become sufficiently influential to compel attention" (Arnold, n.d. d, p. 8).

Arnold was well aware that her critical analysis of secular theories would be viewed with suspicion. She called her reappraisal of Freud a thankless task "in today's climate": "If it is done by a Catholic, it may give rise to all kinds of misunderstanding" (Arnold, n.d. b, p. 1). The problem was that "A Catholic cannot accept Freud's philosophy, however high he may esteem his psychology. But any objection to his psychology, coming from a Catholic, is all too often taken as an objection to an unpalatable philosophy"<sup>56</sup> (Arnold, n.d. b, p. 1). But although her criticism of what she called "the new orthodoxy" might be understood as "neurotic resistance to inconvenient truths," Arnold believed that for the sake of scientific progress psychoanalysis should not have unquestioned "perpetual tenure" (Arnold, n.d. b, p. 1). How should Freud's theory be evaluated, according to Arnold? Her answer: "Is it based on valid philosophical principles, does it include all the relevant facts and does it provide a consistent explanation of necessary connections between these facts?" (Arnold, n.d. b, p. 1). Thus Arnold's typical response to secular psychology theories was an articulation of scientific subjectivity and an insistence on scientific rigor, rather than a religious argument.

In singling out Freud and Jung for attention, Arnold was fairly typical of religious commentators on psychology at the time (Richards, 2009). Freud was of interest because he was so influential—his technique Arnold compared to "the gambler sitting in on a rigged-deck poker

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<sup>56</sup> Arnold makes it clear that she was speaking from experience in the next sentence: "It has happened to me more than once that a discussion of some inconsistencies in the Freudian system was cut short by some remark to the effect that I should not presume to judge a system which better Catholics and wiser men have found acceptable" (Arnold 'Freud', n.d., p. 1).

game”: people chose to play because it was “the only game in town” (Arnold ‘The place of Logotherapy’, n.d., p. 43). But Arnold’s view of Freud is not a contagion model, such as that articulated by Rudolf Allers, a Catholic psychologist who similarly rejected Freud based on his false philosophy—“One has to conclude that a Catholic ought to beware getting too close a contact with Freudian ideas” (1941, p. 210). It was not, for Arnold, that the Catholic analyst was endangered by Freudian methods, but that an orthodox Freudian interpretation “loads the dice against his own efforts” (Arnold ‘Freud’, n.d.). The assumptions are just too different. Whereas a Freudian will aim at “a comprise between libidinal drives and the demands of society,” a Catholic analyst “will picture man as a child of God, redeemed and living the life of grace. What one will consider an escape into infantilism, the other will see as a necessary religious activity” (Arnold, 1954b, p. 419).

In contrast to Freud, Jung was popular with Catholics because he was one of the first to discuss religion in a positive light.<sup>57</sup> However, his perspective was incompatible with Catholicism on certain important points: the Catholic psychologist William C. Bier observed that “many Catholics, reacting against Freud, have embraced Jung more for what he *said* than what he *meant*” (1953d, p. 4). Despite Arnold’s love of Jung, she was aware of this conflict: Jung “made of religious dogma a highly significant but ‘psychic’ reality, in which God and Satan, Good and Evil were equal though opposite, and the incarnation was God’s attempt to become conscious” (Arnold, n.d. g, p. 1). But Jung was valuable nonetheless because of his less reductionist perspective on the human person. In a review of various schools of psychology Arnold judged “in all these sincere and well-meant efforts to help human beings, only two major

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<sup>57</sup> As Kugelmann (2011) notes, however, neoscholastic psychologists were generally not big fans of Jung, so Arnold is unusual in this respect.

psychotherapists, Jung and Frankl, paid attention to the human spirit and human aspirations” (Arnold ‘The place of Logotherapy’, n.d., p. 50).

In some ways Arnold actually prefers Frankl to Jung, because while both expect man to attempt to become his larger, better self, for Jung this is a subjective self, chosen by the subject, whereas for Frankl, “A person with an inadequate philosophy of life will never discover that his life has meaning” (Arnold ‘The place of Logotherapy’, n.d., p. 39). By making this existential task paramount, Frankl “has made the thoughtful, questing, creative personality the foundation of his personality theory, rather than extrapolating it from the neurotic caught in his emotions and preoccupied with his problems, or from the rat shaped in the Skinner box” (Arnold ‘The place of Logotherapy’, n.d., p. 41). The only problem is that Frankl deems God a mere archetype, despite the fact that for every other archetype there is a “counterpart in the real world (the mother, the father, the sage, the hero, the king)” (Arnold ‘The place of Logotherapy’, n.d., 41). For Arnold this is “an evasion, a refusal to face the possibility that there is a divine reality beyond all psychic reality, a divine reality that can be experienced by human beings” (Arnold ‘The place of Logotherapy’, n.d., p. 41).

Interestingly, despite Arnold’s criticisms of these three systems of psychotherapy, Arnold is not willing to abandon them. In *The Human Person* she devotes a full chapter to “Free Association and Free Imagination,” exploring what parts of Freud’s technique can be rescued from his faulty philosophical assumptions. Although Arnold is suspicious of analysts who insist that “every human activity can be submitted to the psychoanalytic scalpel” whether “literary products, religious experience, and scientific theories” (Arnold, 1954b, p. 406), she concludes that both free association and dream interpretation have value. Similarly, Arnold’s correspondence reveals that she and Gasson both believed in the value of the Jungian free



fantasy exercise and regularly used them on their patients (see Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949; Gasson, [1950], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]); her TAT story sequence analysis served a similar purpose. Arnold was no pure experimentalist; she always had an interest in clinical psychology, and this points to one reason she was so critical of these non-Catholic theories: philosophically-suspect therapy could have big real-world consequences. In preparing for his final talk for the Barat workshop, Gasson mentioned that he was thinking of a talk that would deal with the relationship between spiritual direction and counseling that would discuss “how inept therapy can negate good spiritual direction and destroy or warp a well begun interior life” (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 13, 1951). This was a concern Arnold shared. She once wrote that her friend Ginny really needed counseling but that she did not know who to send her to: “If there were a good psychiatrist I could recommend her to, I would feel a lot better about it - the trouble is, by now I don’t trust a Jungian analyst any more unless he is a Catholic, nor do I quite trust even a Catholic if he is a Freudian.”

It was not just the corrupting philosophies of those therapeutic methods that were at issue; Arnold had strong opinions about what ought to happen in therapy. As she wrote in her chapter on free association: “There has never been a single case in my experience where this process of inner growth did not at some time or other confront the person with God” (Arnold, 1954b, p. 420). Arnold’s correspondence contains an example of what this might look like. When Arnold was still at Bryn Mawr she wrote to Gasson about two clinical cases she was wrestling with, one a Jewish agnostic:<sup>58</sup>

I did a free fantasy with her and it turned out to be not only Christian, but Catholic - to her great mortification. First she saw the picture of the Good Shepherd hanging on the wall, the Good Shepherd bending down to pick up a stray lamb... a tall man, blackrobed,

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<sup>58</sup> This young woman was possibly a Bryn Mawr student.

in a Roman collar, stood in the midst of a sea of people. He had a beautiful smile, she said, like the Good Shepherd in the picture, and there was light all around him. All the people were perfectly quiet, just looking at him, and she was looking, too. Here she wanted to stay: “What else would anyone want to do but look at him!” It made a deep impression on her... (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 26, 1949).

Gasson was the more experienced therapist, with more patients coming to see him at the Jesuit House of Studies parlor than he could handle (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 11, 1955; Gasson, n.d., J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 15, n.d.), and at one point he advised a floundering Arnold that she could do something in therapy that would “supply for the confessional” since the patient was not (yet) in the church: “try, gently and adroitly to persuade your patient to make an act of perfect contrition - you are skillful enough to do that amount of ‘directing’ - it will not only mitigate guilt-feelings but most important, it will revive the soul” (Gasson, 1949, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949). This approach to therapy may seem bizarre, or even unethical, but it can be explained by further exploring the view of human personality, in particular the self-ideal, that Arnold and Gasson shared.

### **The Self-Ideal**

If Part I of *The Human Person* set up the critique of psychology’s unjustified basic assumptions, Part II, “Personality Structure,” extends this critique to personality theory specifically. The remainder of the book continues this shift from general scientific principles to a more applied discussion of personality, and in that context the concept of personality integration is key. The importance of this concept can be seen from the fact that Parts III through V all have integration in their titles: “Personality Integration,” “Psychotherapy and Self-Integration,” and

“Self-Integration through Religion.” Clearly integration is to play a large part in personalist psychology.

It is Part II that introduces the idea of integration, as well as the closely related concept, the self-ideal. This takes place in two consecutive chapters by Gasson, “Personality Theories based on Physical and Biological Models” (Chapter 5) and “Personality Theory: A Formulation of General Principles” (Chapter 6). In the first of these chapters Gasson lays out the foundations for this alternate theory by pointing out how inadequate physical and biological theories of the human person (in Allport’s terms, “the model of the robot, the rat, and the infant mind”) have been. The trend towards “deanthropomorphizing”—using jargon that does not actually describe humans in an effort to be objective, has sent psychology on a chase after “will-o’-the-wisp” (Gasson, 1954a, p. 127). An animal or machine or model is not totally irrelevant, but it can be “a stumbling block for further research because it favors exclusive attention to the least important aspect of human activity” (Gasson, 1954a, p. 145).

Here Gasson references Norbert Wiener’s cybernetic theories (1948) in which Wiener asserted that electronic servo-mechanisms are purposive since they possess self-regulatory capacities. However Gasson argues that they are not purposive in the same way that humans are because with humans “the intention is always intrinsic, the goal is set by the human being himself or, at least, the goal which is inherent in his nature has to be implemented by him” (Gasson, 1954a, p. 141-142). Humans have the ability to change their goal, whereas machines are constrained by their programming and design. A purely physical account of psychological activity is unsatisfactory because the most important point is not explained: “how the human being is not like a robot” (Gasson, 1954a, p. 136). As little as psychologists like to acknowledge it, the fact is that human beings “have purposes of their own which they do achieve, even

purposes that involve the direction of their lives” and that although the person “may resist having it changed for him,” humans are able to change “the conception of a self-ideal toward which to strive” (Gasson, 1954a, p. 147). Accordingly, Gasson predicts that central to any adequate theory of human personality will be “a human person who in all the vicissitudes of life somehow is pointing toward a single goal, which he does not invent but discovers, in his concept of human destiny” (Gasson, 1954a, p. 163).

The critical Chapter 5 is followed by a more constructive Chapter 6, in which Gasson formulates the principles of good personality theory. Gasson begins (in the method recommended by Arnold earlier in *The Human Person*) by making explicit his assumptions. His first is “epistemological realism, a moderate and immediate realism” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 165), which means: “We take for granted that in dealing with personality we are dealing with something that is real and that can be discovered by us” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 166). This realism, Gasson says, is necessary lest we “condemn ourselves to that sort of intellectual vegetarianism” which “the logical positivists so ardently recommend,” particularly because “they insist that only their hydroponic diet is fit for consumption” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 166). His second assumption is the human person as an original unit: “a single undivided substance, distinct from other substantial units in the universe,” not “an aggregate of heterogeneous substances (like the snakes and snails and puppy dogs’ tails that little boys are made of)” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 166). Certainly the human person has a number of qualities, “but it is the person who possesses them, not they which constitute the person” (Gasson, 1954b, p.167). Finally, Gasson assumes that humans are different in kind from other animals, and are operating at a higher level, and therefore possess a greater degree of freedom.

With these assumptions made explicit, Gasson turns his attention to the fundamentally active character of human behavior. Gasson asserts that a human's natural inclination is "not a passive orientation of his capacities to their proper objects but an impulse to action, capable of itself to move the person in a certain direction" (Gasson, 1954b, p. 176). This disposition toward action is true of "all human capacities, cognitive and motor as well as appetitive functions" (Gasson, 1954b, p. 176). It is this tendency that makes possible self-actualization, although Gasson specifies that he means something different from Rogers by this term, not just a biological unfolding but the "actuation of potentialities peculiar to the human being" (Gasson, 1954b, p. 179). The human person self-actualizes by reaching into the external world to "make one's own whatever may be valuable or desirable in it" (Gasson, 1954b, p.179) as well as by organizing and stabilizing the things it already possesses. Self-actualization is not simply achieved by borrowing from one's environment, but by changing the world for one's own ends. This is different from animals using or changing their environment, because a human is psychologically responsible for his actions. Gasson, quoting Joseph Nuttin, says "Man intervenes intentionally in his own development to actualize higher potentialities" (Gasson, 1954b, p. 182).

Thus, according to Gasson, the impulse to create is a form of self-actualization:

The making of things, whether it be a mud pie, a dress, a golden goblet, a poem, a song, or a new chemical compound, is a higher reach of self-actuation than mere acquisition. In making, what was an individual, intangible, and perhaps fleeting thought is made substantial and enduring. The self is made more real... (Gasson, 1954b, p. 186)

"Man the maker" is perfected (that is to say self-actualized) to the degree that "he puts his whole self, his soul" into his work, a work that has some human use (Gasson, 1954b, p. 188).<sup>59</sup> Such

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<sup>59</sup> Gasson has a footnote in which he comments on the fact that the modern industrial system has dehumanized the craftsman and the artisan. Traditionally "the idea of making [objects] well and the instinct for making them beautiful

constructive work is “a *realization* (a bringing into thinghood) not only of an idea within the mind but also of a potentiality dormant and hidden, till now, within the self” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 188).

This idea of self-actualization by making and doing stands in stark contrast to other theories because Gasson insists that no conflict is necessary for complete self-actualization. In fact, in addition to making and doing Gasson claims that perfection comes through sharing: “the firmest and most enduring possession of the self in knowledge and love is in the giving of self” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 190). The perfection of the person is to be found in giving and sharing: in the dedication of one’s self to the common welfare “there will be found the surest and most stable condition for achieving the actuation of one’s highest potentialities” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 190). In contrast to psychoanalytic theory’s view of human society as a foment of barely restrained urges and aggression, Gasson says that love, “the fruit of rational knowledge and deliberate choice,” is the foundation of all relationships: “Without love no human relationship can endure except by force or accident. Without love no family or state can be permanent. Without love human society is impossible” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 190). Love is the greatest form of self-actualization since “the known and loved other becomes the better part of the knower and lover who almost by sheer self-interest is drawn to enhance the beloved” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 190).

However, self-actualization does not simply happen by accident, nor is it inevitable. Whereas in other theories failures in therapy “are never laid at the patient’s door” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 193) but are blamed on the therapist or explained by constitutional factors, Gasson says that sometimes the outcome of therapy genuinely is the patient’s choice. This is what it means for humans to have free will:

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were united” but now since the design and creation of objects are separated the worker is not to able create things which “naturally satisfy his sense of beauty” (Gasson, 1954b, p.188, quoting Gill, 1944).

The patient must be willing to pay the price if he is to get well, and for some patients the price seems to be too high. The price is his willingness to organize his life according to a rational pattern which will give direction to his life, regardless of difficulties and discomfort. (Gasson, 1954b, p. 193)

The person must set his goal and direction based on the “the ideal of the perfect person as the individual conceives him,” not based on himself but on “human nature at its best incarnated in a concrete person” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 193). That ideal person is Jesus Christ, who alone in human history has been perfect. Even for non-Christians or people unaware of his existence, the moral character of Jesus matches the qualities of their ideal person. For the individual, the self-ideal is “that approximation to Christlikeness which the individual judges to be proper and possible for himself” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 194).

Conflict arises because there is a discrepancy between “what I am and what I want to be, or even between what I am and what I think I am, and a further gap between what I want to be and what I ought to be” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 195). Although psychotherapy addresses this gap, it often is insensitive to which of these problems it is addressing, and tries to address the gap between the person and their self-ideal by making their self-ideal more “realistic.” But it is not high self-ideals that produce psychological conflict, because in striving to achieve a high goal (even if the striving always ends in failure) one is always clearly directed toward the right goal.

But in the case of a wrong self-ideal, that is, a divergence between “the self-ideal as it actually is and the self-ideal as it ought to be” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 195) there will indeed be emotional conflict and friction. This psychological bifurcation happens because such a man is trying to unite “several incompatible objects: ‘No man can serve two masters’”<sup>60</sup> (Gasson, 1954b, p. 197). But if a man changes his self-ideal to what it ought to be and sets out to

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<sup>60</sup> See Matthew 6:24.

“determinedly and deliberately organize and integrate himself” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 197) in pursuit of the new self-ideal, such emotional conflicts will cease. To be clear, the more “a person’s activities and strivings are centered about the self as self, the less do they become amenable to effective integration and harmony, the more they are concerned with outgoing and sharing, the more they are not only integrated but enhanced. ‘He that loses his life shall find it’” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 197).

This is relevant to a discussion of personality because the self-ideal is at the heart of the personality. The personality structure is the “externally perceptible organization of a person’s activities, habits, and powers, as they go toward a self-ideal” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 219). Gasson notes how different this theory is than most: “It is hard to find in current literature a psychological explanation of this putting together of elements in personality development which does not use conflict (and frustration) as its most fundamental concept” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 198-199). In contrast, Gasson’s view of self-actualization through making and doing and sharing holds that “any being as a being, is by its very nature pointed to completion in the tranquility of right order” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 199). For humans this means that “the achievement of his distinctively human perfection consists in coming to possess the rest of creation in a way which, far from destroying or damaging, rather enhances it namely by knowledge and love” (Gasson, 1954b, p. 199). Rather than conflict being at the heart of human life, the principle is “*Bonum est diffusivum sui*”<sup>61</sup> (Gasson, 1954b, p. 188).

The concept of a self-ideal, and the idea of integration as the goal of psychological intervention, echoes throughout the rest of *The Human Person*. Louis Snider contributes a chapter on using the TAT story sequence analysis method to measure self-determination; Vincent Herr discusses “Integration and the Self-Ideal;” Arnold contributes a chapter on

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<sup>61</sup> “Goodness seems to spread.”



emotions as a part of personality integration;<sup>62</sup> Charles Curran covers “Counseling as Therapy and Self-integration;” and Gasson contributes a chapter on “Religion and Personality Integration.” This last chapter (also the last in the book) was a heavily edited version of Gasson’s 1931 PhD dissertation (“John Augustine Gasson, S. J.”, n.d.). Of all of the discussion of the self-ideal in *The Human Person*, it best communicates how Arnold and Gasson saw the self-ideal functioning in therapy.

Gasson introduces The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, because he has experienced how “efficacious the Exercises are in improving not only spiritual but psychological functioning in whole and well souls” (Gasson, 1954c, p. 549). The Exercises, which are intended to be explored over the course of a 30-day spiritual retreat, “make use of the basic dynamisms of human action in a remarkable manner and achieve an effective integration of human personality, on both the natural and the supernatural planes” (Gasson, 1954c, p. 549). A critical theme within the Exercises is “Election, or Choice of a Way of Life” (Gasson, 1954c, p. 558); in other words, the choice of a self-ideal. Over the course of the retreat, attendees discern (in consultation with a spiritual director) what specific form their self-ideal should take, given their life circumstances, meditate on the perfect moral exemplar of Jesus Christ, and are encouraged to give up things (even good things) which might interfere with them achieving their self-ideal. This method, which is certainly how Gasson conducted his therapy,<sup>63</sup> as well as his retreat, results in an “inner concord and peace of mind” but also requires “effort and discipline” in pursuit of the self-ideal

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<sup>62</sup> This chapter was her first articulation of her appraisal theory of emotion, which would be more fully elaborated in *Emotion and Personality*. This chapter of *The Human Person* is not discussed here because it would duplicate some discussion of *Emotion and Personality* in Chapter 4.

<sup>63</sup> Likely Arnold conducted her therapy using this method as well. It seems likely that the Jungian free fantasy exercise that was such a favorite of Arnold and Gasson, as well as TAT story sequence analysis, was used to help the patient gain insight about their life-struggles, with the eye to eventually helping the patient develop a true self-ideal. For example Gasson writes “My patient has made good progress; I’ll be able to leave him, sure that he will get along well enough. He has caught on to what is awry and he has solid supernatural motivation” (Gasson [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, July 16, [1953]).

(Gasson, 1954c, p. 556). But there is no question that for Gasson the self-ideal was vital. Without it, the human being is in a state of intolerable tension as his lower and higher natures war: “Some unification, some combination is necessary, for the human being cannot long go on being so pulled apart” (Gasson, 1954c, p. 566). Arnold concurs: the most essential element of therapy is personality integration through the establishment of a self-ideal: “final success decisively depends on the patient’s willingness to follow through on the reorganization of his life and the establishment of his self-ideal” (Arnold, 1954c, p. 537).

The concept is also important in Arnold’s emotion work. Just months after Gasson’s death, Arnold wrote to friends about how she was coping by keeping busy trying to compile an “Arnold Reader,” which would include her various articles and lectures. She wrote that as she edited it she was thinking of John because some of the pieces she had written with him: “It helps, too, to reread them realize anew just how good he was; I could never have written them without him” (Arnold, 1988). She continued “He also wrote an article on Personality Theory which I am going to include because it is really the basis of my later work” (Arnold, 1988). Based on Arnold’s frequent citation of it in *Emotion and Personality*, that influential personality theory article is Chapter 6 of *The Human Person*. Gasson’s work on the self-ideal, inspired by Ignatian spirituality, thus would not remain the forgotten final chapter of a Catholic book, but laid the foundation for Arnold’s emotion theory.

### **Reception of “The BOOK”**

The influence of *The Human Person* on Arnold’s future scholarship was unthought-of in the days following the workshop. Rather, the focus was on converting the workshop proceedings into a book. This was possible because Arnold’s daughter, Joan, and the chair of Barat’s

psychology department, Mother Margaret Burke,<sup>64</sup> had recorded and later transcribed the workshop papers (Arnold & Gasson, 1954). Joan recalled that at the time she did not know how to touch type, but her mother told her that this was her chance to learn (Arnold, 2014). Arnold had arranged for Gasson to help her with the editing process; he wrote that he would be able to stay for a whole month because his superior had given him the summer for psychology, and when she fretted about the Barat guest quarters, he told her not to worry: “Don’t be concerned about whether or not I’ll be comfortable during my stay at Barat. I’ve lived in Rome” (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 13, 1951). He was looking forward to working together: “As long as I will be working with you, they could shut the air-conditioning off, darling” (Gasson, 1951, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 6, 1951).

Once Arnold and Gasson parted ways they continued editing the book by exchanging manuscripts in the mail. It eventually became clear that they would have to add a substantial amount of material to create a book; they ultimately ended up with 9 chapters by the other workshop contributors and 10 chapters written by them (about two-thirds of the book was written by them, in terms of page numbers). Their goal was to make a book that could be used as a textbook in a personality class and that would be accessible enough for both non-Catholics and undergraduates. In accomplishing this goal they ran into some trouble, particularly with Gasson’s more theoretical material: “My Chap two will take longer if it to be a good rewriting job to make it less hard going. It can be made fairly intelligible and it must be. If Fr. Herr and Fr. Snider find it tough it has got to be made much easier or the Gentiles won’t know from nothing” (Gasson, n.d., J. Gasson to M. Arnold, “Whensday”).

Arnold and Gasson got a preview of how non-Catholics might receive their work in the person of Gordon Allport. The book was complete and after a couple false starts had a publisher

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<sup>64</sup> Mother Margaret Burke, R.S.C.J. (1913-1990), was later president of Barat (1954 to 1976).

lined up (Arnold, 1952, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 6, 1952), so Arnold gave a copy of the manuscript to Allport and asked him to write the preface. But Allport firmly declined: “I appreciate your still wanting me for the Preface. It is a significant volume and I wish I could cooperate, but fear I cannot” (Allport, 1953, G. W. Allport to M. Arnold, July 8, 1953). He was terribly busy with a variety of other projects, but it was not only that:

I have weighted your merciful suggestion that a short note of introduction would be sufficient. My belief that all psychologists should divest themselves of petty prejudice and acquaint themselves with the mighty framework your volume offers is deep and sincere. But I fear that if I started saying this, and a few other things, in the Preface I should not be satisfied until I read the whole volume. This would lead me into more thoughts, friendly and critical, and I should find myself more deeply involved than I can afford to be.

This is the way my mind is working, and so in self-protection I plead for your understanding and hope you and Fr. Gasson will excuse me.

Allport included in the letter minor criticisms of the book, and closed:

I greatly regret having to send you these negative thoughts, for I do wish the enterprise well. I know it can stand on its own feet, and can do so better than if I splashed out a few inadequate ideas to support a most carefully reasoned position. (Allport, 1953, G. W. Allport to M. Arnold, July 8, 1953)

Arnold was deeply disappointed by this news. After all, Allport was an old friend and mentor, and frequently approvingly cited in *The Human Person*. It was Allport who she had written to with the news that she was leaving Bryn Mawr for Barat, certain of his sympathy for her reasons and asking for his help in finding a replacement psychologist for her, someone

“brilliant enough to be acceptable to Bryn Mawr and positivist enough to be happy here - the latter shouldn’t be difficult” (Arnold, 1950, M. Arnold to G. Allport, May 6, 1950). In this earlier interaction Allport had not disappointed, writing in return:

Your announced change of plan startled me a little - but not for long. I believe I understand fully your motivation, and I respect you for preferring integrity to the brittle rewards of conformity...All good wishes. Integrity is even more desirable than avoidance of Chicago. Here again I understand and sympathize! (Allport, 1950, G. W. Allport to M. Arnold, May 9, 1950)

But in the case of *The Human Person* it seemed that Allport refused to commit himself to a project that so explicitly laid out its philosophical assumptions. Gasson was disappointed too but understood:

...I am of course a little let down by Allports letter. However, I think we can both appreciate his position. He feels that if he is going to write an introduction he should write a good one - and he is not in good circumstances for that because of other work. Then too, the book is not an enterprise with which he would want to [sic] identify himself completely. He would rather give support from the sidelines than as a coach or auxiliary member of the team. I wouldn’t hold that against him at all. We can thank him for his good will. (Gasson, [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, July 16, [1953])

Allport’s reaction was a good measure of the pressures that faced religious belief in 1950s science. Although Allport had written positively on religion, even writing an introduction to a work on Hinduism and psychology (Richards, 2009),<sup>65</sup> it was still dangerous to associate himself with an explicitly Catholic work.

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<sup>65</sup> The book was *Hindu Psychology and Its Meaning for the West* (Akhilananda, 1948).

Kostis (2014) has argued that Allport was one of the religious scientists who chose to separate their religious identity and their professional identity, so as to avoid having their objectivity questioned. Allport was in a sense a closeted Christian, not disclosing the degree to which his faith influenced his theories of personality. Allport's sharp awareness of the dangers of a faith which "intruded" on one's professional work can be seen in a letter of recommendation he wrote for Arnold for Tulane in 1950. Rather duplicitously, given his certain knowledge of Arnold's faith, he wrote "She seems to me a woman who has deep religious convictions of her own, and while she does not intrude them they affect her work in an advantageous way" (Allport, 1950, G. W. Allport to C. Man, February 21, 1950).

Arnold would never have framed her faith in such terms. In a letter to Gasson in 1952, for instance, Arnold told of her frustration with John Gilbert Beebe-Center,<sup>66</sup> with whom she had shared a few pages of the manuscript that would eventually become *Emotion and Personality*.<sup>67</sup> Arnold recounted that Beebe-Center "practically blew a fuse," wrote pages of critical comments on the draft, and told her "nobody will publish the book if I go on in the way I want to;" Arnold "got hopping mad, fortunately not until I got out of his office" (Arnold, 1952, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 6, 1952). The underlying reason for Arnold's anger: "he told me he had studied under Lindworsky<sup>68</sup> and never noticed that Catholic philosophy need to interfere with a man's scientific approach" (Arnold, 1952, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 6, 1952).

In contrast to Allport's approach, Gasson and Arnold were quite willing to go public with their beliefs in a professional setting. Not quite 2 years after the workshop, Arnold and Gasson

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<sup>66</sup> John Gilbert Beebe-Center (1897-1958) was a member of the Harvard psychology faculty with an interest in emotion and motivation (Boring, 1959)

<sup>67</sup> Arnold shared with Beebe-Center "the first few pages to the introductory chapter on emotion" (Arnold, 1952, M. B. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 6, 1952).

<sup>68</sup> Johannes Lindworsky (1875-1939), author of *Experimental Psychology* (1931) and *Training of the Will* (1929), was a German Catholic psychologist who attempted to create a psychology independent of metaphysics (Kugelmann, 2011).

were wondering if they ought to introduce some of the ideas of the *The Human Person* in an APA symposium. Gasson was not sure whether APA or ACPA was the more strategic location, but thought that if they presented their ideas at APA it should be “not as an alternative to current theories, but as a modest attempt to clear the field as much as may be of ‘biased’ terms and phraseology” (Gasson, 1953, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 19, 1953). All things considered, Gasson thought they should try; in the worst case scenario: “if it is accepted and we disgrace ourselves in the face of the APA, we will have provided a target for beefs and bad temper that might otherwise have been vented by way of drink and stuff” (Gasson, 1953, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 19, 1953). It was just as well that Gasson and Arnold were willing to face disgrace on behalf of their ideas; mainstream psychologists were not quick to embrace criticism of their objectivity, and were apt to attack the objectivity of religious authors who so obligingly pointed out their own philosophical assumptions.

But before the reviewers pounced there were last-minute concerns to worry about, such as getting the book approved by the Catholic censors<sup>69</sup> (Gasson, 1953, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 23, 1953), and catching typos and misquotations. Unfortunately mistakes were too late to be fixed since the printing plates were already cast: “We will just have to let things ride and wait for slings and arrows. It will serve to keep us from being too proud of our cheild” (Gasson, 1948, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 11, 1954). Still Gasson and Arnold could not help being proud of their creation:

... compared with some of the jackets on other Ronald books I’d say they did a special job for us. I think it will look very nice on the book - it will be in color and the design is striking. I know both of us would have specified ermine and brocade, royal purple and

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<sup>69</sup> Since the book included contributions by members of Catholic religious orders it had to be approved by a censor (Kugelmann, 2011).

burnished gold, symphony and loud speakers but to Ronald ours is just another kid in an orphan asylum. I'd say we have had a swell deal all around. (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 6, 1954)

Gasson speculated that based on the reasonable price (\$5.75) Ronald expected good sales, over 3,000 copies, and thought that perhaps each contributor should be responsible for selling 15 copies: "Me I've done that much already and I haven't even started my personal advertising campaign!!" (Gasson 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 5, 1954). To promote the book Gasson planned to bombard all manner of Catholic institutions with fliers: directors of schools of nursing at Catholic hospitals and directors of social service in Catholic charities, and chaplains of the Newman clubs at the secular universities in New England and throughout the South (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 31, 1954). He reminded Arnold to plug the book at her speaking engagements (Yale and Northwestern) and pronounced, apparently in response to one of the reactions she reported: "I think anyone who thinks that human person is tautology is singularly dense" (Gasson, n. d., J. Gasson to M. Arnold, n.d.).

When the copies of the book finally arrived the Jesuits of Spring Hill celebrated in style: "We unveiled it here by exhibiting it lying upon a silken pillow on a dais at the refectory door during dinner. After dinner we toasted it and the authors with modest but powerful libations" (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 31, 1954). Gasson rejoiced that the book's jacket was "not as gaudy as a Penguin book but immeasurably more eyetaking than the usual Ronald jacket" (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 31, 1954). They sent signed copies to friends and to the contributors to the book, and Gasson even created a Latin distich in honor of Allport for his autographed copy: "For one 30 years away from writing Latin poetry," Gasson lamented, "it was silly to try. It took hours and hours to get the meter right, but once started, I



was doggoned if I was going to give up!!! I can be so assiduous in useless tasks - and obstinate too” (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 31, 1954).

The initial response was encouraging; Gasson ran out of books and had to order more: ...it sounds like everybody in my vicinity is yelling for one. So far I have heard one father say that chap 1 and chap 17<sup>70</sup> would be worth the price even if the rest of the book weren't there at all. “Not,” says he, “that your stuff isn't good, father, but those two chapters say so beautifully what a lot of professional men I know have been looking for an honest-to-God need.” So you see, what did I tell you. The last chapter he liked, of course, because it was about the Exercises and that is his favorite book. (Sister Veronica began reading it for the spiritual reading to the community - I persuaded [sic] her to stop it - that's no stuff for tired nuns at the end of the day...). (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 31, 1954)

Later Gasson revealed just what section it was that had so captivated Sister Veronica: “she read a little of it to the community, as I told you, and then demanded an hour's lecture to the same community explaining what she had read. And guess what she had read. **Self-actuation in doing, making, and sharing**” (Gasson 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 5, 1954). *The Human Person's* original description of self-actualization was resonating.

The secular reviews, when they came, were more temperate. Most reviewers reacted positively, although tempered their praise with a disclaimer about the book's distinctive Catholic approach, which would not be for all readers: “The two chapters on orthodox Christianity...make it a specialized book rather than a general personality text” (McKinney, 1954, p. 384); “it is doubtful whether it would be accepted in the usual secular college or university” (Riggs, 1955, p. 279). Arnold's old graduate school colleague, Mary Northway, wrote a friendly review which

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<sup>70</sup> These were Arnold's chapters “Basic Assumptions in Psychology” and “The Theory of Psychotherapy.”

she began with the hope that the shock of seeing learning theory and the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius together would “not result in a withdrawal response, but rather arouse interest in the relationship which the authors perceive between these apparently disparate phenomena” (Northway, 1955, p. 254). While Northway noted some unevenness and Catholic jargon in the other chapters, she thought “the chapters by Dr. Arnold and Father Gasson are always comprehensible” (Northway, 1955, p. 254) and that it would be good for modern students to learn that “at least one group of psychologists is making a serious effort to include man’s highest aspirations and achievements in the basic data of our science” (Northway, 1955, p. 255).

In *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Margaret Riggs opined that the book was “founded more on logic than on fact” (Riggs, 1955, p. 278), since there was only one study presented (the use of the TAT to measure self-determination) and its procedure so briefly described as to be unverifiable. However, she singled out Arnold’s analysis of emotions for praise: “these seem to represent a fundamental step toward genuine theoretical precision” (Riggs, 1955, p. 279). She too noted the explicitly Catholic orientation: “With minor deletions, some of the individual chapters might pass without any comment in any secular text; others frankly discuss man’s knowledge of God through Jesus seen through the Christ. The whole, however, is strikingly self-consistent in underlying orientation” (Riggs, 1955, p. 278). Fred McKinney agreed in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, calling the work “a point of departure for a much needed critical and unfettered discussion of psychology and human values” (McKinney, 1954, p. 384), although he thought they ought to have included a non-Catholic psychologist “to increase the objectivity of the presentation” (McKinney, 1954, p. 384).

The objectivity of the authors of *The Human Person* was the major issue in the book's highly critical review in the *Psychological Bulletin*. Bert Sappenfield<sup>71</sup> did not pull any punches: “the authors are inclined to subordinate psychological principles to the articles of their religious faith—that they attempt to remodel psychology in the image of an ideology” (Sappenfield, 1955, p. 89). He took issue with their abandonment of determinism in favor of free will, which he said would “deny the predictability of human action” (Sappenfield, 1955, p. 89), and their redefinition of the self-ideal. He had no objection to the concept of a self-ideal, “provided the ‘self-ideal as it ought to be’ is defined by the prevailing social values” (Sappenfield, 1955, p. 89), but their notion of a self-ideal using Christ as model was ridiculous. He conceded that “The authors demonstrate a high degree of sophistication in dealing with psychological concepts deriving from varied school of thought” however this was “only for the purpose of refuting many of the concepts that are widely accepted among present day psychologists” (Sappenfield, 1955, p. 90). “To the Catholic reader, perhaps, this book will seem to offer significant contributions” (Sappenfield, 1955, p. 90), he concluded, but for the non-Catholic reader, it would be disappointing “since it provides, instead of an integrated theory of personality, little more than a discussion of psychological principles in terms of their agreement or disagreement with Catholic doctrines” (Sappenfield, 1955, p. 90).

Gasson's response to reviewers' accusations of bias was mostly bemusement: “The poor psychiatrist betrays himself so very badly when he makes us doctrinaire; you can see the party line sticking out all over the few paragraphs” (Gasson, n.d., J.A. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 15, n.d.). But Sappenfield's review was bad enough and prominent enough that it called for a response, so Arnold wrote a rebuttal that was published in *Psychological Bulletin* later that year. Sappenfield's review, Arnold said, reflected “a serious misunderstanding of our position as

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<sup>71</sup> Bert Sappenfield was a personality psychologist who taught at Montana State University from 1941 to 1978.

stated in the very first chapter of the book” (Arnold, 1955, p. 372). She defended herself by distinguishing between philosophy and religious faith: “Our own assumptions are presented as an alternative to the currently popular world view...and are based on Thomistic philosophy. This, like any other kind of philosophy is the fruit of reflection, and hence has no intrinsic connection with Catholic doctrine” (Arnold, 1955, p. 372). She pointed out that non-Christians, such as Mortimer Adler, were Thomist. “Obviously” she said, “every philosophy can be called an ‘ideology,’” whether logical positivism or psychoanalytic, and in that sense “Thomistic philosophy is an ideology too, and Dr. Sappenfield is free to take it or leave it, as suits his systematic position” (Arnold, 1955, p. 372). Sappenfield was being inconsistent to apply the label of ideology to their philosophy only, and to do so was to “take unfair advantage of the philosophical naiveté of the reader” (Arnold, 1955, p. 372). Sappenfield was, Arnold feared, the victim of “unconscious prejudice” (Arnold, 1955, p. 372).

But it was not all bad news. Allport, after reading his copy of *The Human Person* (distich and all: “I am gleeful over the inscription in the book--the first time I have been honored in Latin”), had changed his mind about the book. He wrote Gasson:

Re-reading “The Human Person” gives me far better perspective. It is more instructive and more adequate than most books on personality. Whereas at first I felt the critical edge to be sharp and intrusive, I think now it strikes a good balance between criticism and constructiveness. It is packed with valuable insights. (Allport, 1954, G. Allport to J. Gasson, August 31, 1954)

He continued:

It may be my own ignorance of the field that leads me to think that a new spirit blows through the pages...I refer to the attempt to communicate Scholasticism in 20th Century

terms and with full and complete knowledge of what other psychologies today are delivering. There is no cloistered isolationism, but a fair battle in a modern arena. The expositions you give demand attention and merit it because you link on to the growing knowledge of psychological science. (Allport, 1954, G. Allport to J. Gasson, August 31, 1954)

Delighted, Gasson got Allport's permission to use a quote from his letter in their promotional materials.

Less gratifying, ironically, was the published Catholic response. Gasson wrote to Arnold about two Catholic reviews: "I was not as disappointed in them as you were. Fr. Farrell is young and bright and does think. The other guy is a THOMIST and so could be expected to insist that we use Thomas' words even to the Gents who wouldn't understand them" (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 4, 1955). Gasson then got an ominous note from Raymond McCall, who was going to review the book for the ACPA newsletter. Gasson wrote Arnold, "I suspect he is going to harp on some picayune little point of no significance just to show off his erudition on an irrelevant matter. ...When the review appears I guess I'll write him a reply and point out some of the Nominalistic flavor of the exaggerated Thomism he seems to cultivate" (Gasson 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 19, 1954).

McCall's review was on the whole positive, calling it "a book of enormous range" which, although somewhat uneven, would be "indispensable reference for upper-level students," including the students at De Paul University, where it would now be required reading (McCall, 1955). Arnold's chapters on psychotherapy and imagination he called "highly original and challenging;" they "mark Magda Arnold as a thinker to be reckoned with" (McCall, 1955). But to Gasson, his Thomistic fellow, McCall was not as kindly. Although he credited Gasson with

“scientific erudition and lively philosophic realism” while “twitting the makers of pseudo-mathematical and physical models in personality theory,” he critiqued him for failing to provide a “clear line of demarcation between philosophical and scientific method” (McCall, 1955).

Gasson’s philosophy, McCall said, appeared to be “closer to the tradition of Wolff and certain of the 19th century manuals than to Thomism” (McCall, 1955).

This last jibe was, as Gasson explained it to Arnold, “a family fight among contemporary scholastics about existentialism and essentialism,” which in his opinion was “a tempest in a teapot stirred up by a curious attempt to get ahead of modern existentialists” (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 25, 1955). But being called Wolffian was a deadly insult to a Thomist and Gasson was angry. He wrote to Arnold: “I am inclined just to let the thing go without a word. I am mad enough to say some sharp things” (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 25, 1955). If he were going to say something, he confided, it would be something like:

I am unimpressed by the tendency...St. Louis U and Toronto Thomists have of dismissing so many propositions that have been traditionally been accepted as ‘profoundly and authentically’ St. Thomas’ as Wolf[f]ianism. ... St. Thomas was happily unaware that even he might be dubbed Wolf[f]ian by authentic Thomists. (Gasson, 1955, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 25, 1955)

Part of the dispute was over using St. Thomas’ original language. McCall had critiqued *The Human Person*’s use of philosophical terms as ““popular” rather than technically accurate” (McCall, 1955), but the use of popular language was intentional, as Arnold and Gasson had wanted non-experts and non-Catholics to be able to read the book. However, judging from

reviews, they had to conclude that they had failed to make the book as accessible as they had hoped. Gasson wrote Arnold:

...the book is not as easy to read and assimilate by the professional psychologist as we hoped it would be. When we do the revision we will have to use even basicer basic English. It is a little too tough for our own students and too foreign for the others. What about your students this year? Are they as slow to get the point as some of last year's were? (Gasson, n.d., J.A. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 15, n.d.)

Arnold and Gasson thought they might put out a second edition, or perhaps start from scratch for an even more popular audience<sup>72</sup> (a good idea since “our parts of the book are the only meaty ones” [Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, July, 1954]). It was clear it was going over the heads of many:

Of the twenty copies I have had to give away I don't think a single one has gone to a person who could follow the discourse of the book the whole way with complete understanding. Maybe we ought to be thinking of a book for the intelligent laypeople in personality psychology. (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, July, 1954)

But the real problem was a lack familiarity with basic logic: “The more I think about the more difficult it gets to seem because so many people do not understand the meaning of formal cause except as some form of efficient causality, i.e, some kind of efficient cause. As we said before, it is going to be primarily a matter of effective communication” (Gasson 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 19, 1954). Indeed, it seems it was the unconventionality and boldness of Gasson and Arnold's views that prevented *The Human Person* from having a wider impact.

### Summary

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<sup>72</sup> Neither of these ideas ever came to fruition.

In January 1952, not quite a year after the workshop had taken place, Gasson wrote to Arnold telling her about an after-dinner lecture he had given to the officers at Brookley Field Air Force Base.<sup>73</sup> His talk had been called “Building a Personality or How to Get The Most Out of Life” (Gasson, [1952], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 12, [1952]). As for the content: “For a psychologist to talk about Christlikeness was at least unexpected” Gasson wrote, “but I think I made a lot of them like it” (Gasson, [1952], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 12, [1952]). In this talk, the notion of the self-ideal is implied; the officers were taught to build their personality based on a Christlike self-ideal.

The shock of the psychologist talking about Christlikeness is an apt way to describe the impact of *The Human Person*. What Arnold and Gasson were attempting to do in organizing the Workshop in Personality and in editing *The Human Person*, was uncommon, even among Catholics in psychology. Rather than trying to keep their faith quiet, or clearly separating their faith and their science to show that they were unbiased (the assimilationist approach), Arnold and Gasson boldly proclaimed their own philosophical allegiances at the same time that they called out secular psychology on its own unquestioned assumptions. Their integrationist approach was unique within Catholic psychology at the time for its unapologetic attempt to break out of the confines of the Catholic ghetto, and to bring explicitly Catholic ways of thinking into the psychological mainstream.

In this attempt Arnold and Gasson were only partially successful. Although secular journals reviewed the book, they most frequently judged that it was “written by and for” Catholics (Sappenfield, 1955, p. 88), that is, appropriate reading primarily for Catholics. Sappenfield delivered the traditional “conflict” position: *The Human Person* was ideology, Arnold and Gasson were biased and could not be trusted to interpret scientific findings

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<sup>73</sup> This base is located in Mobile, Alabama.



accurately. There was some dissent from the Catholic camp as well: Arnold and Gasson's attempts to use language that would be understood by "Gentiles" was not appreciated; instead a strict adherence to Thomistic convention was expected. Although there is no written record of this response, it is also probable that Catholic assimilationists were annoyed by *The Human Person's* overt articulation of Catholic philosophical assumptions, which to them would have seemed like asking for trouble. In the end, the project of *The Human Person* was too radical to have a widespread impact on psychology. For the secular reader it was too strange to have a psychologist talk about Christlikeness, for the Catholic reader, unwise.

But *The Human Person* does reveal just how deeply Arnold's faith had impacted her science. She was no longer satisfied to work on mechanistic, biological psychology projects that relied on animal models to explain human experience. She was impatient with secular psychology for being blind to its own philosophical commitments, for accepting logical contradictions in the name of dialectical psychology, and for continuing to spurn philosophy in its attempt to be like physics. It was not that she rejected materialist theories because they did not agree with Catholicism, but because she thought they were not based on valid philosophical principles and did not adequately explain the facts.

The main fact to be explained was that of human experience—humans as free agents and as tending towards a goal of their own choosing. In too many psychological theories human experience was dismissed in favor of elaborate scientific apparatus, which looked good but explained little. In order to understand human nature, Arnold argued, psychologists needed to look to questions of origin and purpose, rather than to animal or machine models. From her Thomistic, direct realist perspective it was clear to Arnold that the human person was a unique creature, possessing rational capacities distinct from animals, but a creature nonetheless, whose

proper *telos* was God. As such, human discord and anxiety is the result of a disordered self, a self split apart by warring desires, and tending after a wrong end. The secret to peace was psychological integration through the establishment of a self-ideal—the self-ideal as it ought to be: human nature at its best, incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ.

While *The Human Person* did not have the public influence Arnold had hoped for, it did live on in her own work. The writing and thinking that she and Gasson had done in editing *The Human Person* laid the foundation for the phenomenological method and theories of emotion she would articulate in her definitive work on emotion, *Emotion and Personality*. Although *Emotion and Personality* was not explicitly religious in orientation, it shared the personalist philosophical commitments that Arnold had introduced in *The Human Person*. It articulated many of the same ideas, but in a secular guise.

#### Chapter 4: Arnold's Theory of Emotions and Thomistic Psychology

As Arnold and Gasson edited *The Human Person*, Arnold, who was at Harvard on a Helen Putnam Fellowship for Advanced Research, was starting work on the emotions project that would eventually become *Emotion and Personality* (1960). As a result the two works share many ideas, and *Emotion and Personality* can be seen as an outgrowth of *The Human Person*—a practical application of the theoretical base that Arnold and Gasson had laid out. But there was a major difference: whereas *The Human Person* had been open about its authors' religious commitments, *Emotion and Personality* was demure. There are mentions of Aquinas and Aristotle to be sure, and the occasional citation of chapters in *The Human Person*, but Arnold did not engage with Catholicism explicitly in this work. This allowed *Emotion and Personality* to have far greater success and prominence in mainstream psychology than any of Arnold's previous work.

Emotion was a subject ripe for a revolutionary work. As Arnold noted in the first chapter of *Emotion and Personality*, the term “emotion” had fallen out of favor in psychology—a search of the *Annual Review of Psychology* 1950-1958 revealed “no such topic as emotion under this or any other term” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 10). The reason for this reticence, Arnold said, was psychology's eschewing of popular categories (such as emotion) in favor of terms dictated by elaborate theoretical systems—and the theoretical system then in favor was behaviorism, which took only a marginal interest in a very narrow range of emotions (e.g., Watson's definition of anger, fear and love as the only innate emotions). Yet emotions remained undeniably important to applied psychology, so despite and perhaps because of “this eclipse of theoretical interest in emotions” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 10) in experimental psychology, an unprecedented cottage industry addressing practical problems of emotion had emerged.

In this context Arnold had her work cut out for her; it would be no easy task to articulate a theory that did not toe the behaviorist line and define emotions as an aspect of biological drives—she could expect to be accused of being unscientific at the least. The advantage of the great potential of the field was balanced against the deterrent of the vociferous opposition that a truly original theory of emotion would receive. Stephanie Shields, who interviewed Arnold in 1999, reported that Arnold remembered that because of behaviorism’s preeminence, “I needed to be clear about the fact that I would not be listened to” yet “once I started writing about emotion, you couldn’t hold me back” (Shields, 1999, p. 3). Indeed, it was with *Emotion and Personality* that Arnold found her niche, articulating a compelling and comprehensive theory that would ultimately win her titles such as “founding mother of modern appraisal theory” (Roseman & Smith, 2001, p. 9), “pioneer of cognitive emotion theory” (Reisenzein, 2006, p. 920), and “one of the founding mothers of contemporary emotion theory” (Shields, 1999, p. 3).

Yet perhaps surprisingly, given Arnold’s success, there is no question that Thomistic philosophy was essential to Arnold’s theorizing. Arnold, in her autobiography, wrote of the Thomistic synthesis: “without it, I would never have achieved the integration of psychological functions I did” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29). The truth of this statement is demonstrated by the correspondence between Arnold and Gasson, which shows that Arnold worked out the details of her emotion theory in close consultation with Gasson as her expert on Thomistic philosophy. Arnold remarked that *De Anima*<sup>1</sup> “fits modern research findings and makes them intelligible in a way I have found nowhere else” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13). That, clearly, was Arnold’s process—she used Thomistic philosophy as an interpretive framework for modern emotion research. Arnold’s phenomenological approach to emotion, the foundation of *Emotion and Personality*, was itself a

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle is St. Thomas Aquinas’ primary philosophical influence.

Thomistic method, and the heart of her cognitive theory of emotion, the concept of appraisal, was directly borrowed from Thomas' discussion of the passions.

This chapter will focus on Arnold's appraisal theory of emotion, specifically exploring its strong ties to scholastic thought. Arnold's theory of emotions deserves this emphasis given that it is her most long-lasting contribution to psychology, widely recognized as anticipating important cognitive psychology insights. But this theory is also important as an exploration of just how deeply and in what ways Arnold's religious beliefs influenced her theorizing. I thus return to the question I posed in the introduction: how do scientists' beliefs and values influence their science?

### **A Survey of Past Emotion Research**

Arnold begins her two-volume *Emotion and Personality* with the academic equivalent of a fairy tale: "There was a time when common sense was acknowledged by scientists as being something like rudimentary science" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 3). But this "once upon a time" does not have a happy ending: "gradually this notion went out of fashion, and psychology, the latecomer among the sciences, was the first to recant" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 3). It is not the act of narrowing the field to study a particular factor in isolation that is the problem, Arnold says, provided the scientist realizes that this restricts investigation to that level of complexity. However, "In the first flush of victory psychologists were slow to realize this limitation" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 3).

This melancholy tale takes place in *Emotion and Personality's* first chapter, entitled "Science and Common Sense," which consists both of a warning against (as reflected in chapter subheadings) "The lure of systemization" and an argument for "Common sense as the mother of science" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 4, 6). This chapter is Arnold's argument for phenomenology as the appropriate method for studying emotions. In *The Human Person's* terms, this is her confession

of her basic assumptions (her choice of phenomenology is due to her realist epistemology, which values human experience). As in *The Human Person*, Arnold emphasizes scientific subjectivity, but this time she focuses on the scientist's ability to be seduced by his own system:

...he forgot to take into account that his selective process might affect his own thinking. Common experience had to be abandoned for purposes of study because it was too unwieldy. But the beautifully controlled, polished, and antiseptic variables he selected from it began to develop a subtle attraction for him. He began to think that they alone could give scientific explanations of everyday experience. The system of variables he had selected because he found them convenient developed into a system that claimed to explain the common human experience from which it was derived. (Arnold, 1960a, p. 4)

This resulted in a rash of psychologists who claimed that their systems could “give a better account of human experience than common sense could: if common experience contradicted this account, common sense must give way” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 4).

But such systems “merely give the impression of being scientific” because their terms are borrowed from physics or other sciences. As a matter of fact they are simply figures of speech or metaphors, and as such they are dangerous, since “the scientist often follows the logic of the metaphor rather than the logic of the actual observation” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 8). Such a metaphor, whether it comes from physics or cybernetics, is “no more than a makeshift adopted arbitrarily because as yet no explanations can be given that would describe the functional relationships. If it is taken seriously, it may delay progress” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 8). The fact is that common sense will always ultimately trump an abstract theoretical system, no matter how prestigious its borrowed metaphor:

Titchener's fate, I believe, will be that of anyone who ignores common experience and sets up a system in defiance of it, for such experience is the only common ground for theorists of every persuasion. It is the only guarantee that a scientist's observations will outlast the fashion of the day. When the connection between any system and common experience snaps, that system (and not common sense) is doomed. At best it will maintain itself in a forgotten eddy in the stream of scientific endeavor without contributing to scientific advance. (Arnold, 1960a, p. 6)

The remedy is not more abstractions but rather "the awareness that our common human experience is the matrix of every system" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 5). Arnold references Sartre's observations that multiple groups holding rival explanations of reality will never unify but inevitably create more and more sects: "we may find ourselves building a modern Tower of Babel: every smallest group will try to develop its own jargon to convey the subtle shades of meaning emphasized by its particular system in which the common meaning is all but forgotten" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 5). But if, instead, psychologists use common experience as a guide, they will be able to give an intelligible explanation for the world and human behavior.

In Arnold's introductory chapter of *Emotion and Personality* there are clear thematic links to her discussion of personalist psychology in the first chapter of *The Human Person*; in very similar language she points out the logical contradiction inherent in dismissing everyday experience while privileging experimentally-derived experience:

Scientific observation and theory themselves reply on veridical sense experience. Unless we assume that our senses give us correct information, we can never be sure that our logical or mathematical reasoning is reliable, because our only check is verification by sensory experience. ...Unless we trust our senses, science itself becomes impossible

because every hypothesis, every theory, every law is the free creation of a mind eternally barred from verifying it. (Arnold, 1960a, p. 6-7)

Having preemptively dealt with potential critics of her realist perspective, Arnold does not hesitate to go on the offensive and lay some blame on mainstream psychology. As Arnold sees it, not only have behaviorists and other theorists chosen language remote from experience, based on their philosophical biases, but they have also “at last brought us to an impasse” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 11) in emotion research. Progress has “come to a standstill because qualitative differences within emotion do not fit our scientific preconditions” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 11) and haphazard clinical and applied research has resulted in considerable “speculation that cannot be integrated into an over-all view of the phenomenon” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 11).

Arnold intends to give a comprehensive theory of emotion, one that integrates all the apparently contradictory elements, and she means to do it by using the phenomenological method. She is quite up front about the fact that her method is unusual: “Throughout this discussion I am going to talk about emotion as a human experience, a human activity, and shall not apologize for taking as fact what you, the reader, and I, the writer, experience first and can identify without scientific terminology” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 12). This approach does not mean abandoning scientific evidence, but it does mean not allowing scientists to “dictate to us their particular definition of emotion or their particular explanations, without regard to our experience.... we must insist that in this field we as human beings have the advantage of the scientist” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 12). We can at last see what Gasson meant when he said about Arnold’s forthcoming work: “What you say is going to be ‘what every woman knows’ sort of” (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 6, 1954)—*Emotion and Personality* is to be a common sense reading of the emotion everyone experiences. It is “what every woman knows” in



the complimentary sense of women as the wise possessors of folk knowledge—they have not bought into scientific flights of fancy.

But before Arnold can lay out the common sense, phenomenological account of emotion, she has to review the existing emotion literature. Here she takes an unusual view: “it is not a sign of maturity to abandon older views without a thought” because “Dead theories may have a grain of truth that might be a needed corrective for modern scientific fashions” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 15). As Arnold sees it, modern psychology does not have a huge advantage over its predecessors because it has traded whatever greater sophistication it might have had for the craze for fashioning theories “ever more closely after physical, rather than psychological, reality” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 5). “Physicalism” Arnold says, “has become not only a fashion but a virtue, yet the reality of the physicist is only another set of abstractions, another step away from the world in which we live and move” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 5).

Whatever the current fashion, moving beyond such fads and sorting good theories from bad is the duty of the scientist, “If we take the adventure of ideas seriously, as we are duty bound to screen the wheat from the chaff, even if that screening is a thankless task and takes time that could be devoted to original work” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 15). As respected experts, psychologists have an obligation to the public to thoroughly examine their theories, even if that means ultimately discarding a favorite but in fact unreliable theory. Unless there are periodic evaluations of the state of the field, “the science of psychology may easily exhaust itself in brilliant speculations instead of gathering the rich harvest which is the reward of honest labor” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 15).

So Arnold proceeds to survey past research on feelings and emotion (she distinguishes these), often in surprising detail. She regards introspective data from earlier in psychology’s

history as perfectly legitimate data, since it was collected by careful observers. She proceeds, therefore, to reinterpret this data, showing how her phenomenological account of emotion was “unwittingly established” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 36) by earlier experiments. For example she finds evidence to support the distinction between “emotion as a tendency toward or away from some object and feeling as a direct awareness of one’s state of functioning”<sup>2</sup> (Arnold, 1960a, p. 36). Past research suggests, according to Arnold, that feeling is a reaction to enhanced or impaired functioning: “When we find motor activities pleasant, our feeling is based on the realization that these activities go on smoothly, without effort. Dancing, running, skating, or swimming are pleasant only as long as we are rested and vigorous” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 71). This is true not only of physical but psychology activity; for example, creative writing is enjoyable when it flows, not when “results are meager and unsatisfactory; when thinking does not produce understanding; when imagination will produce neither a creditable plot nor interesting dialogue” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 71).

In order for us to know whether (or which aspect of) functioning is impeded or enhanced, there must be some sort of faculty, distinct from the function being appraised. “There must be an estimate that one kind of functioning is good, that is, favorable for the organism, another unfavorable, before the one can be felt as pleasant, the other as unpleasant,” Arnold reasons. And “Since it is necessary to postulate such a sense-like process of appraising to account for the facts, we are justified in proposing it as a hypothetical construct” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 73). This appraisal will be direct and immediate, “as direct as sense perception” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 73), as well as intuitive, that is to say, often the actor will be unaware of making such a judgment. According to “traditional philosophy,” Arnold says, this faculty has been called the “estimative

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<sup>2</sup> This understanding of feeling dates back to Aristotle, Arnold notes.

sense” which is one of the internal senses, like memory or the imagination. This Arnold simply calls appraisal, and it is at the heart of her cognitive theory of emotion.

One can contrast this line of thinking with previous theorizing as Arnold reviews Charles Darwin, William James, Carl Lange, John Dewey, William MacDougall and Sigmund Freud. These theorists tend to frame emotions as physiological, either as the result of bodily changes (James, Lange, and Dewey, i.e. the James-Lange theory) or as instincts (Darwin, MacDougall, and Freud). Most of these theories share an emphasis on abnormal or negative emotions, such as fear, anxiety and anger, and hold conflict as an important explanatory construct. Accordingly, for these theorists “emotion is the result of conflict, of some interference with ongoing action tendencies” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 124). But this means that such conflict theorists tend to ignore positive emotions such as joy and desire, since they have difficulty explaining them. Arnold gives the extreme example of Madison Bentley (1924), who since he had defined emotion as the result of a “predicament,” “wonders whether joy is a real emotion since there can be no ‘joyful predicament’!” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 125).

The upshot of this research, Arnold says, is that “the causal relation between perceived object, emotional experience, and bodily upset has been a problem to theorists throughout the ages” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 170). There have essentially been three solutions to this problem: the view that perception arouses emotion, which in turn causes bodily changes; or that perception induces bodily changes experienced as emotion; or that perception causes both emotional and bodily changes. An adequate or “balanced” emotion theory, according to Arnold, must be able to explain all aspects of emotion: emotional experience, emotional expression, and emotional action. A good theory of emotion must be able to explain “the nature of emotional experience

and how it differs from unemotional experience; the arousal of emotion and bodily changes; and emotion as a factor in goal-directed action” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 165).

In this light Arnold assesses modern emotion research and finds it lacking. Both psychoanalytic and academic psychological theories of emotion in her day have continued down the “conflict” line. The only major addition to the earlier research is behavioristic theories, which view emotions as an aspect of biological drives (a change in drive or reflex strength). The assumption of behavioristic theories is that emotion is caused by a stimulus that has tripped an innate biological drive. But this assumption is a mistake, says Arnold, a good example of how theorizing with animal models may mislead. While comparative experimental research generally does indeed activate an inherent drive (hunger or pain avoidance) in its subjects, human emotion is more flexible, and can exist in the absence (or even counter to) any inherent drive. For example, while a child might initially fear a stranger (the result of an inherent drive for self-preservation) they may also learn to greet them with joy once the stranger becomes a friend of the family. The point is that “emotion can occur without a drive, particularly in human beings” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 150). In a surprising offensive, Arnold turns the tables and accuses behaviorist theories of being anthropomorphic: “The behaviorist makes the various conditioned stimuli, linked to inherent drives, act like a person in initiating, selecting, and directing action” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 160). It is much more parsimonious to treat a human as human, as one who chooses and acts, and is not merely at the whim of his environment.

In her review of modern research Arnold most approves of Agostino Gemelli<sup>3</sup> (1949) and Albert Michotte<sup>4</sup> (1950), whose theories she dubs “Functional.” Incidentally, although Arnold

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<sup>3</sup> Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M. (1878-1959) was a Franciscan physician and psychologist. He founded the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, Italy in 1921 and was known for his research in workplace psychology.

does not mention this fact, both researchers are Catholics.<sup>5</sup> Gemelli differentiates between objective feelings and subjective feelings in a way that is similar to Arnold's definition of emotions versus feelings, and sees an intellectual appraisal of a situation as required for emotion to occur. Emotions, in his system, certainly result from an activated biological instincts, but the "action tendencies" created by an appraisal are independent of instincts and do not determine the action chosen. Arnold uses Michotte's famous perception experiments which established that subjects attributed motive and emotions to mere moving shapes (attack, escape, etc.) to demonstrate the intuitive appraisal of relevant objects to which human agents are prone.<sup>6</sup> This agreed with Michotte's interpretation of his research: "A man feels himself attracted or repelled by an object, and at the same time he is aware of the attraction or repulsion, he knows it is happening" (Michotte, 1950, p. 126).

Both Gemelli and Michotte recognized that "a perceived special relationship" between subject and object is what generates emotion, the "functional connection between subject and object" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 164). Arnold praises their functional theories as "balanced," but says that they are nonetheless incomplete. To develop a complete theory Arnold turns to "a careful phenomenological analysis of the whole sequence from perception to action" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 170), which she is says is the only way to resolve the question about the relationship between emotion and bodily changes that have troubled psychology for so long.

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<sup>4</sup> Albert Michotte (1881-1965) was a Belgian psychologist who was born into a noble Catholic family. Eleanor Gibson describes him as "a baron and an ardent Catholic, as well as one of the great psychologist of perception" (Gibson, 2002, p. 73) in her description of the Gibsons' visit to Michotte in Louvain, Belgium circa 1956.

<sup>5</sup> Arnold does mention that Gemelli is neoscholastic in orientation.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold and Gasson had heard this paper of Michotte's read at the Mooseheart Symposium in 1948. Arnold recalled being "particularly impressed" by Michotte's paper (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13).

### A Phenomenological Theory of Emotion

Arnold does not do much in the way of explaining what her phenomenological methods are, but simply begins to list the results of such an analysis of emotion, which she takes to be self-evident.<sup>7</sup> From her phenomenological analysis Arnold concludes that emotion is fundamentally object-oriented: “We are afraid of something, we rejoice over something, we love someone...” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 170). Similar to perception, emotion has an object, although unlike perception, the object does not have to be physically present to elicit an emotion. Also unlike perception, there has to be a special relationship between the person and the object in order for emotion to occur: “To arouse an emotion, the object must be appraised as affecting me in some way, affecting me personally as an individual with my particular experience and my particular aims” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 171). If an object is assessed as neutral by the person, no emotion occurs.

Again like perception (at least in a realist conception of perception), appraisal is direct, immediate and intuitive. Direct and immediate have clear enough meanings, but Arnold has to correct the usual understanding of “intuitive,” which she says has been “banished” from psychology on the “mistaken conviction that ‘instinctive’ must mean a mechanical behavior pattern and ‘intuitive’ must have the character of a hunch” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 175). Instead what she means by “intuitive appraisal” is “the direct, immediate sense judgment of weal or woe” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 175). That is to say, appraisal is not the result of reflection—just as we take

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<sup>7</sup> Arnold’s silence on the details of her phenomenological methods could be taken as evidence that Arnold is not very deeply committed to phenomenology. However Wertz (2015) notes that a diversity of methodological practices has characterized the approach, including a range of precision and intentionality. Certainly Arnold is not as engrossed in the world of phenomenological theory, relative to someone like Edith Stein, another Catholic woman (Haney, 2000), but this may be the result of her location in America rather than Europe. Wellek (1968), in his review of German psychologists who immigrated to the U.S., does class Arnold as a phenomenologist, which was a common identification for these German psychologists. In general Arnold seems committed to phenomenology as an approach, yet her lack of specificity about her method does lead one to suspect that she used it more as a rhetorical device than as a precise tool for analysis.

evasive action without thinking if we see something about to poke our eye, we feel immediately when objects are harmful or beneficial to us. That is not to say that reflection plays no part in emotion. Emotions can be adjusted by reflective judgment, if later reflection occurs. But in this case intuitive appraisal still plays a critical role—there is a new intuitive estimate of the object in question, following and based on the reflection.

The appraisal and emotion are separate acts, but closely bound: “As soon as we appraise something as worth having in an immediate and intuitive way, we feel an attraction toward it. As soon as we intuitively judge that something is threatening, we feel repelled from it, we feel urged to avoid it” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 177). The appraisal of a given situation initiates “an *action tendency that is felt as emotion*, expressed in various bodily changes” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 177). This action tendency may lead to action, or not—as always Arnold leaves room for human agency. The sequence for emotion, then is: perception-appraisal-emotion-expression-action (although expression and action should be bracketed, since they are not strictly necessary for emotion—a person can experience an emotion without giving it physical expression or acting upon it). Arnold’s emphasis on the perception-appraisal-emotion sequence is a reversal of psychology’s typical interest in emotion; Arnold notes that emotion-expression-action “so far has been emphasized almost exclusively in psychological theory” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 182). In Arnold’s theory it is perception-appraisal-emotion “that alone will explain the conditions necessary for arousing emotion” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 182).

Thus two-thirds of the way through Volume I of *Emotion and Personality*, Arnold is able to give her ground-breaking cognitive definition of emotion as “*the felt tendency toward anything intuitively appraised as good (beneficial), or away from anything intuitively appraised as bad (harmful)*” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 182). These attractions or aversions are “*accompanied by a*

*pattern of physiological changes organized toward approach or withdrawal*” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 182). As a result of this system Arnold defines basic emotions using a scheme “of three dichotomies” that is consistent with her idea of emotion as organized based on approach or withdrawal. This view of emotion is unusual, as other theorists choose particular emotions, such as anger or fear, as basic. Basic emotions for Arnold are those that occur in reaction to an object that “is either good for bad for us; it is either present or absent; and finally it is either easy or difficult to attain (or avoid)” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 193).

Arnold follows this with a table in which basic emotions are classified according to their direction and degree of impulsion (See Figure 1). In this classificatory scheme there are Impulse Emotions (tending toward or away from an object when conditions are favorable) and Contending Emotions (tending toward or away from an object when conditions are unfavorable. For example, for an Impulse Emotion, in the case of a suitable or beneficial object the resulting emotion will be love/liking; if it is not present, wanting/desire, and if it is present or possessed, delight/joy. For a Contending Emotion if a suitable object is judged attainable the resulting emotion will be hope, and if it is unattainable, hopelessness/despair. Naturally both Impulse and Contending Emotions have their negative corresponding polarities. For instance for an Impulse Emotion with a harmful object whose dominant emotion is hate/dislike, in the object’s absence the emotion is aversion/recoil and in possession of the object the emotion is sorrow/sadness.

Arnold then contrasts this classification of emotions (which she notes “In substance, this analysis goes back to Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas” [Arnold, 1960a, p. 193]) with other modern theories of emotions. Arnold’s classification is very different, for example, from the emotional polarities of Freud. In his system, opposite instincts arouse opposite emotions. For example, for Freud the love and death instincts are linked, resulting in the association of love and



hostility. Love “may erupt into hostility at any time” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 197). But within Arnold’s scheme the activation of one side of an emotional polarity excludes the possibility of the other: “One and the same object cannot at one and the same time and under the same aspect be both liked and disliked, desired and avoided by the same person”<sup>8</sup> (Arnold, 1960a, p. 197). This makes more sense than the Freudian system in which aggression is not only “hostile attack but every kind of constructive action. Carving a statue, painting a picture, making a cake, engaging in competitive sports are all manifestations of aggression” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 251). In Arnold’s evaluation, “Only on Freud’s dogmatic assertion that libidinal-aggressive drives supply the energy for all goal-directed action can such usage be defended” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 251).

The fact that Arnold’s emotion scheme posits an inherent impulsion in human beings is another advantage over other theories, which must grasp at straws to explain human desire for knowledge. Unlike Maslow (1954), she does not have to resort to explaining human curiosity and desire for understanding as an “‘instinctoid’ need” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 200). Arnold invokes Gasson’s *Human Person* chapter in which he explained the impulse to action as a natural human capacity: “We want to see, hear touch, know, and go out toward the world to meet it halfway” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 200). Explaining such things from a behaviorist perspective of conditioned and unconditioned responses results in nonsense: “A man may decide to become a painter or a poet in spite of the fact that his paintings or poems have never brought him money or food” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 219). Explaining motive based only on physiological drives cannot explain a wide range of human action: “How can conditioning explain, for instance, the case of Heinrich Schliemann, the famous merchant turned archaeologist, who on reading Homer was struck by the

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<sup>8</sup> For example, Arnold would say that a person who has mixed feelings about a friend feels that way because the friend has characteristics that both attract (say extroversion) and repel (say selfishness) them. Although a person can feel the tug of conflicting emotions regarding the friend, it is not possible to be both repelled and attracted by the friend’s selfishness at the same time.

thought that Troy must actually have existed! To find it became his dominant motive from that time on” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 219).

What these modern theories did not grasp, Arnold argued, was that activity in itself is pleasurable. Motivation for most human action comes not from a few instinctive drives but from the fact that activity is pleasant: “If an activity itself were not pleasant, we might start an action for the sake of the goal, but it would soon become so tedious that we would never finish it. If smooth functioning were not pleasant, walking or thinking might become a lost art in one generation” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 238). In other words activity is more fundamental than pleasure (contradicting Freud’s pleasure principle), although it does assume the existence of pleasure. This is an insight, Arnold says in a footnote, contributed by Aquinas (“Pleasure does not occur without activity...” [Arnold, 1960a, p. 238]).

In contrast to other emotion theories, Arnold’s system does not conflate physiological drives or instincts and emotion. An emotion may exist in the absence of or in opposition to a drive: “What is required for emotion is an intuitive estimate of something as beneficial or harmful, whether or not it is also the goal of a physiological appetite” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 232). As in *The Human Person*, Arnold preserves the role of free will in human action. In her system a volitional act is an “inherent action tendency like any other” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 245), which is sparked by intuitive appraisal but which requires a deliberate decision in order for the act to occur and sustained determination to carry it to completion.

But while going against natural drives is possible, it is not without consequence: “When the choice goes against the natural tendency of a function (e.g., the vow of silence), a physical appetite (e.g., the vow of celibacy), or an emotion (e.g., the virtue of long-suffering), the decision is difficult to make and still more difficult to carry out” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 245). The mistake

most psychologists make is thinking that an instinct is an impulse to action; instead, says Arnold, it is an impulse to ordered activity, toward “achieving a naturally determined goal” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 246). This means that instinct’s ordered action sequences (in humans) still must be the result of reflective choice. There are some human activities governed exclusively by inherent impulsion, such as physiological activities; on the other hand there are actions that are ordered primarily by reflective decisions, such as the choice of vocation or career.

Arnold devotes some time to the role of development in emotion. While she critiques Watson for his failure to separate emotion from startle reflexes, when she thinks about development she has something very different in mind. As children grow, their intuitive appraisals of situations grow more accurate. As an example of how appraisal changes, Arnold reflects at length on the changes that occur in romantic ideals as a girl grows:

As the basis for appraisal widens from adolescence to adulthood, so the object of love will change as well. While the teen-ager is aflutter with the adoration of a crooner, rock ‘n’ roll artist, or film star, at a time when glamor and romance are the highest ideals that can be imagined, the young woman will be attracted by a man whom she can admire and on whom she can depend, even though he is neither a matinee idol nor an Adonis. With increasing maturity, qualities of mind and heart will become more attractive than romantic looks or a dashing manner. With increasing maturity, what is desired is not the merely pleasant, still less the glamorous but that which shows solid goodness and enduring value. (Arnold, 1960a, p. 215)

Although Arnold does not go into this detail with other emotions, the point of this example is that “every other emotion will show a similar development” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 215).

*Emotion and Personality* was published in two volumes, for the sake of convenience (a single book would have been over 700 pages long). At the end of Volume I Arnold hints at what is to come in Volume II. She has already established that emotions do not exist in a vacuum but are always in the context of the person and the context of their relationship with the object of emotion. But further Arnold states that although these emotional appraisals are relative to the person, they are not random or transitory. Emotions take place in a person's "whole scheme of life, to be intensified or suppressed according to his wider goals" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 164). Each person can shape their emotional responses to objects as a part of an overarching organization of their personality. "There will be wide individual differences in the motivational system developed by each individual, in his self-ideal," says Arnold. The fact is that "wittingly or unwittingly, every man establishes in the course of his life a hierarchy of values for himself that guides his actions. This may lead him to his development and perfection as a human being or far away from it" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 248). Arnold's readers of *The Human Person* can guess where this is leading—to a discussion of the self-ideal as a means to personality integration.

### **The Mediating Neurological Structures**

Before Arnold gets to the self-ideal, she has some background work to do. Arnold begins Volume II of *Emotion and Personality* with a review of neurological and physiological evidence as it relates to her appraisal theory. It "may not be in accord with currently fashionable ways of looking at things" (Arnold, 1960b, p. vi), she says, but she will show that appraisal theory integrates psychological, neurological, and physiological facts consistently. Arnold had long been interested in the relation of the brain and emotion. In fact the failure of her previous excitation theory of emotion to fit in with known facts about the brain was one of the reasons she had abandoned it (Arnold, n.d. c.). In this case Arnold uses the model that she had established

through her phenomenological account (perception-appraisal-emotion-expression-action) and looks to see what neural structures likely mediate each element of the emotion sequence.

As she works to “examine, sift and integrate” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 30) the evidence, she warns that traditional models may have to be discarded since they may hinder progress to the degree that they are “based on analogies instead of verifiable facts” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 31). In fact, she singles out behaviorism for neglecting the area of emotion based on “misguided purism” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 23); accordingly, restrictions to behavioral evidence only “are not inherent in the scientific enterprise” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 23). This self-imposed handicap on the part of psychologists has meant that most theoretical work has come from other fields, such as physiology and neurology. Similarly, she critiques Hebb for his abstract language (“he passes freely from one universe of discourse to another” [Arnold, 1960b, p. 28]), which is distant from real human experience. She concludes that such linguistic sloppiness is a sign that he does not believe that he is describing reality but rather something that becomes real only because one is thinking of it.

In contrast, Arnold is concrete, pausing periodically as she progresses through the existing neurological evidence to describe what she sees as the mediating cognitive structure of emotion. She ultimately concludes that emotion relies on several different areas of the brain for different processes: the registration of impressions (for appraisal to be possible later) occurs in cortical areas close to the primary sensory and motor areas; liking and disliking is mediated by the limbic system; the recall of memories and the impulse to action are initiated by the hippocampus; action involves the midbrain, cerebellum, thalamus or hippocampus, and the frontal lobe. The impulse to action is generally accompanied by endocrine and autonomic changes. The identification of this system was the result of significant intensive labor on

Arnold's part. Her correspondence with Gasson reveals his responses to her puzzling over various aspects of brain function, and she had to consult with several eminent neurologists to make sense of things. In her autobiography she recalled her difficulty in integrating the published neurological research to identify the brain circuits that mediated the different parts of emotion. "After weeks of work, thinking of nothing but brain circuits, waking or sleeping" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 14), Arnold awoke one morning with the insight that there were three separate brain circuits (recall, imagination, and affective memory), not two, which resolved the conflicting research findings.

The details of Arnold's scheme are less important for our purposes than how she frames it. In the chapter "Patterns of Action," which follows Arnold's summary of the basic neurological correlates of emotion, along with the correlates of common instinctive (hunger, mating) and emotional (anger, fear) action patterns, Arnold also discusses deliberative action. While instinctive and emotional actions are typical of topics covered by other emotion researchers of the time, with deliberative action Arnold is introducing something unique. Arnold defines deliberative actions as those that are not prompted by emotions or pleasant feelings, such as a child practicing the piano even though he does not feel like it. Deliberative action occurs when a judgment prompts an impulse to an action—even though that action may in fact be unpleasant. Arnold says that these actions actually comprise the majority of human action, and therefore their neural correlates are critical to identify.

In her discussion of how other "objective psychologists" (Arnold, 1960b, p. 194) have responded to this topic, which raises the problem of consciousness and the relationship between mind and brain, Arnold reveals how she thinks the neural evidence she has just introduced ought to be understood. Arnold quotes Penfield (Lasett, 1950) and Eccles (1953) on the mind-body

problem; they both see evidence that there is some unknown element (for Penfield “a spiritual element of a different essence”; for Eccles a “ghost”-like agent) that operates on the physical mechanism (for Penfield the “switchboard”; for Eccles the “machine”) of the brain. While Arnold salutes them for recognizing this problem, she takes issue with their assumption that brain is separate from mind.

This assumption, she says, is likely due to decades of reliance on experimentation with the dead or anesthetized brain: “Such experiments have made it easy to believe that the brain consists of a feltwork of intricate wiring which merely needs to be activated to produce a given psychological experience” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 195). But this is not so. The living brain is integral to a living being:

The brain does not produce sensations, images, or thoughts, *we* do. When we sense, imagine, think, certain pathways are active and communicate activity to a widespread area; but *we* sense, *we* imagine and think, not our brains. Similarly it is not our muscles that produce movement, *we* do. We intend to move in a certain direction, and while we are intending...muscles become organized into a pattern and in a sequence that comes out as movement. (Arnold, 1960b, p. 195)

The way out of Penfield and Eccles’ dualism is a reaffirmation of the human person as agent. It is a solution, Arnold says, that is “simple, though by no means new”: the living being is “an actor or agent that acts in, through, or by means of the organized body. This body is a distinguishable, but not distinct, part of the living being. *I as a living being* initiate both biological and psychological activities” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 196).

In this context it is the capacity for deliberative action that “distinguish man from brute” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 194). While animals act based on emotional impulse (based on appraisal) only

the human has the capacity to judge and act “on the basis of abstract and long-range considerations” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 197). Deliberative action does not require “‘a ghost’; pulling strings somewhere in the brain” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 201). Rather, it is based on the same mechanism as emotional appraisal, but with a reflective judgment substituted for a sense judgment, and similarly initiates action impulses. Rational judgment and similar powers can be called spiritual but this would only be so as to “distinguish themselves from their counterparts on the sense level” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 202). It is unnecessary, Arnold says, for the word spiritual to have become taboo in psychology; spiritual, at least as she is using it, “does not necessarily connote anything more supernatural or superstitious than the psychological difference actually existing between a man and his dog” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 202). Referring to the frequency with which scientific trends progress through thesis and antithesis, Arnold expresses her hopes that future psychologists will understand the basic unity of the human person:

One generation of scientists may see every disturbance as organic, the next may overemphasize psychological causes; let us hope that the synthesis to come will bring a realization that disturbances of every kind affect the total man who suffers their effects and reacts to them. (Arnold, 1960b, p. 262)

### **The Thomistic Self-Ideal**

In the last three chapters of *Emotion and Personality*, Arnold introduces the self-ideal as vital to understanding emotion, and as the key to the integration of personality. The focus here is the self-ideal’s relationship to emotion. Given Arnold’s definition of emotion as fundamentally object-oriented and composed of movement, it makes sense that emotion will have something to do with goals. Since “emotion is a tendency that prepares for and urges to action” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 281), most basically emotion serves to help humans and animals to pursue their goals.



Since emotions are felt tendencies towards objects appraised as good and away from those appraised as bad, emotion motivates living beings to avoid things that are harmful and to pursue what is beneficial. In other words emotion, via action tendencies, helps to “organize the living being in his relations to the world around him” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 268).

But whereas for animals spontaneous emotional tendencies are enough to organize their life to perfection, humans, due to their higher nature, require something more. Since humans have both physical and rational natures there is the possibility of their emotional impulses conflicting—with one level urging approach and the other urging withdrawal. For example, the diabetic who wants sweets but wants to be healthy “will experience a real conflict; he will be torn between his desire for candy and the fear of the effect of his indulgence” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 273). In the case where some object is appraised as attractive, but the person knows of some reason why he should not approach that object, movement towards the object can be inhibited by deliberative action.

So humans are not ruled by their emotions—their impulse toward attractive things, even those things which evoke a basic instinct, can be overruled by reason. Emotional conflict occurs when there is such a disagreement of emotional tendencies, but the conflict ends when “a man makes a clear decision to turn away from the attraction and succeeds in following his choice wholeheartedly” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 273). This best case scenario can be described by reviving “the old distinction between sin and temptation”: “there may still be temptation (sweets do remain appealing), but there will be no ‘sin’ because the attraction is resolutely put out of mind” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 273). On the other hand, conflict that persists “breeds disturbance” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 273): emotions such as anger, fear, shame, remorse, and self-contempt are likely if the craving is dwelt upon or “fitfully indulged” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 274).

In order to live a reasonable human life, it is necessary to inhibit impulses that interfere with the pursuit of long-term goals. Emotions can distract or deter us from these goals, and so therefore we must “reduce the intensity of pleasant emotions that distract us from a chosen goal and overcome the negative emotions that prevent us from following it effectively” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 277). However, simply suppressing emotions that “hinder reasonable action (fear, shyness, embarrassment)” is not ideal; more strategic is to overcome these negative emotions by using “pleasant emotions to increase the desirability of our goal by dwelling on it in thought and imagination” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 277). As this example implies, emotions are not undesirable: “Pleasures or emotional satisfactions need not be rooted out ruthlessly. They are a legitimate part of the joy of living” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 278). It is simply that they are very powerful, and so they may overwhelm the weaker desire to strive for reasonable goals. Because positive emotions’ “lure is far greater than their value for a well-ordered, happy and effective personality,” humans must direct their attention towards “spiritual values” and away from “the pleasurable things of life,” until pleasure ceases to hold an inordinate influence (Arnold, 1960b, p. 278).

Arnold says this sort of control of emotion “implies a worth-while self-ideal to provide a focus for a man’s striving” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 278). Whereas in animals the organization of its tendencies is static, humans can choose to reorganize their hierarchy of values. Humans have choice in this matter, but really there are only two options: “A man may develop habits of right action (they used to be called virtues) or he may fall into habits of indulgence (formerly called vices)” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 278). The self-ideal is possible in humans because for them appraisal is both a sense judgment and reflective judgment. The self-ideal is the result of reflective judgment: “the choice of goal-directed action is essentially a rational wanting, an inclination

toward what is reflectively appraised as good (pleasurable, useful, or valuable)” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 279).

How exactly does the formation of self-ideals occur? To answer this, Arnold turns Freud’s account of children’s imitation of parents on its head. Whereas Freud interprets the child’s identification with his parents as the result of jealousy and conflict, Arnold sees this identification as the result of love. In knowing and loving his parents, the child discovers that they are admirable, and that they have qualities that the child lacks. Their modeling then guides the child’s choices:

If he had to depend on his own experience with the things around him to learn what is beneficial, what is harmful, he might never reach adulthood. If parents were to guide him by demands and prohibitions alone, he might become a robot rather than a man who knows what is right and what is wrong. But when the child sees what his parents do and recognizes them as lovable, admirable, he acknowledges their counsel as wise and obeys willingly, out of love for them. Over and above doing what they require, he will try to do what they do because he recognizes it as good. (Arnold, 1960b, p. 281)

This first parental-based self-ideal sets up the child to imitate other admirable role models, and to discipline himself “to choose what is valuable rather than merely attractive” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 282) in order to be more like them. Out of his growing awareness of his lack relative to these models, the child begins to develop a self-ideal based on “what he knows he ought to be” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 282). As a result the self-ideal can serve as an “index of maturity”—the organization of values in a given self-ideal indicates the maturity of an individual.

Of course the self-ideal is also a result of the community that an individual is born into. However, for Western society, Arnold sees an impending crisis as a result of this fact. Psychologists have done their best to “devalue the image of man” and as a result have given people a completely uninspiring self-ideal:

There was a time when man hoped that he was “a little lower than the angels.” But in recent decades “scientific” debunkers have instilled in him the conviction that he is a creature of lust, greed, and rapacity; worse than that, that he is a machine as blindly determined as the computer or the guided missile. (Arnold, 1960b, p. 282)

Such a change in the view of man has real-world consequences, influencing individuals’ self-ideals and choices: “A man can bear the discomfort of unfulfilled desire as long as he believes there is a good reason for it. As soon as he sees restraint only as a social edict, a remnant of unenlightened bigotry, he rebels” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 286). Arnold predicts that “later generations of social scientists will feel little pride” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 282) in having debunked the traditional views of the human in favor of the conviction that humans are basically irrational creatures of appetite.

The problem with this state of affairs, according to Arnold, is that self-ideals are heavily influenced by the approval or disapproval of social groups. For example, historically the pressure for young women to be beautiful but dumb in order to attract men meant that “a girl’s self-ideal was more likely to be patterned after Mata Hari than Madame Curie” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 286). Similarly, Arnold says, there is a cultural taboo on religious practice, which means that for the majority religion plays no role in choosing a self-ideal. This is a dramatic change from the past, since previously in every culture religion has been deeply influential in shaping self-ideals. Or

perhaps, Arnold says, it is more accurate to say not that religion has ceased to be influential, but that the dominant religion has changed from theism to scientism.

This is a problem, says Arnold, because theism offers a better model for the self-ideal since “it emphasizes the supremacy of God, who is the beginning and end of man’s striving” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 283). The Judeo-Christian tradition encourages the active pursuit of a self-ideal with its understanding of humans as created free to perfect or frustrate their nature, and an appropriate object for such a self-ideal in God. Ethically superior to an ideal based on cooperation, the Judeo-Christian view holds that “The perfection of human nature lies in loving God and doing His will” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 283). As in *The Human Person*, Arnold goes beyond this to articulate an ultimately Christocentric model for the self-ideal: “The Christian, in addition, finds a living model of human perfection in Jesus Christ, whom he loves and admires and wants to follow” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 284). This imitation is to such a degree that there is complete identification with the person of Christ such that the Master lives in the disciple: “In Paul’s words ‘it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me’ (Gal. 2.20). Such is the Christian’s self-ideal” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 284).

Not only does Arnold identify Christ as the ultimate model for the self-ideal, she expresses doubts about the ability of the non-Christian to form a valid self-ideal. “The Christian,” Arnold says, “would add that even the choice of a valid self-ideal is difficult without faith in God” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 298). This is because even the most admirable model has flaws and it is hard to imagine ideals high enough “to justify the endless discipline necessary to act consistently as the ideals demand” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 298). According to Arnold:

Only when God is recognized as the ultimate goal and His only Son as a perfection incarnate, does it become easy to establish the proper hierarchy of values and to follow

this model of human perfection....Whatever we think of this answer, it does offer a solution to man's unconscious conflicts and anxieties. With faith in God, the self-ideal finds its natural end and support. With faith in God, there can be no existential anxiety, no pervading fear of want, no enduring sorrow. (Arnold, 1960b, p. 298)

Whatever the choice of self-ideal, the self-ideal organizes a person's motivational system. In addition to an object being appraised for its general attractiveness, it is "also appraised as it contributes or detracts from the ideal toward which he aims" (Arnold, 1960b, p. 286). In the case of an object that will obstruct the way towards his goal, the person will have to choose between immediate pleasure or denying himself in order to pursue his ultimate aim. The decision to abstain in this case is not the result of either external mandate or childhood taboo but the realization that the two goals are incompatible. Learning to do this successfully is what constitutes maturity: "In fact, maturity means forming a valid self-ideal and living it" (Arnold, 1960b, p. 286). In contrast, the person without a valid self-ideal "continues to follow his emotions wherever they lead him and his personality remains unorganized and infantile" (Arnold, 1960b, p. 289). Whatever a person's vocation, they are striving for human perfection embodied in their own life: "Human perfection must be found in a self-ideal that is formed according to the best a man knows and understands and in actions that will actualize this ideal" (Arnold, 1960b, p. 287).

Arnold emphasizes that although self-ideals are particular to individuals, they are not truly subjective. There is such a thing as a "valid" self-ideal, one which aims both at the perfection of the individual and his humanity. In contrast, "When a man's self-ideal is mistaken or perverted, he is in fact working against the deepest requirements of his own human nature" (Arnold, 1960b, p. 291). The sort of ends that human nature demands must be taken seriously, or

else “ennui, malaise, disillusionment, and unhappiness” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 291) will be the result of aiming at a lesser goal. In other words there are standards outside of humans that must be considered in forming or judging a self-ideal. Arnold adopts the Aristotelian idea that an object’s nature is manifested in its actions—and the demands of its nature can be deduced from these actions. In the case of humans this nature is clear: “We know that human nature is different from animal nature—it is rational nature” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 293). A rational nature demands certain behavior as regards other beings—not only that their rights are honored, but that they are helped to achieve their final end. The existence of moral law is implied by human nature, and in contrast to the popular view, it is not “imposed and enforced from outside by a wrathful God” but defines “the conduct appropriate to our human nature. And that nature did not develop by accident” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 296). The point is that if humans wish to be happy, they must organize their personality with an eye to human *telos*. An objectively valid self-ideal is necessary to “escape the consequences of emotional indulgence”: “To go against the demands of our human nature by indulging our emotions instead of letting them support our human purposes, is to bring upon ourselves a pervading discontent and unspoken distress” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 298).

The good news is that emotions are not merely distractions from pursuing the self-ideal, but also serve as “the Guardians” of the self-ideal (Arnold, 1960b, p. 299). Arnold analyzes a variety of emotions that are normally considered detrimental by psychotherapists—guilt, embarrassment, shame—for their value in protecting the chosen self-ideal. When a person does something to violate the standard of his self-ideal he experiences these types of emotions, which prompt him to reverse his actions as far as possible and continue progressing towards the self-ideal—or, in other words, repentance. The turning away from evil and towards good implied in repentance is necessary in order to go beyond mere emotion about the wrongdoing (e.g., sorrow

or fear) to a rational decision to change. Repentance is, Arnold says, a rational action tendency supported by emotion. For example, “For the religious man” repentance is a desire for the good rationally, but also emotionally since “the love of God has become personal, and repentance is a return to the Beloved” (Arnold, 1960b, pp. 305-306). Forgiveness restores harmony between man and God and his neighbors, and allows the resumption of effective striving for the true self-ideal.

Even something apparently negative like suffering is useful in the pursuit of the self-ideal. “Until it is tested through suffering, a man’s self-ideal may be the casual outcome of an easy and successful life,” but suffering acts as a fire which either purifies or destroys self-ideals. If the suffering man has the right self-ideal his values will be revealed as gold; if his self-ideal crumbles, this presents the perfect opportunity to “come to terms with his life, death, and his ultimate end” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 308). No doubt influenced by her own experience, Arnold tempers this positive assessment of suffering with the remark, “it is doubtful whether suffering can bear positive fruit unless a man have Job’s trust in God” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 308) in the face of apparently meaningless pain.

On the other hand, positive emotions support a man’s progress towards his self-ideal “by his love for everything that is good, true, and beautiful” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 299). In her chapter on positive human emotions, Arnold dwells on similar themes to those in Gasson’s chapter in *The Human Person*, such as “The joy of doing and making,” “The desire to know,” “Union with others” and “The love of beauty.” But for each one Arnold outlines how it facilitates the pursuit of the self-ideal. Even something as seemingly insubstantial as “Mirth and laughter” plays a role in the quest for the self-ideal: “it will correct our shortsightedness, reduce the intensity of our



desires to their proper proportions, and promote the humility without which we would never strive for human perfection” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 325).

This evaluation of humor is a good reminder of how Arnold’s assessment of positive emotions differs from that of other theorists (if they discuss positive emotions at all). In her discussion of laughter Arnold points out that Darwin saw the smile as a remnant of an animal snarl, not surprisingly, since he “was committed to the assumption that everything found in man must have its earlier form in animals” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 323). Arnold is up front about her own assumptions: “We are not committed to such a notion. In fact, it is our contention that there are certain emotions that have no equivalent in the animal, for they depend on a reflective rather than an intuitive estimate of the situation” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 323). Positive emotions only help in the pursuit of the self-ideal if they are deliberately oriented toward the self-ideal. Positive emotions can be misdirected, and their positive influence wasted; for example, “The desire to know may be expended in avidity for gossip rather than the knowledge of human excellence” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 326). Ultimately “a deliberative decision to follow the self-ideal as it ought to be” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 326) is required for positive emotions to help in the perfection of personality.

Arnold singles out two positive emotions as particularly important in motivating the pursuit of the self-ideal. These are “Religious emotions” and “Happiness.” In religious emotion Arnold invokes the human experience of “the absolutely good, true, and beautiful: the experience of God” (Arnold, 1960b, 326) as (according to “the religious man”) the most powerful help in right action. But Arnold does not want to emphasize traditional religious emotions such as reverence, awe and submission, as she thinks humans tend to relate to God in more human terms, such as “father, brother, or bridegroom” (Arnold, 1960b, 327). Like other relationships humans engage in intuitive appraisal of God and in their development find that their appraisal changes as

they come to know him better. Ultimately the heart of religious emotion is the love of God sparked by “a vivid realization of His goodness, His love and concern for men” (Arnold, 1960b, 327). This religious emotion can either be reflective or the result of direct experience. In what could be a description of her own conversion Arnold notes that:

Such an experience seems to be as direct as sense experience, but without any sensory content. It may happen in a moment, with full awareness, or it may take some time during which there is no awareness of the outside world (mystical ecstasy)...they are experiences in which love as we know it in human life has become intensified and transformed, hardly resembling even the love of God that is aroused by meditation and reflection. (Arnold, 1960b, p. 327)

The point is that such experiences are uniquely powerful and, as the lives of the saints demonstrate, “As an aid to the establishment of a worth-while self-ideal, and its singleminded pursuit under the most trying circumstances, this love of God has no equal” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 327).

Arnold calls happiness the most mysterious of human emotions. We only feel it “in snatches” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 328) and we cannot achieve it through direct pursuit, it is always a gift, the pearl of great price.<sup>9</sup> The desire for happiness is “one of the most puzzling features of human life,” since an enduring experience of perfect joy is “bound to remain unfulfilled in life as we know it” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 329). The fact that happiness “contains a hint of eternity” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 328) is the key to understanding it. Once again Arnold invokes the religious man’s perspective—our perpetually unfulfilled longing for happiness is an indication of the reality of the happiness “promised when man sees his God face to face, and seeing Him will

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<sup>9</sup> See Matthew 14:45-46. In one of a series of parables, “The kingdom of heaven” or “The kingdom of God” is compared to a pearl of great price that a merchant sold all he owned to buy.

possess Him forever” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 329). Happiness in this life is a token the greater joys to come—“what God has promised to those that love Him”<sup>10</sup> (Arnold, 1960b, p. 329-330). But this habitually unfulfilled nature of happiness means that it always motivates us in the quest for our self-ideal:

The desire for happiness, even more than other positive human emotions, urges us to hold a steady course toward our self-ideal. Since the pleasures and delights in which we seek it disappoint us again and again, it urges us on and on. The man who despairs of fulfillment may become disillusioned, bitter, and cynical. But the man who sees it as a promise, the reward of love, may have a taste of it before he knows and complete fulfillment in the end. (Arnold, 1960b, p. 330)

### **Arnold’s Theory in the Light of Thomistic Philosophy**

While Arnold does not emphasize this influence in the book, the ideas of *Emotion and Personality* are fundamentally Thomistic. Randolph Cornelius has previously noted this, writing that Aquinas had “an enormous influence” (Cornelius, 2006, p. 978) on Arnold’s thinking about emotion. As we have noted previously, Arnold was exposed to the ideas of Aquinas by Gasson when they first met in the summer of 1948, and then in greater depth the following summer, when Gasson gave Arnold a crash course in Thomistic philosophy. The impact that this had on her thinking on emotion can be seen in the following letter to Gasson in October 1949:

My seminar in Emotion is off to a good start with an excellent group of students. They are making me see all kinds of problems I hadn’t thought off [sic] before, and by the time I am through with the first semester I may have the courage to edit and otherwise complete my articles in the field for publication in book form. Before I do that I have to

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<sup>10</sup> James 1:3 reads “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

look at the Thomistic treatment of emotion, of course. I am beginning with Brennan's Rational Psychology and am delighted to find that this time, thanks to you, I find it quite intelligible. (Arnold, 1949, M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 22, 1949)

While Arnold had already developed ideas very similar to Thomistic concepts (such as the existence of a soul, and a hierarchy of being) before she met Gasson, his introduction to her of Thomistic philosophy was clearly a signal event in her thinking on emotion. Recall that Arnold began to be dissatisfied with her upcoming Mooseheart Symposium presentation following her summer 1948 conversations with Gasson, and realized that she would have to do "a great deal of rethinking" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 13) as a result. That rethinking meant, in large part, surveying Thomistic philosophy for the insights that it had to offer about psychology.

In this process Arnold continued to rely upon Gasson as guide. Their correspondence reveals his significant influence in her writing of *Emotion and Personality*. Arnold apparently appealed to him for his assessment of her interpretation of Aquinas, and his letters frequently give detailed interpretations of scholastic philosophy. The following example is typical:

Now then, Motive; your definition is exact and would be understood perfectly by a Scholastic as restricted to appetitive activities (emotion being appetitive as well as choice, intention, consent, use, etc.etc.). However, the gentile would immediately think of instinct, or drive, or something such business, which is part of motivation too, (cf. Leeper, as you know) so you would have to explain that motives are of two kinds. 1. Those that work as final causes like purposes and objectives; and 2. These that work as efficient causes like hunger, anoxia, emotion, etc.etc. To illustrate: your definition describes a motive as final cause which acts on the person like the propeller pulling the plane along to the goal; there are other motive forces that act like the jet pushing the

plane, which are internal, and move the person as a force moves bodies; they can be called motives too. We had better have a long talk about that. Animals can have motives of both kinds but their purpose motives are never rational but always sensory. (Gasson, 1954, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 6, 1954)

As can be seen from this letter, Gasson was helpful to Arnold in her efforts to interpret Aquinas (necessary since his meaning is frequently obscure), to read him in the context of psychological research, and to adapt his terms to make his meaning intelligible to secular psychologists.

Gasson's influence is not just evident from correspondence, but is confirmed by Arnold herself. In the preface to *Emotion and Personality* she wrote:

Most of all I owe a debt of gratitude to a colleague and helper in a former work, the Reverend J. Gasson, S.J., of Spring Hill College, Mobile, Alabama. He graciously and patiently read each chapter as it was written, criticized it, and encouraged me, often drew my attention to problems I had glossed over, and was always willing to discuss a difficult point until a feasible solution was reached. Without his steadfast encouragement I might have given up trying long before such consistency as I have achieved was possible.

(Arnold, 1960a, p. vii)

For the interpretation of Aquinas, Gasson and Arnold were able to take advantage of the scholarship of others, which was plentiful because of the resurgence of interest in the area thanks to neoscholasticism. In 1953 Gasson wrote Arnold, "I'll have to see St Thomas on conflict. Look at Mercier's article in the Jan number of *The New Scholasticism* - On Babbitt.<sup>11</sup> [sic] What he says about 'higher will' is very interesting and needs thinking over. It's something on the same line as you mention from St. Thomas" (Gasson, [1953], J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 10, [1953]). This quote and the previous passage from Gasson's letter on motive show how

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<sup>11</sup> The article is "Was Irving Babbitt a Naturalist?" by Louis J. A. Mercier (1953).

Thomistic thought was functioning in the process of writing *Emotion and Personality*. St. Thomas was used as a trusted authority; a reliable resource that one could appeal to in order to solve puzzling problems. His authority was not used to dismiss inconvenient research findings, but often his philosophy, which was so different from most researchers' theories, could be used to resolve conflicting evidence of different experiments.

This process is not something that Arnold makes explicit in *Emotion and Personality*. Arnold does occasionally reference Aristotle or Aquinas as the source of certain ideas and at one point hints that theories of emotion would have been more fully developed if psychology "had followed the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition instead of starting fresh with Descartes" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 97). But unlike in *The Human Person*, Arnold never identifies her approach as Neoscholastic or Thomistic, but rather emphasizes her phenomenological methodology. She was too well aware that the view that "before Descartes there was nothing but theological prejudice" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 97) was still widespread.

Yet despite Arnold's efforts to keep the Thomistic thought in *Emotion and Personality* subtle, it is easy to spot. In fact there is so much in Arnold's theory of emotion that is Thomistic, it would perhaps be easier to recount the little that is not scholastic. Nonetheless it is important to establish (at least in part) what is Thomistic about Arnold's theory of emotion. The following analysis draws on Nicholas Lombardo's *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (2011), the best modern consideration of Aquinas and emotion, and Randolph Cornelius' "Magda Arnold's Thomistic theory of emotion, the self-ideal, and the moral dimension of appraisal" (2006), the only existing analysis of this aspect of Arnold's work.

As Cornelius observes, at the heart of Arnold's emotion theory is her hierarchical vision of nature, which she shares with Aquinas.<sup>12</sup> Aquinas (drawing on Aristotle) held that human beings have three levels of being: the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual. This human organization is a part of the larger hierarchical organization of all of creation; all created beings have one or a combination of these three levels or powers (i.e., plants: vegetative; animals: vegetative and sensitive; angels: intellectual). Humans are unique in possessing all three types of "power of the soul" and this fact means that our emotions are the most complicated because we have three different kinds of appetite corresponding with our three levels of being. From this we can see that Arnold's insistence on the distinction between animals and humans has its origins in Thomistic taxonomy.

Further, it is clear that Arnold's insights about emotional conflict in humans resulting from disagreement or competition between their physical and rational natures is Thomistic. Arnold's diabetic candy-lover whose physically-based emotional impulse towards sweets is arrested by deliberative action (the result of a rational appraisal of the situation) is an illustration of this Thomistic hierarchy. In Aquinas' system there are two types of cognition—sense cognition and intellectual cognition—which are defined by their objects (sense cognition: material objects; intellectual cognition: immaterial aspects of reality/universals). These two types of cognitions function simultaneously and interdependently to take in and evaluate the outside world. An intention (*intentio*) is the result of their joint action—"the sense perception of an object combined with a cognitive evaluation of its relevance to the subject's interests" (Lombardo, 2011, p. 21). The similarity of intentions, which Lombardo describes as "perception colored by cognitive evaluation" (2011, p. 24), to Arnold's intuitive appraisal, should be obvious. Like intuitive appraisal, intentions are stored in the memory, and allow the same object

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<sup>12</sup> See the next section for a discussion of how much of this hierarchical theory Arnold had arrived at independently.

to elicit a different emotion at different points in time, relative to its changing meaning for the subject.

Aquinas' emotion theory is undergirded by an extensive metaphysical system about which *Emotion and Personality* is largely silent. However a reading of Aquinas makes sense of some of Arnold's surprisingly confident yet weakly supported assertions in *Emotion and Personality*—her theory was clearly shaped by Aquinas' metaphysics, even if she did not consider it prudent to say so. Perhaps nothing is as central to Aquinas' thinking as the idea of appetite. Aquinas' definition of appetite, like Arnold's appraisal theory of emotion, is fundamentally object-oriented: appetite “is nothing other than an inclination toward something, something that is both similar and suited to that which desires it” (*Summa Theologiae* I-II 8.1 in Lombardo, 2011, p. 26). This definition of appetite makes sense within Aquinas' system because appetite is the defining characteristic of existence—all creation is drawn towards what completes it, its *telos*. In other words, it loves the good. Everything is naturally inclined to move towards what is good for it; it cannot help but move towards perfection. Thus, the active characteristic of a being, its appetite, is evoked by goodness; that is, appetite is triggered by a desirable external object. Evil, rather than being the opposite of good, is the corruption of goodness, the choice of something contrary to *telos*.

This dynamic system, it should be noted, is premised on belief in a good creator God, from whom everything that exists came, and to whom everything ultimately returns. In this system appetite is emphatically good, since it drives us towards our *telos*. Human *telos* is “partial happiness in this life and union with God and complete happiness in the next” (Lombardo, 2011, p. 33). Movement towards human *telos* is made possible by our appetites—plural because humans have three appetites corresponding to their tripartite nature: natural, sense, and



intellectual/rational appetites. Although all three appetites recognize and move toward the good, the intellectual/rational appetite (also called the will) has the greatest capacity to know and love the good. The intellectual appetite's proper object is infinite good, which allows it to love and enjoy God, the highest good possible. God is glorified in this movement of his creation towards him, and most particularly in the perfection of humans who seek God through their intellectual capacity.

In Aquinas' metaphysics we can see the reasoning behind Arnold's dynamic system of emotion, with its inevitable movement towards the good, and humans' ultimate *telos* of union with God. But there are even further similarities in the details of Aquinas' system. While Aquinas' appetite captures the notion of an inclination toward movement toward the good on which Arnold's whole system is premised, the concept of passion is markedly similar to her definition of emotion. Aquinas never discusses emotion, but in his terms passion (*passio*) has a similar meaning. For Aquinas a passion is the act of being acted upon, or more specifically, the movement of the sense appetite as a result of the apprehension of an object toward which it inclines. In other words a passion captures the response of the being to good, or the movement of the being towards its *telos*, as the result of the presence of a good object. Since the system is defined in terms of beings' relationship with the good, love is the most paradigmatic of passions, and the source of the other passions.

Implied in this system is current deficiency and future perfection—in other words movement toward the good is necessary because perfect good has not yet been obtained. Thus the purpose of passions is to move us towards our *telos*; to incline us toward the perfection of our nature. This results in a strikingly positive view of the passions, since rather than being an

obstacle to goodness, they are in fact indispensable to human flourishing. Passions are what impel us towards a good, flourishing life.

The idea that pleasure leads to perfection might be counterintuitive, but for Aquinas it is a justifiable assumption because of his belief in the absolute goodness of God. God loves all that is, and so with a generosity and concern for his creation he has made us so that our natural human capacities carry us towards our *telos*. We can trust the direction of our passions because God is trustworthy. This does come with a major caveat: the passions do require the educating element of reason to be consistently virtuous; rational analysis may have to override first impulse. Since rational appetite's object is the highest, its inclination, although often less appealing than that of natural or sense appetites is the more trustworthy. This is the case because "The will's most basic inclination is for complete, unrestricted goodness" (Lombardo, 2011, pp. 78-79), that is, the desire to have infinite happiness and beatitude. The rational passions then can help one choose between various good things, because it will tend towards what will move you closer to infinite good.

However we should not mistake the elevation of the rational appetite as the denigration of the body—according to Aquinas, passions by definition involve the body: "even more strictly speaking passion is a movement of an appetitive power that involves a bodily organ and a bodily reaction" (*Summa Theologiae* I-II 41.4 in Lombardo, 2011, p. 45). Aquinas is different from many other Christian philosophers and theologians in his emphasis of and positive take on human corporeality.

We can see from this review of Aquinas that Arnold's appraisal theory of emotion shares a number of his emphases. Perhaps the most obvious is the cognitive element in both their emotion schemes—despite their differences in terms, both see emotion at its most basic as an

intuitive appraisal of a given object or situation as it relates to the person, which then can be reinforced or overridden by later deliberative processes. Like Aquinas, Arnold sees emotion as active and object-oriented, and marks out activity toward something as the defining characteristic of living beings. Indeed, her definition of emotion as “*the felt tendency toward anything intuitively appraised as good (beneficial), or away from anything intuitively appraised as bad (harmful)*” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 182) is clearly Thomistic, based on the principle that the passions and appetites move toward the good and away from the bad. Her addition to this definition that the attractions or aversions are “*accompanied by a pattern of physiological changes organized toward approach or withdrawal*” (Arnold, 1960a, p. 182), fits in with Aquinas’ insistence on bodily change as inherent in passion, and with his emphasis in general on humans as both intellectual and physical beings. Arnold’s use of neurological evidence also fits in with this—she sees it as important because of the basic unity of the human person, although there the powers of being are organized on different levels, as they all depend on each other and function as a unit, and thus, as with Aquinas, there is no mind-body problem.

Other shared ideas are emotions as helpful in pursuing one’s *telos*, perfection according to one’s nature as the key to human flourishing, and God as the ultimate object of human emotion and action. Arnold’s anti-subjectivist insistence that there is ultimate truth, there are such things as virtues and vices, and that there exist valid and invalid organizations of life (i.e., the self-ideal) all have correlates in Aquinas’ thought. For Arnold, as for Aquinas, love is the most important emotion, and happiness is the key to discerning and pursuing one’s *telos*. Given Aquinas’ assertion that the passions impel us toward our *telos*, Arnold’s emphasis on positive emotions and more everyday emotions than are usually discussed by psychologists makes sense. Arnold’s point about the positive purposes of even traditionally negative emotions, such as those

provoked by suffering, fits perfectly into Aquinas' system. And finally, like Arnold, Aquinas identifies Christ as the exemplar for human emotion and action (passion).

If these similarities were not enough evidence to demonstrate Aquinas' influence on Arnold's thinking, consider the similarity of Aquinas' irascible versus concupiscible passions with Arnold's impulse versus contending emotions. Aquinas classified passions by their objects, with two major categories: concupiscible passions, which pursue the good and withdraw from the harmful, and irascible passions, which resists whatever would attack the good. In other words irascible passions respond to challenges to the good and therefore differ not just based on their objects (and therefore their movements towards or away from an object), but also in the difficulty of attaining their end. While Arnold does not use the terms concupiscible and irascible, in her chapter "Basic Emotions" she defines basic emotions using the same structure. Recall that she organized basic emotions according to "three dichotomies": whether the object of the emotion "is either good or bad for us; it is either present or absent; and finally it is either easy or difficult to attain (or avoid)" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 193). This results in a table showing basic emotions "Classified According to Their Direction and Degree of Impulsion" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 196). This classification scheme results in a division of emotions into impulse emotions and contending emotions, a classification which perfectly corresponds with Aquinas' categories of concupiscible and irascible. In fact the taxonomies of Arnold and Aquinas so perfectly agree that Arnold's table (1960, p. 196) matches almost exactly Lombardo's Figure 2-1 and 2-2, which depict concupiscible and irascible emotions (2011, p. 55, 63) (Compare Figure 1 and Figure 2). There are some minor changes in vocabulary (repulsion vs. recoil; pleasure vs. delight, etc.), but the organization is the same.

### Humanistic Influences

Given these many resemblances, perhaps we should ask what differs or is original in Arnold's work relative to Aquinas' philosophy? One element that seems to be particularly unique to Arnold is the concept of the self-ideal. While, as Cornelius notes, the concept developed "quite naturally out of her understanding of Aquinas" (2006, p. 987), there appears to be no Thomistic predecessor to the self-ideal. Certainly the idea that the flourishing life is that which is organized toward pursuit of the creature's *telos* is present in Aquinas, but there is no link to personality.<sup>13</sup> Cornelius also says that Arnold developed the concept of the self-ideal based in part on her readings of humanist psychologists, in particular Maslow (1954) for his hierarchy of needs and Kurt Goldstein (1939, 1940) and Allport (1937) on self-actualization and personality growth. This assertion is somewhat puzzling, because while Arnold cites Goldstein and Maslow in *Emotion and Personality*, she cites them primarily to disagree with other aspects of their work.<sup>14</sup> Certainly she never acknowledges them as influences in her discussion of the self-ideal. For Allport there is a much better case, as Arnold cites him frequently and almost exclusively approvingly, however not in the sections dealing with the self-ideal. Yet it does seem fair to say that the self-ideal was humanist-influenced, since Arnold's ideas about personality integration and self-actualization share a very real kinship with humanist concepts. In fact one could even describe her concept of the self-ideal as a Thomist-humanist hybrid, with the idea of

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<sup>13</sup> Given that "personality" is a 20th century psychological construct, this is not surprising. What would be more reasonable to expect is a self-ideal-type concept that is defined in terms a person's relation to virtue and vice. Given that interpretations of Aquinas vary widely, it is difficult to decide how closely his ideas resemble Arnold's. This topic deserves further, more extensive investigation.

<sup>14</sup> This assertion of Cornelius' appears to be based on his reading of Arnold's article "Psychology and the Image of Man" (1959). But again, Arnold cites Maslow and Goldstein there only to disagree with them, so whether she would have regarded them as influences remains questionable.

humans naturally pursuing their *telos* borrowed from Thomism and humans as having naturally integrating and self-actualizing personalities borrowed from humanistic psychology.<sup>15</sup>

Certainly the growing humanistic psychology movement was a part of the ethos in which Arnold wrote *The Human Person* and *Emotion and Personality*. The humanist emphasis on humans as persons, not merely animals, and their rebellion against strictly behaviorist or Freudian psychology certainly agreed with Arnold's own philosophical commitments. In many ways Arnold could easily be considered another of Katherine Pandora's *Rebels Within the Ranks* (1997), joining Gordon Allport and Gardner and Lois Murphy in their vigorous critique of psychology for its narrowness, idolatry of method, and lack of transparency about its political commitments. Arnold shared, among other things, humanistic psychology's emphasis on positive emotions and on the nonpathological, its more positive take on religious/spiritual elements of human experience, and humanism's deep suspicion of psychology's philosophical assumptions. Many humanists, like Arnold, thought that psychology's unshakable but unquestioned faith in its own methods and objectivity amounted to scientism, a new religion.

Arnold was not the only Catholic to find humanistic psychology compelling. The Second Vatican Council in 1962-65 marked the decline of neoscholastic psychology as Catholic psychologists instead began to form alliances with movements in modern psychology that seemed compatible with Catholic commitments. Humanistic psychology was the most popular option, attractive because it held a robust view of the person that could counter the more reductionistic views in behaviorism and psychoanalysis. Kugelmann (2011) notes collaboration

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<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that there is probably an even stronger case to be made for the self-ideal being an Ignatian-Thomistic hybrid, given the similarity of the concept of "election," or the choice of a way of life, to the self-ideal (at least as Gasson presents Ignatian spirituality in the last chapter of *The Human Person*). Since the chapter was based on his PhD dissertation, and his other chapters (and not Arnold's chapters) articulate this idea, one could make a case that the self-ideal was something Arnold learned about from Gasson, who had received it from Ignatian spirituality. Again, this deserves further exploration.

between ACPA members (William C. Bier, Annette Walters, Adrian van Kaam) and major figures in humanistic psychology (Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport). As early as 1951, there were ACPA presentations on Rogerian therapy, which was seen to be compatible with Thomistic ideas. As I have previously noted, Arnold herself considered Allport a friend and mentor, and she and Gasson wrote positively on Victor Frankl in *The Human Person* (Arnold & Gasson, 1954b). Arnold's work reflects this movement in that she strongly questions the fact/value dichotomy that undergirds psychology and points out psychology's ideological commitments.

However, as ever, Arnold walked to the beat of her own drum. While she was in sympathy with much of humanistic psychology, there was also much that she found to disagree with. For example she later recalled her disgust at how unscientific humanist psychology eventually became: "What made me unhappy in the States in later years was the humanistic movement that went so completely overboard into ascientific encounter groups — you know, they had absolutely no use for psychology as a science any more" (Arnold, 1976, pp. 55-56). This was a concern shared by other Catholics who had earlier found humanistic psychology attractive, particularly given the fact that many of the "ascientific encounter groups" involved experimentation with drugs and sex that Catholics found troubling (Kugelmann, 2011).

But even before humanism's more radical iteration Arnold had her reservations. This can be seen in Arnold and Gasson's efforts at the Barat workshop on personality to curtail the enthusiasm of Curran and Smet for Rogerian counseling, as well as their critique of Frankl in *The Human Person*. Rogerian therapy was incomplete because it was relativistic—it did not emphasize the necessity of putting the patient on the right road, "the road to salvation" (Arnold, [1951], M. Arnold to J.A. Gasson, [1951]). Similarly Frankl's admirable insights about "golden

bridges” needed a corrective—his logotherapy must emphasize humans as “dependent upon God his maker and responsible to Him for every thought, word, and deed” not their “vague responsibility to a nebulous life” (Arnold & Gasson, 1954b, p. 485). In other words, although Arnold was sympathetic to humanistic psychology, it was often too relativist for her tastes, emphasizing the human need for growth and self-actualization without considering in what direction that growth ought to take. Indeed it is clear from *Emotion and Personality* that Arnold had some deep reservations about self-actualization, at least as it is generally understood. In a section on self-actualization through self-expression, Arnold comes down hard on self-expression: “Expressing his emotions, pursuing each passing attraction, a man’s ‘better self’ remains unexpressed and unfulfilled and will revenge itself on him by an indefinable malaise, leading to cynicism and unhappiness” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 287).

Arnold’s concern with humanist psychology’s dodging of moral questions points to the way in which her self-ideal was different from similar humanist concepts. In an article called “Psychology and the Image of Man” (Arnold, 1959) published in the journal *Religious Education* the year before *Emotion and Personality*, Arnold reviewed the assumptions about the nature of man that contemporary psychology implied. Although Arnold called humanistic theories “more hopeful” (Arnold, 1959, p. 31) than the “pitifully distorted” pictures (Arnold, 1959, p. 32) painted by Freud and neobehaviorists, she nonetheless was critical of Goldstein and Maslow’s theories of self-actualization. She says that like the other popular psychological images of man the humanistic version is built “on a purely mechanistic deterministic basis, as if he were an animal or a machine” (Arnold, 1959, p. 33). This is because although these humanistic theories acknowledge human potential for freedom and agency, it makes these dependent “entirely on



favorable environmental circumstances whether these will ever come to fruition” (Arnold, 1959, p. 32).

Further, none of these theories of self-actualization actually explain the existence of religious belief, since on their view such belief is something that only a minority attain with full self-actualization. In short, “Man the actualizer, as Goldstein and Maslow paint him, also falls short of man the worshiper” and as a result, “For the religious man, none of these images of man are really adequate, no matter how popular they are in psychology” (Arnold, 1959, p. 32). But a better understanding of self-actualization is necessary for scientific purposes, too:

Unless the image of man...includes man the reasoner as well as man the impulse driven, unless it includes man’s recognition of what is good and his determination to act accordingly, there is no possibility of explaining either his cultural achievements or his moral and religious aspirations. (Arnold, 1959, p. 33)

In this article Arnold continues on to introduce the concept of the self-ideal as the solution to this problem. She asserts not only that “The human being can and does organize his powers, actions, habits in the active pursuit of the self-ideal” but (note the Thomistic concepts and language) that there is a “natural tendency towards perfection” (Arnold, 1959, p. 33). But this pursuit of human perfection is dependent on rational choice and action, a person’s values must be organized by its supreme goal: “What is valued most is what we want so intensely that we are willing to forgo every other pleasure or satisfaction rather than lose it” (Arnold, 1959, p. 34). But Arnold emphasizes that self-ideals are “not purely subjective”: “When a man’s self-ideal is mistaken or perverted, he is in fact working against the deepest requirements of his own nature” (Arnold, 1959, p. 34).

Thus Arnold's concept of the self-ideal differs from humanist theories of self-actualization in terms of her emphasis on *telos*. Goldstein and Maslow did not specify the proper end for human growth; their concept was non-directional. In contrast to the humanist view Arnold held that human maturity was dependent on the correct choice of goal: "No matter how good his endowment or how favorable his circumstances, a human being cannot reach the perfection possible to him if he simply follows his inclinations indiscriminately" (Arnold, 1959, p. 35). Choosing the wrong goal was to misuse one's human capacities, much like trying to read in the dark. Whereas humanists were agnostic about the right goal for self-actualization, Arnold was not shy in identifying God as the correct goal for all human activity. In the relative safety of a journal dealing with religious education, Arnold could be explicit about the goal of a "valid" self-ideal:

Revelation asserts that man has a destiny which goes beyond any of the goals he can reach in this world; that man's desire for perfect knowledge, for unfailing love and understanding, for enduring happiness, can and will find its fulfillment in God who is all in all. . . .Such an ideal will organize man's actions and bring them into harmony.

(Arnold, 1959, p. 35)

Cornelius concurs: Arnold and Gasson "saw the self-ideal in religious (i.e., Thomistic) terms" (Cornelius, 2006, p. 988).

This examination of Arnold's concept of the self-ideal suggests that while Arnold was influenced by and sympathetic to the humanist movement, her Thomistic allegiances made her an uneasy ally. Her belief in ultimate truth and morally objective "valid" self-ideals founded in the person of Jesus Christ put her outside of mainstream humanism. If she had to choose between camps, she would choose Aquinas (even over Allport). Even her phenomenological approach,

which was a method championed by humanists, is also a method with a long history, including a well-established association with Thomistic philosophy, via an Aristotelian view of science (Wertz, 2015).

Given her demonstrably deep commitment to Thomistic philosophy it seems more accurate to say that Arnold chose her phenomenological method based on Thomistic influences, and that the humanistic movement's embrace of this method made her choice (relatively) professionally acceptable. Humanistic psychology created the space for less positivist methods, established useful non-behaviorist vocabulary, and normalized critiques of psychology's assumptions, all of which paved the way for Arnold's work. Thanks to humanistic psychology, she was not the lone voice in the wilderness in her call for a more human-centered psychology. Arnold's Thomistic beliefs distanced her from parts of humanistic psychology, but they also inspired her creativity—prompting her to take self-actualization in a unique direction with the teleological self-ideal.

### **Arnold's Thinking: Continuity or Discontinuity?**

One question raised by an emphasis on the role of Thomistic philosophy in Arnold's thought is how much continuity or discontinuity there is between her mature theory of emotion and her earlier scholarship. In emphasizing the influence of Arnold's conversion and her resultant exposure to scholastic philosophy there is the danger that the discontinuity in her thinking may be overemphasized. Certainly in her autobiography Arnold gives some clear indications that she had arrived at several foundational Thomistic concepts independently. For instance she wrote that the idea of the individual as agent and the hierarchy of being "I arrived at for myself" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 11). It thus seems advisable to briefly look at Arnold's earlier

work to see what continuities and discontinuities exist between it and her later, post-conversion work.

Arnold's article on the "Physiological differentiation of emotional states" (1945) was her first publication on emotion. It reflects the findings of her doctoral research—her adrenaline research that challenges Cannon's emergency theory of emotion. In this article she argues that it is possible to identify at least three different emotions (fear, anger, and excitement) based on their different physiological profiles. The article is highly technical, and uses primarily physiological evidence to engage Cannon and similar research. The only real hint of her later cognitive theory is her rejection of two excitatory states as emotions since "In both cases a conscious evaluation of the stimulus situation seems to be missing" (Arnold, 1945, p. 46).

Arnold's next publication on emotion was her contribution to the Mooseheart Symposium (Arnold, 1950). Entitled "An excitatory theory of emotion," Arnold gave this paper after her EPA conversion experience and her first conversations with Gasson about Thomistic philosophy but before her intensive summer tutorial in Thomism, or her return to the Catholic Church. However the paper seems to have been written prior to her meeting with Gasson (Arnold, n.d. c) so may be taken as a reasonable approximation of her views prior to her Christian thinking. Arnold begins the paper with the assertion that an emotion theory, "To be acceptable, has to reconcile several contradictory lines of evidence" (1950, p. 11). This evidence is on the one hand the disruptive influence of emotions on motor performance demonstrated by experimental psychology and, on the other hand, the observation by clinicians that some emotions "are the very conditions of effective living" (1950, p. 11). Therefore, Arnold says, the question is, "Are all emotions harmful, are some of them useful, or are all of them useful sometimes?" (1950, p. 11).

Some familiar themes in this article are Arnold's insistence on reexamining and attempting to reconcile conflicting experimental findings rather than extrapolating them from theories as well as an emphasis on the actual functioning of humans as the standard against which psychological theories ought to be judged: "we shall have to scrutinize neurological and physiological facts rather than theories and interpret them in the light of our knowledge of the psychological functioning of the human being" (1950, p. 11). Arnold's approach resembles a nascent phenomenological approach ("we know from our own experience..." [1950, p. 12]); and at the end of the article there is a hint at what would later become appraisal, only at this time phrased as "evaluation." A "complete" emotional experience, Arnold says, would include "evaluation, emotional attitude (or feeling), resulting in emotional expression, autonomic changes, and their cortical perception and reevaluation" (Arnold, 1950, p. 19). In a section titled "Reeducation of emotion" Arnold explains that emotions can change if we change our evaluations of a given situation: "a change of heart, and a change of regard is literally all that is necessary to reshape our human nature nearer to our heart's desire" (1950, p. 31).

However, other than these general similarities in approach and hints of later concepts, Arnold's theory here is substantially different from the one she would articulate in *The Human Person* and *Emotion and Personality*. While the excitatory theory of emotions that she articulates does have in common with her later theory the fact that emotions are evaluated more positively than in the emergency theory of emotion (some emotions, at least, are useful) there is little else that links this early theory to her more developed work. Arnold's focus is on evaluating the evidence for cortical excitation, and as such the paper is again quite technical and very physiological/neurological in focus. There is no sign of her later taxonomy of basic emotions, of

self-appraisal, or even of any of the basic dynamics of appraisal (in terms of movement toward the good and away from the bad).

The shift in Arnold's thinking can also be seen in the differences between her contributions to the two Mooseheart Symposiums. In the proceedings from the 1948 conference, Arnold's paper was to be found in the "Theory: Psychophysiological Approaches" section of the book, rather than one of the less materialist sections such as "Theory: Psychological Approaches." But in the 1968 Mooseheart proceedings Arnold's theory is not in "Theories Based on Biological Considerations" (the closest equivalent to "Psychophysiological Approaches") but is instead in "Cognitive Theories of Feeling and Emotion"—a category that was entirely absent in the earlier publication.<sup>16</sup> This shift in emphasis not only reflects the changes of the field, but also Arnold's changing thinking about emotion—her theory went from primarily biological/philological to cognitive and phenomenological. In her 1968 Mooseheart talk "Perennial Problems in the Field of Emotion," Arnold emphasizes the importance of a phenomenological approach to emotion:

But only on the basis of a phenomenological analysis of the psychological activities from perception to emotion and action will it be possible to work out a theory of brain function that provides a neural correlate for psychological experience. Without such a theory, the scores of detailed findings resulting from the massive research effort of the last few decades are bound to remain isolated disconnected nuggets instead of clues to the rich veins of future knowledge. (Arnold, 1970b, p. 184)

While in this passage from her mature perspective there remains an emphasis on neural structure similar to her earlier excitatory theory—it is clear that Arnold expects these facts to be tested

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<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the existence of such a category is in part due to Arnold's influence. One contributor explicitly states: "My account of emotion obviously owes a great deal to Magda Arnold" (Peters, 1970, p. 193) and many of the contributors cite *Emotion and Personality*.

against a phenomenological account of emotion, an emphasis which agreed with Thomistic philosophy, and which is missing in her earlier work.

On the preceding evidence it does seem that Arnold's view of emotion changed substantially as a result of her conversion to Catholicism and her exposure to Thomistic thinking. This view fits with Arnold's own account of the effect of her conversations with Gasson:

These discussions opened new vistas for me. I realized that I would have to do a great deal of rethinking. I did not know it at the time, but my views of emotion, on which I was to give a paper at the Mooseheart Symposium, would need a great deal of further work. For the moment, I was fairly satisfied with my plans for the paper and looked forward to the symposium. (Arnold 'Autobiography' n. d., pp. 12-13)

So the idea of disjuncture between Arnold's pre- and post-Catholic views of psychology does seem to have some support as regards her theory of emotion. Certainly it was not a complete break with the past or an immediate revolution, but Arnold's friendship with Gasson did substantially change her thinking. Some part of the change in her thinking on emotion no doubt should be attributed to the natural maturation of a scientific thinker, and the increasing independence made possible by her professional advancement and the space opened up by humanistic psychology. But even this process is impossible to separate from her conversion: Arnold matured as a thinker in conjunction with her growth as a Christian thinker—her belief was integral to her maturation as a scientist and theorist and is impossible to dissect.

However there is also much continuity in Arnold's general approach to psychology. During her training at the University of Toronto she became dissatisfied with reductionistic psychoanalytic and behaviorist explanations of human action and went looking for a psychology

that was both scientific and humanistic (Arnold, 1976).<sup>17</sup> Given her late entry to university and her unusual background, she was a fiercely independent thinker who was willing to take an unpopular stance if she believed it was true. It seems Arnold was already on a trajectory toward a more phenomenological and human-centered theory of psychology at the time of her conversion, as evidenced by her independent articulation of some of the core concepts of Thomistic philosophy. Her conversion and friendship with Gasson did not produce a complete break in perspective but provided her with a technical language and support for her ideas, which along with the stimulating insights of Aquinas, allowed her to complete the process of departing from familiar psychological orthodoxy to articulate an original new theory.

### **The Response to *Emotion and Personality***

The response to *Emotion and Personality* was generally gratifying.<sup>18</sup> Prior to the publication of the book, Allport had told Gasson he found Arnold's "opus" "both erudite and incisive like all her work" (Allport, 1954, G. Allport to J. Gasson, August 31, 1954), and most of her readers seemed to share that opinion. While Gasson's prediction about her review of neurological evidence ("Professional neurologists should gobble these chaps. like termites chewing oak - or johnny drinking beer" [Gasson, n.d., J. Gasson to M. Arnold, n.d., "Whensday"]) might have been overly optimistic, reviewers at least were impressed with the sheer scope of her work. Brendan Maher of Harvard, in his review in *The APA Review of Books*, wrote that Arnold had "undertaken an heroic task" (Maher, 1961, p. 289) in her book. He judged her well equipped for such a monumental task: "She comes armed with an encyclopedic

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<sup>17</sup> Arnold had good support at the University of Toronto for such an endeavor, since the school had an unusual openness to holistic, ecological, functionalist, and applied approaches. Pols (2002) observes that the line of child development research spearheaded by Bott was done in the natural history model of research described by Pandora (1997) in her account of Allport and the Murphys. Like these humanists, researchers at the University of Toronto tended to see their subjects "as individuals within their specific social and cultural contexts rather than as abstractions or manipulable experimental objects" (Pols, 2002, p. 137).

<sup>18</sup> Arnold recalls the reviews as "very favorable" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 19).



knowledge of relevant data, a gift for lucid exposition, and a prose style of admirable unobtrusiveness” (Maher, 1961, p. 289). Maher was impressed both with the originality of her review of emotion: “There is nothing with which to compare this volume presently available in the literature” (Maher, 1961), and with her analysis of neurological evidence: “By far the most impressive phase of Arnold’s treatment of emotion is...a detailed review of physiological and neurological findings which are germane to the understanding of those changes which accompany emotions” (Maher, 1961). Maher also singled out Arnold’s appraisal theory as an original contribution<sup>19</sup> but worried that it had little predictive value and noted that psychologists generally held that “concepts which add nothing to the accuracy with which observable phenomena may be predicted are unjustifiable” (Maher, 1961).

Although Maher’s is a generally evenhanded review, he casts Arnold as a bit of an ideologue and an advocate for old introspective psychology: “Old psychologies, unlike old soldiers, do not always fade away. Sometimes they return to the battle, freshly uniformed and with more ammunition...This author has only just begun to fight” (Maher, 1961). “Arnold is a frank mentalist” Maher says, and “by deciding, in advance, that phenomenological analysis is the way in which the real nature of psychological events is uncovered, she has begged the question which she sets out to answer” (Maher, 1961). Maher objects to Arnold’s phenomenological approach as arbitrary and contrary to psychological practices: “Particular first premises may have practical advantages, and it is these which commonly influence psychologists to adopt them—not some conviction that they have somehow apprehended a basic truth” (Maher, 1961). Arnold’s unusual first principles are at the heart of the disagreement: “Evidently, Arnold is dealing with psychology from premises which differ from those of many psychologists,

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<sup>19</sup> The term appraisal was first used by Grinker and Spiegel (1945), but Arnold’s definition of appraisal is original (Cornelius, 2006).

especially psychologists in the United States” (Maher, 1961). But Maher recommends “scientific tolerance” to the “impatient physicalist” who is tempted to dismiss Arnold’s work out of hand, because they will “miss the thorough and scholarly analysis” that “comprises the bulk” of her work (Maher, 1961).

The objection to Arnold’s differing assumptions and phenomenological approach also seems to motivate a much more negative review from *The Canadian Journal of Psychology*. Psychiatrist George Laverty,<sup>20</sup> who incorrectly identifies the author as “Miss Arnold,” first complains about Arnold’s nonexperimental language: “‘Emotion,’ like ‘consciousness’ is a term which experimental psychologists tend to avoid, unless they can give it an operational definition” (Laverty, 1962, p. 239). Of Arnold’s review of past research Laverty says, “A great deal of evidence is assembled, some selected uncritically and some of uncertain relevance”; her assembly of “a great variety of fact and opinion” within a framework is “quite the opposite from the tidy critical review” typical of psychology (1962, p. 240). Although he concedes that “the broad scope of this work...offers many hypotheses to be tested,” he is disappointed that “these do not, however, add up to a theory” (1962, p. 240). In other words, Arnold’s theorizing is not to his taste: “rather the data presented should form the preface to a research programme designed to test some of the hypotheses more directly” (Laverty, 1962, p. 240). He concludes, “part of the evidence presented is anecdotal, uncritical, and presented from a point of view more philosophically speculative and piously informed than would seem to be appropriate in the company of respectable psychology and physiology;” however, “Professor Arnold cannot leave anything out: the result on the whole is stimulating” (Laverty, 1962, p. 240).

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<sup>20</sup> Laverty was associated with Queens University and Kingston General Hospital and was an advocate of behavioral therapy.

It is interesting to compare these reviews to those for *The Human Person*. Laverty's "pietistic" insinuation notwithstanding,<sup>21</sup> Arnold's work on emotion appears to be evaluated on its own merits, not dismissed as "ideology." Maher and Laverty are skeptical of Arnold's phenomenological approach and wish that she had limited herself to more orthodox psychological methods and subject matter, but they respectfully disagree, ultimately recommending her book as stimulating. There is no dismissal of Arnold's ideas as "little more than a discussion of psychological principles in terms of their agreement or disagreement with Catholic doctrines" (Sappenfield, 1955, p. 90) or for religious audiences only. Despite Arnold's rather transparent frequent illusions to "For the religious man..." or "For the Christian..." and her regular citation of articles in *The Human Person*, Arnold's *Emotion and Personality* had successfully "passed" as a nonreligious work, and could be treated as such. This may have been intentional on Arnold's part: A biography of Arnold included in Maher's review (likely contributed by Arnold)<sup>22</sup> very carefully avoids any religious content and identifies the University of Toronto as "where she formed her values in psychology, taking a stand intermediate between the introspective and behavioral schools" (Maher, 1961).

It is not surprising that Arnold's phenomenological methods were critiqued and that her reviewers called for work from a more experimental orientation. Their confusion over Arnold's choice of evidence and methods were a good measure of how far outside the mainstream her approach was.<sup>23</sup> It was precisely this narrow definition of emotion and scientific methods that Arnold meant for her book to address and alter. And *Emotions and Personality* did in fact

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<sup>21</sup> It is difficult to judge whether this comment was based on the content of the book or on knowledge of Arnold's religious beliefs. Either way it is fairly mild compared to Sappenfield's accusations of bias in his review of *The Human Person*.

<sup>22</sup> Given that Maher was at Harvard, it is likely that he knew Arnold.

<sup>23</sup> As evidence of how unusual her approach was, see Maher's remarks that some psychologists will have the same reaction to Arnold's work as "Dr. Johnson to the lady preacher: that what is surprising is not that it is done so well but that it is done at all" [Maher, 1961]).

stimulate research to test some of its predictions, and proved very productive theoretically for the field of emotions research. This stimulating effect can be seen by the number of researchers who responded to Arnold's work at the Mooseheart Symposium, and the fact that, 8 years after the publication of the book, there were five researchers in addition to Arnold whose approach to emotion could be classed as cognitive.

There was actually one more cognitive paper ("Toward a Cognitive Theory of Emotion") in the 1968 Mooseheart Symposium, but strangely Arnold included it under "Psychological Approaches" in the published proceedings (Arnold, 1970a). This was work by Richard Lazarus and his colleagues, and it was Lazarus who would do the most to popularize Arnold's appraisal theory (Reinenzin, 2006). Lazarus' theory was very similar to Arnold's; in fact Reinenzin calls it essentially an "elaboration" of Arnold's work (2006, p. 940). Lazarus acknowledged his debt to Arnold in some of his early works (1966; 1968)<sup>24</sup> but his "cognitive-motivational" theory of emotion eventually became the better-known theory. The fact that Lazarus tended to focus on negative emotions such as stress, and to couch appraisal theory in less revolutionary, more technical terms, seems to have made it more palatable to mainstream psychology (Reinenzin, 2006).<sup>25</sup>

Nonetheless *Emotion and Personality* became "the standard reference book in emotion" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 19) and remains frequently cited today. Google Scholar lists the number of citations of the book at 2,248. Arnold, at least according to her student, Eileen Gavin, seemed content to share some of the glory with Lazarus. Gavin recalled that she was annoyed that Lazarus "thought highly of himself" and in her view "didn't give her enough credit" (E. Gavin,

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<sup>24</sup> For example, Lazarus noted that, "the concept of appraisal has been persuasively presented by Arnold as the cognitive determinant of emotion" (Lazarus, 1966, p. 52).

<sup>25</sup> Also, although Lazarus received his PhD only 4 years after Arnold and they both died the same year, he was 20 years younger than her and so was able to work throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s and so to conduct active research when cognitive theories were widely accepted.

personal communication, January 2, 2013). Gavin told Arnold of her annoyance and asked if she shared it. Arnold took a minute to think, and “as was customary with her the latency with her was quite long, about a minute and a half,” but then responded, “well, it’s all in Aristotle” (E. Gavin, personal communication, January 2, 2013).

### **The Role of the Personal in Arnold’s Science**

Providing a definitive answer to the question of how Arnold’s faith impacted her psychology is difficult because of the overwhelming amount of extant evidence that testifies to the importance of faith to her thinking. It would be far easier to identify the influence of faith on a scientist who was more moderately religious, or for whom the categories “faith” and “science” were more clearly defined. Adopting Misiak and Staudt’s *Catholics in Psychology* (1954) approach to such a Catholic would not be difficult—one could simultaneously celebrate their scientific achievements and their Catholic identity, claiming perhaps that their belief had motivated their scientific excellence, or identifying a particular religious application to their otherwise “neutral” theory. Arnold’s life resists such an analysis: a consistent refusal to draw boundaries between her faith and her science, or between the personal religious and the objective professional identity, characterizes Arnold’s work.

This is true of all of Arnold’s post-conversion published work. While the extent to which Arnold was explicit about her faith varied across publications, the influence of faith on her work remained visible throughout. This was a deliberate choice on Arnold’s part, a sign of her integrationist identity. Assimilation with mainstream psychology was not her primary goal; rather, she wanted to articulate a distinctively Catholic-informed psychology that would reform psychology, freeing it from its materialist shackles. The Arnold-Gasson correspondence

showcases the details of the development of Arnold's integrationist perspective, but even going only on a reading of secondary sources, the influence of Arnold's faith on her work is obvious.

It is significant that even *Emotion and Personality*, which was not an overtly religious work, was permeated with religious perspectives and concepts. While Arnold's emotion theory had elements borrowed from humanistic psychology, as we have seen earlier, it was far more deeply dependent on Aristotelian and Thomistic conceptions of knowing and turning towards the good. Even when speaking to a secular, skeptical audience, Arnold includes in her emotion theory her distinctive view of humans as unique and agentic, her criticism of (secular) psychology for its unquestioned philosophical assumptions, and her fundamentally teleological (and even Christocentric!) view of the world. In *Emotion and Personality*, while Arnold certainly tried to speak to a nonreligious professional audience she does not expend much energy in disguising her own religious views and she is unwilling to sacrifice the theory's religiously inspired elements for the sake of conformity. At the heart of Arnold's most original theorizing was her faith, and to try to cut out that heart would have been to destroy the whole.

From a pragmatic perspective, it probably would have been better for Arnold to have included fewer asides about the perspective of "the religious man" in *Emotion and Personality* and to have saved her attacks on psychology's unjustified materialism for another day. If, like Lazarus, Arnold had contented herself with only discussing her cognitive appraisal theory, and had not emphasized the theory's differing phenomenological assumptions, her opus might have had a greater and more immediate impact. But, as in *The Human Person*, Arnold had a more ambitious goal in mind, a large-scale reform of psychological epistemology, and that goal was not compatible with letting others think her theory was anything other than revolutionary.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> For example, see Arnold (1968) for her spirited attack on a behaviorist who tried to conceptualize her cognitive theory in behaviorist terms.

At one point in his review of *Emotion and Personality*, Lavery comments, “Professor Arnold cannot leave anything out” (1962, p. 240). This comment seems particularly apt given Arnold’s persistent refusal to stay judiciously silent on religious and philosophical topics she knew would provoke secular psychologists. This unwillingness to self-censor was also a theme of Arnold’s professional life: recall her comments to Allport that it had become clear to her that “I just don’t fit into the deliberately secular tradition of Bryn Mawr” and that she was excited to be able to teach psychology as she thought it should be taught: “so that the study of man will include man’s purpose, both proximate and ultimate” (Arnold, 1950, M. Arnold to G. Allport, May 6, 1950). Arnold’s insistence on bringing man’s ultimate purpose into psychology, both in her teaching and writing, was professionally risky, but necessary, given her worldview.

Perhaps it is helpful to differentiate between two reasons for Arnold’s boldness in proclaiming her unpopular views. The first I will refer to as her religious reason—Arnold was genuinely convinced of the truth of the Christian gospel and this conviction inspired a fearlessness, even a recklessness about her own reputation. This can be understood in terms of the Christian concepts of “mission” and “vocation,” which teach that believers ought to use the gifts that God has given them to bring the good news of the Christian story to “the Gentiles”—those who do not yet know the goodness and love of God. Logically following this is the idea of exile. Drawing on the Old Testament stories of exile, Christians are taught to regard themselves as “strangers in a strange land”<sup>27</sup>—inevitably alien to the surrounding culture, and waiting for the fulfillment of God’s promise in faith. Sometimes this distinctiveness requires an extreme commitment in the face of opposition: martyrdom may be necessary to be faithful in a hostile world. These themes are evident in Arnold’s correspondence immediately post-conversion, as she and Gasson wrestled with identifying her vocation and how best to channel her zeal. But

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<sup>27</sup> For this theme see Exodus 2:22, Leviticus 25:23, Psalm 137, I Peter 2:11-12, and Hebrews 11:8-15.

while her convert's zeal may have been tempered somewhat in the years that followed, Arnold continued to evince a willingness to sacrifice professionally for God, even if the cost was academic scorn or martyrdom.

The second reason, which I will call her scientific reason, is connected also to Arnold's religious belief, as her view of science was colored by an Aristotelian-Thomistic conception of science. By Arnold's scientific reason, I mean that her boldness was based in both her realist epistemology and her strong view of experimenter subjectivity. She was unconcerned about "objectivity" and with separating her personal beliefs from her science, because she believed such a separation was patently impossible. Time and time again, Arnold emphasized that basic assumptions inevitably influence scientific research, and in significant ways. The best a scientist could hope for was "a combination of prior assumption and experimental fact" (Arnold, 1954a, p. 15), as a truly bad assumption might skew the results so that there was no experimental fact in the outcome. Far better than attempting to reduce experimenter bias was to embrace subjectivity, and to be honest about one's basic assumptions, so that they could be evaluated by outsiders. This meant that Arnold's religious-infused psychological theories actually had a competitive advantage—she was being upfront about her assumptions, whereas most secular theorists were not. True, her approach, choice of method, and interpretation of results were affected by her basic assumptions, but so was every other scientist.

Given this, by rights Arnold's theories *ought* to be treated fairly, to be judged by the same standard as secular theories since they were no less scientific—particularly so since Arnold's theory was based on phenomenology, which meant it was being checked against the only objective standard possible—human experience. Arnold wanted the same standard applied to her work that she used to judge other theories: "Is it based on valid philosophical principles, does it



include all the relevant facts and does it provide a consistent explanation of necessary connections between these facts?" (Arnold, n.d. b, p. 1). In most cases Arnold was disappointed—psychologists judged her theory against disciplinary custom and trends. But like the second-generation woman psychologist that she was, in the face of persistent discrimination, Arnold continued to ask for and expect a level playing field, stubbornly choosing to believe in a meritocracy of science despite the abundant evidence against it.

It is just as well that Arnold did not believe in the possibility of scientific objectivity, for there are other sources of subjectivity evident in Arnold's emotion theories, in addition to her religious belief. The influence that Gasson had on her opinions and interpretation of research is probably the most obvious. In their letters there is hardly an instance of their disagreement—instead they seemed to work cooperatively towards solutions to intellectual problems. Arnold's affection for Gasson meant that his views may have had an unquestioned status, certainly he was more of an influence on her than any other living psychologist. This is not a problem if one regards science as a communal, cooperative endeavor, but it clearly violates the popular idea of the solitary scientist formulating hypotheses without the interference of the outside world.

Arnold's emotion theories were also clearly affected by her past. Her neglected and solitary childhood, as well as the emotional trauma of her marriage and separation from her daughters, offers an obvious origin of her interest in understanding emotions. Were emotions ultimately disruptive or constructive? It seems it may have been important for Arnold to know the answer, especially given the evidence from Gasson's correspondence that she was lonely and often needed cheering. A talk that Arnold gave at the Mobile Diocesan Council of the National Council of Catholic Women in 1974 offers some evidence of how Arnold would have applied her own research to herself. "Emotions are quite difficult to deal with when they become

excessive or chronic,” Arnold told the assembled women. In this case emotions needed to be controlled, but both expression and suppression had their downsides, so a balance was best: “There has to be a golden mean between suppression and discharge” (Park, 1974, p. 5B). “Let the heart speak, but don’t leave the head behind” (Park, 1974, p. 5B), Arnold said; evaluate your situation carefully and figure out what you actually want. Then the emotion will follow the decision automatically. The idea was to deploy one’s emotions strategically; “We have to coax ourselves” (Park, 1974, p. 5B), Arnold concluded.

It is not clear to what extent or how successfully Arnold followed her own advice. From the perspective of her daughters Arnold’s interest in emotion presents something of a paradox. Despite her fully realized theory of emotion, she often remained unable to connect emotionally with her daughters. She frequently emulated her “Aunt” Marie, in harshly criticizing her daughters’ appearances and decisions (Arnold, 2014). It was not until Arnold moved to Arizona in her 80s that she and Joan worked out a more positive relationship, and even in that case Arnold’s unsent letters to Joan testify to the emotional constraints she felt. Arnold’s relationship with Katherine was never resolved; Katherine left angry letters for each of her family members after her suicide. Although sad, this is not terribly surprising, Arnold’s authoritarian parenting style was very much in step with its times, and the painful separation from her children early in their life no doubt contributed to the dysfunction. Gasson seems to have been the one person with whom she could be emotionally honest and intimate, and as a result he was the source of much emotional stability. Little wonder Arnold described her emotional state while tending to Gasson in palliative care as attempting to get “the fist around my heart to relax” (Arnold, 1988, M. Arnold to K, Arnold, April 15, 1988).

Not only does this darker side to Arnold's emotions suggest a personal need for her theory, but for the particular theory that she arrived at. With her emotionally bereft childhood and strained relationship with her daughters in mind it makes sense that Arnold would appreciate a theory of emotion that emphasized cognition. The nonscientific factor of Arnold's own emotional experience no doubt contributed to her emphasis on appraisal along with her religious commitments. Since her childhood thinking had been Arnold's strength; her intellectual gifting was what had allowed her to escape the hell of a loveless and emotionally abusive relationship with Bertl. A cognitive theory of emotion suggested a means to deal with that painful history: she did not need to feel guilty about the negative emotions of the past (after all, they simply pointed to the fact that Bertl had not been good for her); instead she should pursue the things that brought her joy (her scholarship; her relationship with Gasson; the service of God).

Arnold's specifically Catholic definition of the self-ideal must also have proved helpful to her personally; it describes well the way that Arnold responded to the brokenness in her life. Arnold understood the various frustrations in her life (her marriage, strained relationships with her children, professional setbacks) in the light of her overriding self-ideal, her *telos*: God.<sup>28</sup> As Gasson and Aquinas had taught her, true happiness was not necessarily to be found in earthly pleasures, it was only to be found in her sense of the love God in this life, and union with him in the life to come.

### Summary

From this review of *Emotion and Personality*, it seems clear that Arnold's religious beliefs and her personal emotional needs together shaped her scientific theory. Arnold's conversation and friendship with Gasson were critical events in the formulation of her pioneering

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<sup>28</sup> For example, see Arnold's closing words in her autobiography: "All in all, I cannot help feeling that God was working out his plans for me, often contrary to my wishes and prayers. Yet I am grateful even for the pain involved, it brought such unexpected happiness in its train" (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 29).

appraisal theory. Although there is definitely some continuity between Arnold's early and later thought (specifically her interest in both humanistic themes and her impatience with reductionistic theories), her exposure to the work of Aquinas was crucial to her ability to articulate an original, complex theory of emotion.

Arnold's use of her faith in her science requires some comment. By allowing her personal life to affect her scholarship, Arnold was already guilty of violating the scientific ideal of objectivity, a problem particularly given the positivist ethos of the time in which she lived. But Arnold's intentional mixture of her faith with her science was far worse—she had transgressed the invisible but closely policed faith-science boundary. As Lavery had put it in *Emotion and Personality*, “philosophically speculative and piously informed” psychology was hardly appropriate company for “respectable psychology and physiology” (Lavery, 1962, p. 240). A modern conceptualization of this boundary-centric model of faith and science is captured by Stephen J. Gould's idea of Non-Overlapping Magisteria (Gould, 1997). On this view science and faith are separate realms, and conflict is preventable by clear boundaries, by everyone being aware that they are distinct “ways of knowing” or different levels of explanation.<sup>29</sup>

The idea of a strict boundary between faith and science is an old idea, with roots in the Enlightenment, but which was reinforced by the conflict over the theory of evolution. Writing in 1892, in response to Darwin's work, biologist Ernst Haeckel articulated what was becoming the standard view of the relationship between faith and science. Now that there was a non-miraculous explanation for the development of humans, there was no need for a religious account of creation. Haeckel wrote:

...thereby not even the smallest advantage is gained for a scientific knowledge of nature.

Such a conception of an immaterial force, which as the first creates matter, is an article of

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<sup>29</sup> Some Christians share this view, see Myers (2000).

faith which has nothing whatever to do with human science. Where faith commences, science ends. Both these arts of the human mind must be strictly kept apart from each other. Faith has its origin in the poetic imagination; knowledge, on the other hand, originates in the reasoning intelligence of man. Science has to pluck the blessed fruits from the tree of knowledge, unconcerned whether these conquests trench upon the poetical imaginings of faith or not. (Haeckel, 1892, p. 9)

From this perspective Arnold was putting together two things which ought not to be together. Religious belief belonged in the personal realm, not in the laboratory. It must be “strictly kept apart,” lest it contaminate the scientific process. That this view was active in Arnold’s circles can be seen from Beebe-Center’s comments that he had “never noticed that Catholic philosophy need to interfere with a man’s scientific approach.”

Arnold saw things differently. Such a statement “betrays a bias against religion which is as ‘unscientific’ as any bias for religion” (Arnold, 1960b, 283-284). Underlying her belief that faith had a place in science was her belief about the unity of truth. With Gasson (and a host of Catholic scholars before her) Arnold affirmed: “a valid assumption in science will not contradict a truth in any other field” (Gasson, 1954c, p. 556). Christian belief in the unity of truth is bolstered by the theology of the created order—not only were all things made by God, but they continue to exist, and have their being in him. Specifically, the person of Jesus Christ is identified with the ordering *Logos*, the cosmic order. For Catholics, it is this “High Christology” which justifies their confident engagement with science: “Because Jesus Christ is the *Logos* incarnate—and not simply another interesting religious figure among many—signs of his presence and style are found everywhere, and he can be related noncompetitively to them” (Barron, 2007, p. 152).

Although Arnold and Gasson were outliers as integrationists in the 1950s, since then a number of Christian scholars have explored the idea of integration (classics in this scholarship include Meehl, 1958; Holmes, 1975; Holmes, 1977; Marsden, 1997; for psychology see Collins, 2000; for a recent articulation, see Noll, 2011). These integrationist works are based on the assertion (as in the title of Arthur Holmes' 1977 book) that "All truth is God's truth," that is, that anything that is true is necessarily compatible with Christian belief, no matter its origins. This implies an approach to science that is not suspicious or concerned with policing its boundary with faith; indeed, on this view such boundaries are artificial and ought to be abandoned. Faith and science are compatible and in fact intertwined—any apparent conflict between the two of them is the result of a mistake.<sup>30</sup>

For the scientist of faith this means that personal integration, or "Faith-praxis" integration, is necessary (Bouma-Prediger, 1990). Faith-praxis means the full living out of faith into every aspect of everyday life, including one's scientific practice.<sup>31</sup> To live a dualistic life is to risk hypocrisy and a split self. On the other hand, the fruits of a fully integrated life are not only wholeness and harmony but better science (Bouma-Prediger, 1990). The idea is not that Christian scientists somehow have privileged access to truth (divine revelation is not the source of science) but that committed faith provides a firm foundation for inquiry. The idea is similar to Gadamer's (1960) concept of horizons—Christian integrationists agree that horizons are inevitable, but believe that faith provides an imperfect but "optimal vantage point" (Firestone, 2009, p. 4) for understanding the world. As in Gadamer's view, the bias or prejudice implied in

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<sup>30</sup> This mistake can be on either the religious or the scientific side, and can be made either in the establishment or interpretation of the fact at issue.

<sup>31</sup> The faith-praxis perspective raises an interesting point about Arnold's life. She was a faithful Catholic, who participated in individual devotional practices and attended mass frequently. Gavin remembers that during her years in Loyola she would go to mass every day, in a chapel right on the lake (E. Gavin, personal communication, January 2, 2013). The impact of this type of regular rhythm of worship should not be underestimated—it likely shaped her academic work in significant ways. The impact of spiritual practices on scientists of faith is an issue that deserves further investigation.

the idea of a horizon is not seen as negative, but in fact makes knowledge of the world possible. This epistemological approach is not new, but was articulated by the Medieval philosopher Anselm of Canterbury as “Faith seeking understanding” (*fides quaerens intellectum*).<sup>32</sup>

Faith seeking understanding captures Arnold’s perspective on the relationship between her faith and her science. While Arnold never articulated her motives so explicitly, she shared contemporary integrationists’ conviction of secure Christian philosophical foundations as the source of fruitful science. In her lecture, “Opportunity for Catholic Scholarship,” she argued that Catholics could help psychology, which she identifies as unrooted in any guiding philosophy and merely “tinkering with trivial hypotheses,” which she anticipated would produce “a naked relativism and skepticism that will eventually frustrate” scientific effort (Arnold, n.d. d, p. 8). As Arnold saw it, in the “erosion of psychological science” (Arnold, n.d. d, p. 8) there was a real opportunity for Catholics to contribute their philosophical riches. Psychology was “crying out for our aid”:

We have a valid philosophy that has stood the test of time. We know that the truth is there to be found, whether in science or philosophy. We also know that we can find the truth through patient and rigorous reasoning from valid premises, from inferences from established facts. Why not build upon our secure foundation? Why not take the facts where we find them and work out theories that will explain these facts in a consistent way? (Arnold, n.d. d, p. 9)

Arnold’s clarion call to Catholics makes clear why Arnold never attempted to separate her theory of emotion from its religious philosophical origins. It was precisely philosophical underpinning that she believed Catholicism had to offer psychology; a firm grasp of this “secure

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<sup>32</sup> St. Augustine expressed a similar idea “crede ut intelligas,” or “believe that you may understand.” Arnold would have been familiar with both Anselm and Augustine.

foundation” could make Catholic psychologists “leaders in the intellectual enterprise instead of followers, apostles of truth instead of virtual apostates” (Arnold, n.d. d, p. 10). It was this place to stand that she had discovered that April night of 1948: “Now I had a firm foundation, a firm belief” (Arnold, n.d. c, p. 10).



### **Epilogue: Objectivity and Meaning in 20th Century Psychology**

In an undated lecture<sup>1</sup> entitled “The German Youth Movement,” Arnold explained what motivated groups like the Wandervogel. Such a movement, aimed at the “regeneration” of Germany, Arnold wrote, was necessary because Germans had forgotten how to live as human beings. “In Germany,” the poet Holderlin had written, “you find philosophers and labourers, lords and servants, young men and old men, but you find no human beings” (Arnold, n.d. h). In response, the youth returned to old traditions “kept alive all these years by peasants and artizans in their wealth of song and poetry,” “which recognized higher values than the material ones of today” (Arnold, n.d. h). “Folk song, folk dances, folk lore, the revival of old peasant festivals and peasant costumes” were valued because they were the means of revolution, signs of a reorientation in perspective, “signposts, by which new values might be discerned” (Arnold, n.d. h).

The movement was clearly anti-modern, eschewing contemporary definitions of success to search “for an ideal far beyond the reach of those around them who were blindly wor[s]hipping convention” and “a place in life which would satisfy their own deepest need” (Arnold, n.d. h). Arnold ended the lecture by reflecting on the groups’ similarity to a religious movement:

Its aim, to turn the mind of the German people away from materialism toward spiritual values, to call for a change of heart, to lead in the search for the good life. Its tremendous enthusiasm had all the earmarks of a religious revival and I venture to say it was just that. Its ideals, -beauty, health, sincerity, genuineness, brotherly love, would find followers everywhere. After all, the recipes for the good life have been curiously alike, in all ages, amongst all peoples. (Arnold, n.d. h)

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<sup>1</sup> The fact that the lecture was composed on a typewriter dates it to the 1940s-1960s, rather than later.

It is hard to miss the contrast between Arnold's depiction of her beloved Wandervogel as "a force of regeneration" and psychology in the reductionist, materialist form it took for much of the 20th century. As Fuller (2006) observes, psychology has been implicated as "a principal carrier of what Max Weber called the 'disenchantment' of modern thought," that is, "the secularizing tendency to denude the universe of mysterious, incalculable forces and thereby encourage individuals to think that every problem in life can be mastered through technical means and calculations" (Fuller, 2006, p. 223). It was just such a disenchanted perspective on human life that Arnold took issue with in her youth, well before she ever objected to it in Freudian and behaviorist psychology.

In this Arnold was very much a child of her age. In *Reenchanted Science* Anne Harrington (1996) documented the widespread movement within Wilhelmine Germany away from atomism and towards wholism. Inspired by Goethean wholeness and disturbed by the dehumanizing power of mechanistic, reductionist theories, numerous scientists advocated for holistic and teleological methods that would benefit not only science but the political order. Harrington (1996) explicitly connects this movement to the Wandervogel—while the teenagers were escaping modernism to commune with nature, the scientists were rescuing nature by articulating scientific theories that would reenchanted the world.

Twentieth century psychology's relationship with meaning was complex. Fuller (2006) has complicated the notion that psychology's growth necessarily resulted in secularization and a loss of metaphysical meaning, noting that secular psychologists often revealed the philosophical implications of their work when engaging popular audiences. Nevertheless, Fuller states,

Insofar as the professional writings of academic psychologists deliberately eschew what Aristotle defined as the final cause (the intention, purpose, or goal of an action), as well

as what might be called the ultimate or metaphysical cause of events transpiring within nature, they can indeed be interpreted as carriers of the secularizing tendencies of modern Western culture. (Fuller, 2006, p. 223)

Although the trend towards reductionism and disenchantment was strong, there were also significant movements that ran counter to and resisted this impulse (Cohen-Cole, 2005).

Psychology in the 20th century was characterized by the alternating stripping (in associationism, Freudian psychology, and behaviorism) and recovering (in Gestalt psychology, humanistic psychology, and, to some extent, cognitive psychology) of meaning and value.

In this light, it seems important to consider how Arnold's work fits within this larger picture of psychology's complicated relationship with meaning. Analyzing the trends around reductionism in psychology offers an important corrective to the secularization narrative. Since secularism and reductionism (although they often co-occur) are distinct, the two trends can exist independently. Insisting that final causes and metaphysics be removed from psychology is not a necessary consequence of secularization, just as lobbying for them to be restored is not necessarily religiously motivated. Arnold's attempts to return meaning and teleology to emotion can be understood as skirmishes in a war which had been going on long before she joined it and in which she was not the only partisan fighting in favor of meaning.

But unmistakably, the reductionist impulse was real, and the opponents of metaphysics in psychology were legion. Psychology has its origins in reductionism, in a rejection of the (religiously tainted) philosophical (Morawski, 2005). The new psychologists defined themselves against their moral and mental philosopher precursors—rejecting the older scholars' assertion that knowledge was possible through careful introspection, and instead embracing methods removed from everyday experience that could bolster their scientific authority and claims to

“objective purity” (Morawski, 2005, p. 80). Reed (1997) has noted the narrowing of focus that occurred after 1850 in which psychologists “consistently avoided developing the ontological implications of their work;” the few who did address those questions “found their ontological claims ignored in favor of narrower aspects of their work” (p. xv). The narrowing of focus to exclude spiritual or metaphysical concepts in early psychology occurred concurrently with an emphasis on methods that focused on the physical. In the years that followed, the transition from soul to mind was reinforced by significant pressure to conduct research that was quantifiable and further, considered humans as aggregates, with the variability of individuals averaged out (Capshe, 1999).

This approach made possible the avoidance of reflexivity in psychology. Psychologists cultivated an image of themselves as neutral, objective observers, contrasted against the picture of an unreliable and biased subject. As Morawski has observed, objectivity became the standard under which early 20th century psychology rallied and, defining themselves against the subjectivism and moralism of past methods, “ordained objective experimentation with its moral order and ethics of disinterestedness and distance” (Morawski, 2005, pp. 80-81). This facilitated the process that Evelyn Fox Keller (1992) has described as the “progressive disembodiment and dislocation of the scientific observer” (p. 138), which propagated the fiction that a “subjectless representation” of the world was possible.

To the extent that psychologists were aware that this detachment required a split self between their normal and scientific selves, they tended to approve (Morawski, 2007). E. G. Boring wrote that psychologists ought to “cultivate dissociation”: “Too much has been said in favor of the integration of the personality, and too little in favor of a dissociation. The scientist needs to be a dual personality” (Boring, 1929, p. 120). The elevation of objectivity as a scientific

ideal was supported by positivist movements in the early 20th century, such as the Vienna Circle, in which the possibility of a neutral, universal scientific language was eagerly anticipated. For the Vienna Circle, the elimination of metaphysics had positive implications for humanity, with a neutral unified science resulting in social reform and weeding out bias and ideology (Kourany, 2010).

Thus, a modernist reductionist impulse resulted in the redefinition of many previously meaningful aspects of human life to “nothing but”—with what naturalistic explanation they were reduced to decided by the then-dominant theory. Human characteristics traditionally understood as evidence for a soul were explained away as merely the result of instincts, Oedipal complexes, biology, and conditioning. Religious belief was one such human activity targeted—it could be reduced to “a method of adaption to environment by process of illusion” (Catlin, 1932, p. 398). It was just such glib explanations of human experience that Flannery O’Connor found so threatening. She wrote that sin was “a great thing as long as it’s recognized...But cease to recognize it or take it away from devil as devil & give it to devil as psychologist and you also take away God” (O’Connor, 2013, p. 26-27). Many 20th century religious consumers of psychology experienced the psychologist as devil—chipping away at their peace of mind with reductionist explanations for their deepest experiences, tempting them to doubt their most fundamental beliefs.

It is not surprising that reductionistic psychologists singled out religious belief for their most vigorous attacks, since it was the primary competing explanatory system. But the hegemony of “objective” materialist explanations in psychology meant that even nonreligious psychologists who tried to articulate nonreductionist interpretations of their work could run into difficulties—often accusations that their work was subjective and unscientific. For example,

Eleanor Gibson recalled of her graduate experience at Yale in the 1930s that in order to have Clark Hull approve her dissertation, her functionalist views had to be “disguised” by behaviorist vocabulary (Gibson & Levin, 1975, p. 243). And that was true not only for powerless graduate students but even “eminent dissents,” such as James Gibson whose more holistic theory challenged atomistic accounts of perception (see Costall & Morris, 2015, for an account of how Gibson’s revolutionary perceptual theory has been misunderstood and distorted in order to make it agree with standard perceptual theories).

Arnold was acutely aware of the reductionist tendencies of psychology. In *Emotion and Personality* she quoted Frankl, who had criticized scientism for having “held a trick mirror in front of man’s eyes in which he saw his distorted image showing him that he is “nothing but” a reflex automaton, an apparatus of drives, a psychic mechanism, or a mere product of economic conditions...” (Arnold, 1960b, p. 282). Arnold also objected to psychology’s deployment of the “objective” subjectless observer. In her retirement Arnold wrote:

I have always thought that the famed “objectivity” of psychologists, as expressed in their style, is merely a way of hedging, to keep from committing themselves. They say A results in B “in part”; everything is “said to be” or “seems to be” even if it is the front of their nose; and they never, never use the first person singular. (Arnold, 1983, M. Arnold to E. Gavin, June 18, 1983)

Dealing with metaphysics was unavoidable, Arnold believed, and evading questions of meaning and purpose would come back to haunt psychology. Or, as Gasson picturesquely put it: “Staying away from ultimates, even from bare limits of them, so much the habit of so many modern scientists[,] is like ducking the question what is the solid stuff in the soup for fear it might be something we don’t like” (Gasson, 1952, J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 11, 1952).

For all psychology's claims to objectivity, Arnold believed that there was a clear agenda, a deliberate attempt to "devalue the image of man" (Arnold, 1960b, p. 282). Scientific debunkers had convinced modern man that he is "a creature of lust, greed, and rapacity; worse than that, that he is a machine as blindly determined as the computer of the guided missile" (Arnold, 1960b, p. 282). Such an attitude was dangerous; like Frankl, Arnold believed that scientism, with its degraded understanding of man, could lead straight to the gas chambers. Tongue in cheek, Arnold credited American religiosity and anti-intellectualism with preserving them from "the kind of scientism that both Hitler and Stalin made official overseas" (Arnold, 1960b, 283). Even when Arnold did not go that far, she identified scientism's child, relativism (a result, she said of applying the theory of relativity beyond physics to human action), as one of the major sources of modern anxiety: "Modern man, trained for decades to see in the scientist the ultimate arbiter of his beliefs, is left with neither certainty nor faith" (Arnold, 1960a, p. 274).

Arnold was not the only psychologist to rail against the evils of scientism. If meaning had been one of the casualties of the Great War (Eksteins, 1989), meaning, or at least psychologists' interest in meaning, was reborn following the Second World War. This trend began before the war, with a handful of vocal psychologists who found the allegedly apolitical nature of experimental psychology unsatisfactory given the demands of New Deal society (Pandora, 1997; Rutherford, Unger, & Cherry, 2011). For example, in 1939 Allport, in his presidential speech at the APA meeting, called out psychologists for their "stultifying dualism in life and laboratory" (Allport, 1940, p. 1). The fact that psychologists' methods were so estranged from their own experience prevented integration and useful insights, Allport said—they must ground their work in real human problems, not animal models.

Post-war the influence of Gestalt psychology and the increasing important clinical psychology opened up a broader understanding of science and psychology, making room for dissenters to reductionist psychology to speak (Cohen-Cole, 2005). Around mid-century the critical voices became a force to be reckoned with, coalescing into the humanistic psychology movement. Allport's criticisms of psychology's "methodolatry," Rogers' emphasis on persons over science, Maslow's criticisms of "value-free" science, and George Kelley's view of the person as scientist all pushed for a more self-aware, more human psychology. Their work all underscored the point that psychology needed to "supplement and not replace time-honored spiritual categories of meaning and purpose" (Nicholson, 2003, p. 11).

The contributions of humanistic psychology are well known, but Cohen-Cole (2005) argues that, starting at mid-century, there was an even broader wave of anti-positivist sentiment that culminated in the Cognitive Revolution. These critics (both inside and outside of psychology) saw positivism as closely allied with behaviorism, and so denounced both as dogmatic, narrow, and ideological (see Allport, 1940; Bitterman, 1960; Brower, 1949; Ericson, 1941; Harlow, 1958; Hebb, 1949; Solomon, 1955). Explorations of the concepts of insight, purpose, or attention, by psychologists who dared to buck the behaviorist orthodoxy, Donald Hebb wrote, were from the behaviorist perspective "an invocation of the devil" (Hebb, 1949, p. 4). Behaviorism as religious ideology was not a charge that behaviorists endured quietly, but the widespread criticism was indicative of a shift within psychology. Sigmund Koch, in his National Science Foundation review of psychology, identified the behaviorist "Age of Theory," characterized by "prescription from extrinsic sources"<sup>2</sup> (Koch, 1959, p. 783) as quickly coming to an end. The Age of Theory was making room for more open, creative scientific thinking that would focus on "the autonomous, the creative, and the rational aspects of human nature" (Cohen-

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<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note how this rhetoric echoes the earlier criticism of the moral and mental philosophers.



Cole, 2005, p. 114). Instead of environmental determinism, cognitive psychologists postulated “conscious or deliberative thought as a causal agent” (Fuller, 2006, p. 233). Human nature, modeled on the machine, was seen to be rational, autonomous, and creative.

Arnold recognized this transition. In her 1977 article “The concept of mind in psychology” she commented on the change:

Not so long ago, “mind” was something a psychologist just did not talk about. Behavior was all, and nothing but behavior could be investigated. Today, there is a renewed suspicion that there must be somebody who does the behaving, and that this somebody cannot be a mindless machine. (Arnold, 1977, p. 4)

Yet Arnold was wary of this new fascination with mind. She was concerned that it reinforced psychology’s Cartesian mind-body dualism, and in her view such dualism would continue to prevent scientific progress. Scientifically preferable, she asserted, was the Aristotelian view of the soul as the organizing principle of all life.

A logical consequence of such a view was recognizing the spiritual as the organizing principle of human beings: “The capacity of the person to engage in spiritual activities like conceptual language, value judgments, intellectual, cultural, educational, artistic or religious pursuits does not depend on the body but is spiritual in nature” (Arnold, 1977, p. 7). Arnold promoted the “Aristotelian hylomorphic assumption of the person as agent, the person as unit with a spiritual organizing principle” (Arnold, 1977, p. 7) as the best protection from both dualism and reductionism: “A psychologist who recognizes spiritual activities in human beings has no need to reduce scientific or cultural activities to a material or mechanical level” (Arnold, 1977, p. 7). Such a perspective did not arbitrarily restrict the psychologist either to mind or behavior, and allowed them to “treat each person as an individual, a center of activity and self-

determination” (Arnold, 1977, p. 7). Such an investigation into “what is going on,” broadly construed, was trustworthy because of experimenter reflexivity: “because I, the experimenter, also experience thoughts, feelings, emotions - because I, also have motives” (Arnold, 1977, p. 6).

Following the ebb and flow of the fortunes of meaning within psychology, rather than the progress of secularization, provides a new perspective on Arnold. Rather than a lone voice in the wilderness decrying psychology’s reductionism, Arnold was part of a movement working towards a more meaningful psychology. What sets Arnold apart from the crowd is the particular aspects of her vision—her reclaiming of the Aristotelian soul for psychology and her Thomistic teleological definition of the human person. This seemingly quixotic vision can only be understood by reference to her religious belief. Like other humanistic psychologists, Arnold’s life was characterized by acts of resistance toward the dominant reductionist psychology, but, significantly, hers was a resistance motivated by faith. Arnold’s faith helped her to resist the social pressure to produce work that conformed to existing disciplinary norms, encouraged her use of unconventional sources of wisdom (whether Aquinas, introspection, or the TAT), and, most importantly, gave her a perspective from which she could spot solutions to some of psychology’s most entrenched problems.

Not only did Arnold’s faith result in the expansion of her horizon necessary to develop a groundbreaking theory of emotion, it also helped her recognize psychology’s reflexive predicament. Acknowledgment of experimenter subjectivity and reflexivity has been rare within psychology (Morawski, 2005), but Arnold went beyond recognition to embrace, reframing the psychologist’s humanity as strength. Arnold’s positive account of experimenter subjectivity, and her call for psychological research to begin with the frank confession of basic assumptions, accords well with postmodern and feminist psychological approaches to science. Despite its

historical nature, Arnold's life speaks to issues that still vex psychology—her work demonstrates that psychology need not be reductionistic in order to be scientific; that scientists can acknowledge subjectivity without forfeiting all scientific authority; and that the personal and the scientific are not opposed but can be fruitfully integrated. And for religious consumers of psychology—in our day, as in O'Connor's—who worry that psychology is a secularizing, disenchanting force, Arnold's life shows that it often is, but need not be.

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**Figure 1**Magda Arnold's Basic Emotions, from *Emotion and Personality*

## BASIC EMOTIONS

CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR DIRECTION AND DEGREE OF IMPULSION

## IMPULSE EMOTIONS

	<i>Emotion Toward Object (whether present or absent)</i>	<i>Emotion Towards Object Not Present (tendency toward or away from)</i>	<i>Emotion Toward Object Present (rest in possession)</i>	<i>Kind of Emotion (based on direction)</i>
Object Suitable (Beneficial)	love, liking	wanting, desire	delight, joy	positive
Object unsuitable (harmful)	hate, dislike	aversion, recoil	sorrow, sadness	negative

## CONTENDING EMOTIONS

	<i>Degree of Difficulty in Attaining or Rejecting Object</i>	<i>Emotion Toward Object Not Present (tendency toward or away from)</i>	<i>Emotion Toward Object Present (rest in possession)</i>	<i>Kind of Emotion (based on direction)</i>
Object suitable (beneficial)	if judged attainable	hope		positive
	if judged unattainable	hopelessness, despair		negative
Object unsuitable (harmful)	if to be overcome	daring, courage (rashness)	anger (desperation)	positive
	if to be avoided	fear (terror)	dejection	negative

## Figure 2

Aquinas' Concupiscible and Irascible passions, from Lombardo (2011).

### The Concupiscible Passions

Cognition of good object → love (*amor*)

Absent good → desire (*concupiscentia*)

Present good → pleasure (*delectation*)

Cognition of evil object → hatred (*odium*)

Absent evil → aversion (*fuga*) or repulsion (*abominatio*)

Present evil → sorrow (*tristitia*) or pain (*dolor*)

### The Irascible Passions

Cognition of arduous future good

Seems possible to obtain → hope (*spes*)

Seems impossible to obtain → despair (*desperatio*)

Cognition of arduous future evil

Seems possible to overcome → daring (*audacia*)

Seems impossible to overcome → fear (*timor*)

Cognition of arduous present evil with hope of overcoming → anger (*ira*)