DOI: 10.1002/jhbs.21864

WILEY

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

"Very much in love": The letters of Magda Arnold and Father John Gasson

Elissa N. Rodkey

Psychology Department, Crandall University, Moncton, Canada

Correspondence
Elissa Rodkey, Crandall University, Box 6004, Moncton, E1C 9L7 Canada.
Email: elissa.rodkey@crandallu.ca

Abstract

Magda Arnold (1903–2002), best known for her pioneering appraisal theory of emotion, belonged to the second generation of women in psychology who frequently experienced institutional sexism and career barriers. Following her religious conversion, Arnold had to contend with the additional challenge of being an openly Catholic woman in psychology at a time when Catholic academics were stigmatized. This paper announces the discovery of and relies upon a number of previously unknown primary sources on Magda Arnold, including approximately 150 letters exchanged by Arnold and Father John Gasson. This correspondence illuminates both the development of Arnold's thought and her navigation of the career challenges posed by her conversion. I argue that Gasson's emotional and intellectual support be considered as resources that helped Arnold succeed despite the discrimination she experienced. Given the romantic content of the correspondence, I also consider Arnold and Gasson in the context of other academic couples in psychology in this period and argue that religious belief ought to be further explored as a potential contributor to the resilience of women in psychology's history.

Once upon a time, in the days of handwritten letters, two psychologists began a correspondence. The letters exchanged that fall of 1948 were at first formal—they addressed each other as Dr. Arnold and Father Gasson—and resumed a previous wide-ranging conversation about philosophy, psychology, and faith. They had just met in a Harvard summer school class and were not sure when they would next talk in person. The priest had urgent reasons for wanting to see the doctor—based on her letters he had concerns about the peace of her soul. Thus when Father John Gasson learned that he would be able to attend the Mooseheart Symposium,[1] where Dr. Magda Arnold would be presenting a paper, he was thrilled, writing "Tell me, quickly, where will I find you in Chicago. I'll see you there" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948).

The letters that followed their Chicago meeting reflect a new-found intimacy: addressing Arnold by her first name, Gasson wrote fondly: "I almost prayed your plane would be socked in so I would see you again" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 5, 1948). Their meeting was pivotal for Arnold—she left Chicago newly determined to return to the Catholic Church and overwhelmed by the amount of spiritual and intellectual work that lay ahead of her. Their conversations

about Catholic philosophy had "opened up new vistas" (Arnold, n.d.-a, p. 12) for her and Arnold saw that her theory of emotion required "a great deal of rethinking" (Arnold, n.d.-a, p. 13). The meeting also cemented their growing friendship. As Arnold would later write of Gasson "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" (M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992).

As "founding mother of modern appraisal theory" (Roseman & Smith, 2001, p. 9). Magda Arnold (1903–2002) has been the beneficiary of the sort of recovery project pioneered by Elizabeth Scarborough and Laurel Furumoto in *Untold Lives: The First Generation of American Women Psychologists* (1987). Forgotten by many in emotion research (Arnold's appraisal theory has often been credited to Richard Lazarus, whose "cognitive-motivational" theory was an extension of her work), Arnold's untold life story was first chronicled by Stevens and Gardner (1982b) and followed by Stephanie Shields, who interviewed Arnold before her death (Shields, 1999, 2006a). Shields also organized a special issue of *Cognition & Emotion* dedicated to Arnold, which further expanded on Arnold's life and contributions (Bortfeld, Smith, & Tassinary, 2006; Cornelius, 2006; Gasper & Bramesfeld, 2006; Reisenzein, 2006; Shields, 2006b; Shields & Kappas, 2006).

These works agree on the basic trajectory of Arnold's life: how she was raised in poverty in what was then Austria, immigrated to Canada with her husband between the wars, studied psychology at University of Toronto upon her separation from her husband, moved to teach in the United States a few years after receiving her PhD, and then had the conversion experience and return to Catholicism that would powerfully shape her subsequent life and scholarship. However, in telling this story, these works have had to rely upon the few primary sources available, namely Arnold's unpublished autobiography (Arnold, n.d.-a), and two Arnold interviews (Arnold, 1976; Shields, 1999). Although these sources tell us much, they are retrospective, and leave many unanswered questions. Specifically, while these sources provide a good sense of the chronological events that made up Arnold's biography and of her opinions about psychology, they give only a limited sense of her inner life during such pivotal events as her marriage, divorce, conversion, and important career decisions. Particularly mysterious was her relationship with John Gasson, S. J. (1904–1988) who is mentioned in Arnold's autobiographical essay as a close friend and coauthor of *The Human Person* (Arnold & Gasson, 1954) who was critical to her conversion to Catholicism. Apart from these bare facts, very little was known about Gasson.

This paper relies upon and announces the discovery of a number of previously unknown primary sources on Magda Arnold. Joan Arnold (1929–), Magda's eldest daughter, generously shared with me the collection of her mother's papers that were in her possession, unknown to earlier Arnold scholars. The most critical of these new sources are: (1) a second unpublished autobiography that documents Arnold's early life in prewar Austria and her marriage and immigration to Canada (Arnold, n.d.-b), (2) approximately 150 letters exchanged by Arnold and Gasson between 1948 and 1956,[2] and (3) several very personal letters addressed to Joan and Katherine Arnold, which their mother never sent. These sources flesh out the details of a life that would otherwise be lost, and allow Arnold to tell much of the story in her own words.[3]

The Arnold-Gasson correspondence casts new light on the development of Arnold's thought. Gasson occasionally co-authored publications with Arnold, but the letters reveal his deep involvement even in Arnold's sole-authored projects, such as her landmark *Emotion and Personality* (1960). Arnold confirms this interpretation of her relationship with 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.-a, p. 29). Or, as Gasson put it, "Stick with me, kid, and you'll always have a head to beat knots on" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, Monday, n.d.). In addition to their intellectual partnership, the letters reveal a deep emotional attachment. "Of course she was very much in love with John Gasson" (J. Arnold, Personal Communication, January 14, 2015), Joan Arnold told me. Although the correspondence does not reveal a sexual affair, they do suggest that Arnold and Gasson functioned as a couple.

Building on Scarborough and Furumoto's work in exploring the challenges of the first-generation women in psychology, Johnston and Johnson (2008) defined the second generation of women psychologists as those receiving their PhDs between 1906 and 1945. Arnold belongs to this cohort, and was subject to the numerous barriers that Johnston and Johnson state second-generation women faced. Arnold had the additional challenges of being a woman who was Catholic, an immigrant, a divorcee, and a researcher writing in her third language about a marginalized area of psychology.

In this context, Gasson's emotional and intellectual support should be considered as a previously unknown resource that Arnold relied upon to thrive in an atmosphere of pervasive institutional sexism and anti-Catholic feeling. In this paper, I use their correspondence and the other new sources to explore the manner in which Gasson influenced Arnold's career and thought, and to consider Arnold and Gasson in the context of other academic couples in psychology in this period. I argue that Arnold and Gasson's mutually supportive relationship was made possible by Gasson's deeply held religious commitments, which provided an alternative relational paradigm that allowed him to resist the prevailing sexism of the culture. Religious belief is not a factor that has previously been much considered in discussions of the challenges faced by women in psychology's history, and certainly not as contributor to their resilience. This analysis of Arnold's correspondence, however, shows that Arnold's embrace of Catholicism gave her significant advantages in terms of an emotionally supportive romantic partner who influenced her intellectually, encouraged her use of spiritual practices to relieve her anxieties, and urged her to look to strong women in church history for inspiration.

1 | ARNOLD'S CONVERSION

The year 1948 was eventful for Magda Arnold. In the spring she was just finishing her first academic year in the United States, having substituted for an ill Edna Heidbreder at Wellesley College. In April, Arnold attended the annual meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association. Back at the hotel she found sleep elusive, she was too intellectually stimulated, "enthusiastic about everything psychological" (Arnold, n.d.-a, p. 10). She later recalled:

> *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…. I knew that this experience was bound to change my life. Now I had a firm basis, a firm belief. (Arnold, n.d.-a, p. 10)*

The significance of this spiritual event was reinforced and shaped by the "memorable" summer that shortly followed.[4] Arnold was teaching summer school at Harvard, and it was in this class that an event she later called "the greatest stroke of luck" (Arnold, n.d.-a, pp. 28–29) of her life occurred.[5] She describes the event in her professional autobiography:

> *One day, when I held forth on my theory of emotion …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. (Arnold, n.d.-a, p. 11)*

The priest with the insightful question was John Gasson, S. J., a Jesuit who taught psychology at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama.[6] Arnold later recalled:

> *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. (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" (M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992).

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.-a, 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 similar Thomistic hierarchy of being: the inorganic, vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual (Arnold, n.d.-a, p. 12). When Gasson left Harvard, they began a correspondence that marked the beginning of an intimate friendship and intellectual partnership lasting until Gasson's death in 1988.

Their correspondence clarifies how Arnold's return to the Catholic Church came about. In the first existing letter, written September 27, 1948, Gasson thanked Arnold for an article and sent one in return, writing "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'" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 27, 1948). 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 called *A Way With Mary*, in 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). Arnold was already wrestling with how her faith ought to impact psychology, sending Gasson articles by Catholic psychologists: "The Analyst and the Confessor" and "Faith and Psychopathology" (M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 1, 1948).

Although Arnold had been raised Catholic, she had become dissatisfied with the church as a teenager and left it officially upon her marriage to Robert Arnold, a Protestant (Arnold, n.d.-b). While in 1948 she no longer agreed with her adolescent impression that "everything that stood for the Catholic religion was uneducated, poorly thought out, absolutely no rhyme or reason, just tradition" (Arnold, 1976, p. 8), 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 go even a little way along that road" (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" (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?" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948).

Less than a week before their meeting at Mooseheart Gasson wrote that he could see that she was "in darkness and uncertainty" and he 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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948). He begged 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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948).

Their conversations in Chicago 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" (M. Arnold to J. Gasson, January 15, 1949) she let Gasson put her in touch with a local priest. In response to her remaining worries, Gasson exhorted her to put her knowledge of the human mind to good use: "just remember to be a good psychologist when doubts assail you" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 5, 1948). Arnold later recalled, "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.-a, 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!" (M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 25, 1948). When Gasson received the news, he was overjoyed: "Te Deum Laudamus; Te Dominum confitemur!![7] Your letter made me very happy; welcome home!" (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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948).

2 | VOCATIONAL QUESTIONS

Arnold's return to the Catholic Church was the pivotal event of her life (Shields, 2006b). Subsequently, risking professional isolation, she left a safe job at a respected women's college to teach at Catholic institutions and was open about her religious identity at a time when Catholic scholars were suspect (Kugelmann, 2009, 2011). Further, Arnold's return to Catholicism significantly shaped her psychological thinking—she later wrote: "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.-a, p. 29).

What the Arnold-Gasson correspondence makes clear is that Arnold did not make these career decisions alone and that her exposure to Catholic thought was substantially mediated by Gasson. Following her return to the church

Gasson sent Arnold various spiritual books and tracts for her edification and offered practical advice as Arnold wrestled with the implications of her conversion. In response to her convert's zeal he urged patience: "cheer up, honey, there will be roughness enough for you to develop your courage in" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948). In this period Arnold wrote of her new spiritual life, "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" (M. Arnold to J. Gasson, January 15, 1949).

Arnold was impatient with the secular atmosphere at Bryn Mawr and even contemplated joining a religious order, writing after a convent visit that in contrast "everything else seems tasteless, insipid, second best. There are too many nonessentials, too many distractions day in and day out, it's almost like being caught in brambles and not caring for the berries on them." She had to resort to "taking myself to classes by the scruff of my neck" (M. Arnold to J. Gasson, November 17, [1949]). Gasson advised her to wait another year before considering the convent: "Remember, honey, you are not much more than a year old, spiritually" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949). He urged her to consider her alienation as a normal part of the Christian call. "Sure your soul feels exile[d] in a strange land in the surroundings that your present academic life provides" but exile is the calling of all Christians, he reminded her, just consider Mother Duchesne's discouraging missionary work,[8] or the Virgin Mary's years of exile in Egypt (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949). When Arnold was considering joining a Cornell research project and half-jokingly suggested that she propose "a Christian theory of conduct" (M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 1, 1948) as research topic, Gasson urged discretion: "Your scheme for that Cornell research team is quite in keeping with the atomic age. It would rock that group to way below their foundations, I betcha" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 17, 1948).

Over the next two years, various possible academic positions arose and Arnold turned to Gasson for counsel. Despite his desire to have her nearby, he preserved a disinterested skepticism when two New Orleans universities came knocking; she ought to take whichever job offered the best fit for her talents, he said, and therefore the greatest "opportunity for promoting God's greater glory" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]). But he was delighted at her success: "All this clamor for you in New Orleans is a bit breathtaking!! You can't keep a good guy hid!" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 8, 1950).

Arnold's next career move was critical because of the marginal nature of Catholics in this period. In 1949, the best-selling *American Freedom and Catholic Power* painted a picture of a vast Catholic conspiracy threatening the American way of life (Blanshard, 1949). As the best-seller status of Blanchard's book indicates, anti-Catholic attitudes were still widely accepted, even in liberal, educated circles (Jenkins, 2003). Intellectual independence was a particular sticking point; the fear that presidential candidates Al Smith (in 1928) and John F. Kennedy (in 1960) would not be free from Papal interference captures the then common attitude toward Catholic participation in society. This attitude made life difficult for Catholic academics (Schmiesing, 2002) and many were relegated to teaching in the "Catholic ghetto"[9]—often poor quality schools. Catholic academics commonly faced suspicion of their independence—it was feared that dogma would curtail their intellectual freedom (Kugelmann, 2011).

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 professor who, shortly after her to return to the church, talked to her about a Catholic who was on faculty in the social science department of another school. The professor 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.-a, p. 15). In considering her next career move Arnold knew she had to be strategic because her newfound faith would limit 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.-a, p. 15).

Arnold made her fateful move to Barat College[10] in 1950 with the idea of contributing to Catholic education and providing a spiritually nurturing context for her college-age daughter, Joan (M. Arnold to G. Allport, May 6, 1950; Fig. 1). This decision represented a significant sacrifice: not only did the move to the poorly funded Catholic school result in a substantial decrease in pay and prestige but, most problematic for Arnold, it meant a drop in the scholastic ability of the student body.

FIGURE 1 Joan Arnold (at the time a Catholic nun), Magda Arnold, and Father John Gasson together in 1961 (photo courtesy of Joan Arnold)

Arnold's reasoning for her decision is not preserved in her correspondence with Gasson nor is it clear if she sought his opinion about the decision.[11] However, Gasson was unfailingly encouraging when it quickly became clear that the move had been a mistake, writing:

> *Remember, darling, there are few things in this life that are final. Even death is not the end but the beginning. … 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. (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 3, 1950)*

One of Arnold's greatest frustrations was the "completely disinterested" (Arnold, n.d.-a., p. 16) Barat girls she was teaching, but he reminded her of her devotional reasons for persevering: "For you are teaching now, first because you love God, and God loves you" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 3, 1950).

However, Gasson did not think Arnold ought to sacrifice her wellbeing to the cause: "Don't tell me you are living in a room 4 × 10. Sleeping on a rug is all very good in an emergency but as a regular thing… I am against it" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 3, 1950). The letters show Gasson frequently worried about Arnold's physical and emotional health: "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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950).[12]

The context of Arnold's early life is necessary in order to understand the significance that Gasson's friendship had for her. Arnold's personal autobiography reveals that both Arnold's childhood and marriage were difficult. She was the illegitimate child of opera singers, raised in poverty and emotional neglect by sisters who were admirers of her absentee mother.[13] In the absence of parental love, Arnold adopted the Wandervogel, a German youth group, as her surrogate family. Her marriage to Robert Arnold was in many ways an escape, but ill-fated from the start—she was in love with another man (Arnold, n.d.-b). Although their marriage lasted nine years, Arnold's personal autobiography records that Robert acted consistently selfish and entitled, and at times was even indifferent to her physical safety. Upon Magda's return from the hospital from giving birth in 1935, Robert announced that "he didn't feel like a married man" (Arnold, 1976, p. 12) and intended to "live as if he were not married" (Arnold, n.d.-b). This painful event and Robert's subsequent limitation of her access to their three young daughters was the impetus for Arnold's career in psychology.

Given this history, Arnold was understandably prone to melancholy. There are regular references by Gasson to her "morale" and frequent exhortations to "try to keep cheerful" such as "Sursum corda,[14] darling, the sun is bound to come

out" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 18, 1950). Gasson seems to have felt a keen compassion for the hardship Arnold had experienced, introducing her to Saint Philippine Duchesne as "a sympathetic patron with a wonderfully understanding heart" who Arnold would love because "Mother Duchesne had her share and more of the back of the world's hand in her life" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 17, 1949). He also shared Arnold's concern for her daughters. About the rebellious Katherine 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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 11, 1955). As always, he urged trust in Mary, promising he would be "praying doubly hard for you for our Lady to be extra special loving to you" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 2, 1954).

Their personalities (Arnold—intense, passionate, opinionated, prone to depression and anxiety; Gasson—easy going, good humored, witty, tending to overschedule himself and work slowly) seem to have been perfectly complementary. She spurred him into getting work done and provided the intellectual stimulus lacking at Spring Hill. He was emotionally supportive ("Be good as you are. You are, you know" [J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19, [1950]]) and calmed her when she got worked up about someone who was getting psychology wrong. After a talk she gave 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 and waste away into just one of the many "'superstitions" of science" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 14, 1949). When Gordon Allport declined to write an introduction to their book *The Human Person*, it was Gasson who interpreted the seeming insult most charitably, and encouraged Arnold not to take it personally (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, July 16, [1953]).

3 | VISITING PATTERNS

This encouragement by letter was reinforced by regular visits, the first occurring in 1949. Arnold spent the first Christmas following her return to the church in a Toronto hospital caring for Joan with a Christmas card from Gasson her only reminder of the "real" Christmas. Upon her return home Arnold was cheered by both Christmas presents from Gasson and an invitation to visit him. "I am struggling with an impulse to which I am going to yield," he wrote, "the camellias are all in bloom and the azaleas beginning to"; "why don't you come to Mobile for the semester holidays?" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 14, 1949).

Arnold apparently needed little persuading: she visited Gasson and made a retreat at a New Orleans convent. 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. (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 7, 1949)*

They clung to the hope of seeing each other at Harvard that summer, a possibility dependent upon the approval of Gasson's superiors. Arnold closed her own post-visit letter: "the only consolation is that even loneliness and separation come from God's hand and so it doesn't really hurt" (M. Arnold to J. Gasson, February 5, 1949).

Longing to see each other soon became 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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 14, 1949). In April a delighted Gasson wrote "I feel that there ought to be a flourish of houtboys [oboes] to accompany my opening lines, [but] I must let my ebullience be conveyed by these plodding words: I will be with you in Cambridge this summer" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949). Their month together included Gasson giving Arnold a rigorous abbreviated course in Thomistic philosophy, which she recalled as "a very difficult not to say traumatic experience. I felt like a child in kindergarten" (Arnold, n.d.-a, p. 13). Nevertheless Gasson called their time together "the nicest kind of summer I've ever had" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, August 21, [1949]).

This visiting pattern repeated the following two years: Arnold visited 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 wrote when

Arnold told him of her plans, "I almost wish I could sleep for 3 weeks solid, so Jan 14 would come quicker" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 15, 1950). 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. Since the correspondence only extends until 1956, it is unclear how long this pattern continued. The correspondence abruptly ends and this silence is difficult to interpret. It could be that they continued to correspond but Arnold did not preserve those letters, or that a change in technology or its cost resulted in communication by other means (such as sending each other cassette tapes or using the telephone; both are referred to in the correspondence).

Arnold's comment in 1976 that she had visited Spring Hill "off and on for 20 years" (Arnold, 1976, p. 50), and her mention of her "annual Easter visit to Mobile" (Arnold, n.d.-a, p. 23) indicate that regular visits continued for years. With this in mind, Arnold's move to Mobile to join Gasson at Spring Hill in 1971 upon her retirement from Loyola University 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. According to Joan Arnold, after the move to Mobile Gasson spent much of his day at Arnold's house, gardening and mowing her lawn (Arnold, 2014).

4 | ACADEMIC INFLUENCE AND SUPPORT

Since their first conversations at Harvard Gasson began to influence Arnold's perspective on psychology, and this impact was not limited to introducing her to Thomistic ideas. Although Arnold had been critical of behaviorism and psychoanalysis on her own, after meeting Gasson she became even more so, critiquing mainstream psychology for logical lapses and questionable philosophical assumptions. The correspondence reveals that Arnold's paper "Basic Assumptions in Psychology," which laid the foundation for *The Human Person* by denouncing psychology's complacent identity as an objective science, was deeply influenced by Gasson's views. In this chapter Arnold argued that "evidence is not something naturally "given"; it represents rather an answer to some particular question the scientist has put to nature" which in turn depends on the basic assumptions of the scientist (Arnold, 1954, p. 3). Since everyone has starting assumptions, objectivity is neither possible nor desirable, Arnold contended, in a move that made room for an unapologetic and distinctive Catholic psychology.

These claims echo ideas Gasson had expressed in their correspondence approximately four years earlier. Throughout their letters, but particularly early on, Gasson and Arnold discussed philosophy of science, with Thomistic epistemology providing the framework for a stinging critique of the modern scientific approach. Under Gasson's tutelage, Arnold came to reject a Baconian control of nature in favor of a return to a more Aristotelian model of inquiry. As Gasson explained, the way the contemporary "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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950). Gasson's critique here is similar to other mid-century denunciations of psychology's positivism, physics envy, and "methodolatry," but is distinctive in its insistence on a return to philosophy as the cure to the discipline's ills—clearly a characteristically Catholic (and more specifically Thomistic) solution.

In his letters Gasson distinguished between "psychology as a wisdom to know rather than a skill to use" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950). "One requisite for that wisdom," Gasson wrote, "is the capacity to distinguish between your elbow and third base" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949), which Gasson judged secular psychology lacked. Because secular psychologists did not focus on "the unique factors" which account for human behavior, they were prone to researching how a human is like a piece of iron or "his likeness to a white rat," (Arnold, 1954, p. 46). This type of "scienticism" was not difficult, according Gasson, "all you need for that, really, is a correct technique, sufficient material and no more skill than a butcher needs to carve a carcass or a chemist to run a reaction" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 13, 1949). But such a technique would not arrive at useful facts. As Arnold later explained it, 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 has merely equated him with an object or an animal" (Arnold, 1954, p. 46).

Gasson's emphases on wisdom and Aristotelian methods can be seen as the precursors to Arnold's embrace of phenomenology in *Emotion and Personality*—an approach which emphasized the validity of human experience and rejected

conventional Behaviorist technique as a proper method for learning about emotion. This distinctive approach to psychology meant both that Arnold broke new ground, articulating a highly original theory of emotion, and that she had little patience for merely derivative Catholic work that indiscriminately jumped to embrace secular developments in psychology. "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.-c, p. 9).

Thomistic Christian metaphysics gave Catholics an advantage in the scientific enterprise, namely "a firm conviction that the world is intelligible and that reasoning can help us understand it" (Arnold, n.d.-c, p. 9) therefore Catholic psychologists ought to witness by producing academically excellent work (Arnold, n.d.-d). Catholic philosophical assumptions would not bias them, but rather give them a scientific advantage, allowing them to see past the fads and dehumanizing theories of mainstream psychology. This confidence was possible because Arnold believed that religion and science were inextricably linked: "true religion and true science are not enemies but need one another to bring rich fruit" (Arnold, n.d.-d, p. 1). 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 carcasses according to their training. Thus philosophically grounded wisdom was critical to the correct interpretation of natural phenomena, to keeping psychologists from making category errors or other basic logic mistakes. This perspective on the relationship between psychology and philosophy, articulated by Arnold in various lectures to Catholic audiences, demonstrates the Jesuit-educated, Thomistic Gasson's influence on her thinking, their common vision the result of their many conversations.

Arnold and Gasson's vision for psychology is most clearly articulated in their book *The Human Person*, which was the result of "The Workshop in Personality" for Catholic psychologists they held at Barat College. This workshop had the stated aim of reviewing personality research and "reinterpreting the conclusions, from a Christian conception of man as a philosophical basis" (M. Arnold to G. Allport, October 11, 1951). It was a joint project with a clear shared vision: Gasson wrote "you and I are of a mind and can offer a solid structure that will be in the main scientific and adequate and acceptable" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 13, 1951). However they were less sure about the other participants, worrying about "psychoanalytic innocents" who had been "indoctrinated by "SSF (saint Sigmund Freud)" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, April 6, 1951). In the months leading up to the workshop, Gasson and Arnold corresponded about the proper order of the talks and how to strategically deploy discussants to keep the workshop headed in the direction they intended: "of course I count on you to keep the discussion straight" (M. Arnold to J. Gasson, May 4, 1951).

Strict control was also exercised in the editorial process, as they turned the papers into a book. Each paper was followed by a "Comment" section in which the discussion at the Workshop was summarized. However, for those papers about which Arnold and Gasson had qualms, the Comment is clearly in their voice and expresses their dissenting perspective. Gasson was able to stay at Barat to help edit the papers for a whole month following the workshop.[15] The resulting book they jokingly referred to as their child: typos caught too late to be fixed would "keep us from being too proud of our cheeild" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 11, 1954). Still Gasson and Arnold could not help being proud of their creation, "I know both of us would have specified ermine and brocade, royal purple and burnished gold… but to Ronald [Press] ours is just another kid in an orphan asylum" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 6, 1954).

Beyond their official collaborations, much of their correspondence consists of Gasson's detailed comments on Arnold's 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*: "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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 11, 1954). Their correspondence reveals that throughout the writing of *Emotion and Personality* Arnold was in conversation with Gasson, apparently appealing to him for his assessment of her interpretation of Aquinas; his letters frequently give detailed interpretations of scholastic philosophy. This reliance on his philosophical guidance apparently persisted throughout their friendship: "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" (M. Arnold to J. Arnold, February 8, 1992).

The correspondence reveals that Gasson's engagement with Arnold's drafts of *Emotion and Personality* was substantive—not limited to surface level edits. As the following passage shows, not only did Gasson explain Thomistic concepts, but he also commented on translating scholastic language for a secular audience and the relevant psychological literature:

> *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 … two kinds (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 6, 1954)*

Arnold was careful to keep the Thomistic origins of her system concealed in *Emotion and Personality*, yet her reliance on Aquinas' metaphysics is obvious (Cornelius, 2006). Passages from the correspondence such as the above—which was followed by Gasson's comment "We had better have a long talk about that"—indicate Arnold's heavy reliance upon Gasson as she attempted to integrate the scholastic understanding of emotion with modern research.

Not only was Gasson a help throughout the revision and editing of *Emotion and Personality*, he had encouraged Arnold to start writing four years earlier:

> *Have you thought of resuming working on "Emotion"… 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….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. (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 7, 1950)*

Throughout the overwhelming task of reviewing existing emotion research, Gasson was generous in his encouragement: "Professional neurologists should gobble these chaps. like termites chewing oak—or johnny drinking beer" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, n.d., "Whensday").

Arnold and Gasson's regular discussions and compatible philosophies meant that it was sometimes impossible to separate out their individual contributions to a project. About a chapter of *The Human Person*, Gasson wrote: "I could not distinguish the parts you wrote and my parts… /Dear, dear, you and me belong so much together!!/" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 21, 1951). Just months after Gasson's death, Arnold wrote to friends that she was coping by keeping busy compiling an "Arnold Reader," which would include her various articles and lectures. As she edited it, she was thinking of John because she had written some of the papers with him: "It helps, too, to reread them and realize anew just how good he was; I could never have written them without him" (M. Arnold to Lem and James, July 6, 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 article is Chapter 6 of *The Human Person* (Gasson, 1954), in which Gasson introduced the self-ideal, a concept inspired by Ignatian spirituality. The self-ideal had featured prominently in Gasson's 1931 doctoral dissertation, "The Psychological Structure of Religious Experience: A Study of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius From A Dynamic Point of View" (Gasson, 1951) and was a staple of the religious retreats he frequently led. The self-ideal was to become foundational for Arnold's emotion theory. Briefly, in Arnold's system, prior to an emotion occurring, an object is appraised for its general attractiveness relative to the person perceiving it. However, according to Arnold, it is "also appraised as it contributes or detracts from the ideal" toward which the person aims (Arnold, 1960, p. 286). If an object will obstruct the way toward this goal, the person will have to choose between immediate pleasure and self-denial in order to pursue that ultimate aim. Thus the self-ideal organizes a person's motivational system, explaining why humans do not simply follow their desires like animals.

Despite his deep involvement in its theoretical foundation, when it came to Arnold's opus, *Emotion and Personality*, Gasson declined credit. He wrote:

> *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. … the way you say it is the main thing and that is going to be all yours, darling. I wish I could say it the way you can. You really are wonderful; and I'll expatiate on that theme Mar. 18. (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 6, 1954)*

This modesty is part of a larger pattern. Despite Gasson's contributions to Arnold's academic work, he consistently attempted to dodge compliments and instead affirmed her abilities. 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: "I am dubious about the value, in the eyes of the Guggenheim people, of Spring Hill as a place and Me as a guide … my name will not be found in any list of American Men of Science" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 14, 1951). Of course, he said, "I'll give you my full support; physical moral and metaphysical (and how!!)" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 14, 1951) but she should not hurt her chances by mentioning him officially.

In only one in their five official collaborations[16] (Gasson & Arnold, 1963) is Gasson listed as first author. By the standards of the day it was much more typical to have the male psychologist listed first or to alternate first authorship across projects. Elsewhere I have introduced the idea of "charming stubbornness," a strategy many second-generation women psychologists deployed to avoid threatening their male colleagues (Rodkey, 2010a). In the case of co-authorship, charming stubbornness entailed flattering 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* (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 17, 1953), a task that took considerable time (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 4, 1954).

Gasson's support was particularly important as Arnold faced the sometimes hostile secular academic world because of her public Catholic identity. While some Catholics attempted to allay such fears by minimizing the impact that their faith had upon their scholarship (see Kugelmann, 2011), Arnold was explicit about her religious commitments, both in her writing and in her choice to work at Catholic schools. This decision exposed her scholarship to the risk of marginalization and dismissal. Even when secular academic environments were friendly, as at Harvard, Arnold needed the reassurance of Gasson's identical convictions: "I do need a boost, it's almost as if the ground were disappearing from under me … I wish I could see you just for half an hour, just to convince myself that there is some firm ground left" (M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 6, 1952). In the correspondence there is scarcely an instance of their disagreement—Arnold's affection for Gasson likely meant that his views received extra weight; certainly he was more of an influence on her than any other living psychologist. Gasson "made up for my isolation," Arnold later wrote (Arnold, n.d. a, p. 29).

5 | A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP

Gasson's affection for Arnold sometimes interfered with his objectivity as editor. He wrote 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 ilys so I got to be strict with myself)" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 22, 1952). Gasson's use of "ilys" here is a variation on "ily," which frequently occurs in his letters to Arnold. Given its usage it is clear that this was a crypto "I love you." Gasson first used ily in January 1952 (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 28, 1952), and at about the same time began signing himself "Johnny."

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 he now signed off with phrases such as "The mail is leaving ilyliy + Johnny See you in my dreams xx" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, [1955]). The use of ily is closely connected to his longing to be with her: "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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 4, 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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 11, 1954) or "Be good I long for Mar the 20ily moreily every minuteily. Love and prayers and everythingiLy, Johnny" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, January 28, 1954). Regardless of the exact construction of ily the sentiment was the same: Johnny's heart belonged to Magda. Gasson was not shy

FIGURE 2 Together at last: John Gasson and Magda Arnold sometime after her 1975 move to Spring Hill (photo courtesy of Joan Arnold)

about expressing his affection and longing for Arnold: "I'll think about what I'd like for my birthday—besides yourself, I mean" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, October 21, 1954; Fig. 2).

Gasson also emphasized how well they worked together. About a talk on mental health and mental illness 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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, March 6, 1954). Gasson handwrote "ily" above the word performance. There are few surviving letters from Arnold in this period, but there is one that begins "Dear Johnny" and ends "Love and prayers, in Corde Jesu, M. Ily" (M. Arnold to J. Gasson. October 6, 1952), indicating that the practice went both ways. Gasson seems to have been the one person with whom Arnold could be 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" (M. Arnold to K. Arnold, April 15, 1988).

The letters' 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 Gasson warns her "This will be one of those nose-wrinling [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!" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 24, 1952). The letter ends "I wish I could do for you what would help you relax…Idly".

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 when he visits the Midwest. He tells her to read between the lines and adds, "What I mean is, gee whizz, you know how it is with me" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 20, 1951). In another he asks her to be his Valentine, 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" and signs the letter "I love you. Johnny" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1956).

This last is the only surviving letter in which Gasson spells out the phrase "I love you." Their adoption of elementary code could be read as pointing to an illicit affair (illicit both because of Gasson's vow of celibacy and because they

were not married). There do seem to be some attempts at secrecy in the use of the "ily" code—at least Gasson tried to make "ily" not obvious from a cursory read of the letter by appending it to other words or putting it after his signature. Arnold seems to have been even more careful: her "M. Ily." (M. Arnold to J. Gasson, October 6, 1952) was rendered in light pencil and is spaced with the "M." so that it looks like merely her signature.

But there is good reason to doubt that Gasson and Arnold had a sexual relationship: Arnold's surviving daughters believe their relationship was "strictly hands off" (Arnold, 2014). As evidence Joan Arnold offers conversations that indicated that her mother found abstinence difficult. Gasson became "sort of like a second, a loving father, which my father was not" (Arnold, 2014) to Arnold's daughters.[17] But when Gasson was physically affectionate with them, Arnold asked her daughters to tone it down, expressing "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" (J. Arnold, Personal Communication, January 14, 2015). 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 nonphysical. Indeed Catholicism has a tradition of intimate spiritual friendship between male and female monastics—relationships that have "all the characteristics of falling in love," but are "sublimated or transferred to the Godhead" (Alberoni, 1979, p. 190). Given that Gasson and Arnold held traditional Catholic views on sexuality, it seems most likely that their relationship followed this pattern of cross-gender platonic friendship.

Perhaps the best testimony about their relationship comes from Arnold herself. In an unsent letter to Joan, Arnold spent some time discussing Gasson, "the best and truest friend I ever had or expect to have" (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… 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's valuation of the different elements of friendship can help to interpret her relationship with Gasson. Perhaps it is not surprising that after her sexually unfulfilling marriage (see Arnold, n.d.-a, p. 26), she was not inclined to emphasize the sexual element in friendship, but regarded the spiritual as 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" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 19, 1952). Gasson frequently emphasized that their bond was a result of their mutual identity as members of God's family: "We both are more closely bound to our Blessed Mother" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 2, 1951). Many of the letters demonstrate Gasson's tenderness for Arnold, and his desire for her spiritual and emotional wellbeing. 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. (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 30, 1955)*

The intimacy of their relationship is clear in accounts of Gasson's death. In 1985, when Gasson's cancer began to affect him, he received special permission from his Jesuit superiors to move into Arnold's house, so that she could care for him. He lived there until he was moved to hospice, where Arnold visited him frequently: "It is very hard to see John suffering so much …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" (M. Arnold to Lem, April 4, 1988). Arnold's letters recounting his decline underline the importance for them of shared religious practice: "gradually he was stripped of everything: …. he couldn't say Mass any longer; we had said the Rosary

together, but that also become too much for him" (M. Arnold to Lem, June 3, 1988). Eventually he could no longer read and was also losing his hearing so "all that is left is to sit quietly, speaking to him in the heart and from the heart" (M. Arnold to Katherine Arnold, April 15, 1988). Things were not always so peaceful: eventually Gasson forgot why he was in hospice and pleaded with Arnold to take him home with her. Gasson died in May 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" (M. Arnold to Lem, June 3, 1988).

6 | CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON ARNOLD AND GASSON

It is enlightening to consider Arnold and Gasson's relationship in the context of other academic couples in psychology in this period. They seem to have been one of the rarer mutually supportive scientific couples (Pycior, Slack, & Abir-am, 1995). For much of the twentieth 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 this inequality often persisted throughout their careers. In the first half of the century it was common for the wife to subsume her own academic interests to her husband's, either giving up her psychological work to tend to domestic duties (e.g., Ethel Puffer Howes) or continuing only as his assistant (e.g., Lucy May Day Boring). Indeed, in many cases the wife's intellectual contribution went unacknowledged, as books that were in fact collaborations were published under the husband's name only (e.g., Ada Allport;[18] Lillian Moller Gilbreth;[19] and Carolyn Wood Sherif).[20]

In the essay "On being a psychologist's wife" (Stevens & Gardner, 1982a), Sheldon Gardner catalogs the many benefits that male psychologists historically received from being married—all manner of unpaid personal and professional labor. Even couples with more egalitarian relationships generally prioritized the husband's career, leading to less-than-optimal employment and professional development for her (e.g., James and Eleanor Gibson). Male psychologists rarely recognized this operation of privilege, and often 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 beneficiary of more 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. 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)*

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 Arnold's professionally isolation because of her conversion, in addition to the typical challenges of a woman in mid-century psychology.

Gasson's 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). As 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). 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 release her worries and emotional pain: "we'll do like always: kiss our Lady's hand lovingly and say: 'Mama, you fix'" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 19 [1950]). When Arnold was troubled about those she loved Gasson reminded her that they were in "our Lady's work-basket" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 18, 1948). This emphasis on Mary in the letters is worth consideration. Marian devotion seems to have been a natural part of Gasson's own spiritual practices, but invoking such

strong female figures, such as Mary and Saint Philippine Duchesne for emulation may have had a special significance for Arnold, helping her to persevere in her faith and career in a male dominated field in which she had no female mentors and few female peers.[21]

Arnold's plaintive "All I ever wanted was to get a chance at research" (Arnold, n.d.-a, p. 8) identifies her as a typical second-generation woman psychologist (Johnston & Johnson, 2008; Gul et al., 2013) who saw herself as a scientist, rather than as a woman scientist. While neither Gasson nor Arnold were feminists, hints of Gasson's positive views of women can be seen in a letter in which he pushes back on Arnold's complaints about her unpromising Bryn Mawr students:

> *O.K. so you don't like to teach girls! …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?! … All I say is: Never underestimate the power of a woman! (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, February 15, 1949)*

In any event, whatever his views on women in the abstract, Gasson was always for Arnold. He even appears to have been behind her request for a raise at Loyola despite her boss' admonition to not expect a raise when there were men with families to consider. "I do not think it is merely the desire to 'get ahead'" Gasson encouraged her (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, June 11, [1953]).

Far from asking Arnold to prioritize his needs or jealousy of her greater professional eminence, Gasson promoted Arnold and celebrated her achievements. Indeed it hardly seems going beyond the evidence to argue that Gasson played the traditional "wife" role—he voluntarily engaged in supportive emotional and professional labor that allowed Arnold to flourish; he was an uncredited collaborator, willing to sacrifice his own professional advancement for Arnold's sake. This gender role reversal seems to have been made possible in large part because of Gasson's faith. In becoming a Jesuit at 18, Gasson had renounced possessions and achievement and devoted his life to service of God.[22] Gasson operated on the Christian principle "he that loses his life, shall find it" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, December 14, 1948), following Christ's example in renouncing his own claims and engaging in a sacrificial, selfless love. The correspondence suggests that Gasson's religious beliefs allowed him to transcend and reject the sexist gender dynamics of his day.[23]

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

This story of how Arnold's productive friendship with Gasson protected her from marginalization as a Catholic woman should broaden our understanding of academic couples in twentieth century psychology. It also adds another item to the long list of creative ways in which women in the history of psychology coped with the extra burdens and barriers they faced on the path to academic success. Specifically, Arnold's life shows how one second-generation woman was able to benefit from the emotional and intellectual advantages of romantic partnership with a fellow psychologist while avoiding the costs inherent in such a partnership (such as antinepotism rules, career interruptions due to children-rearing or domestic duties, and the reduction in status due to the husband's suspected intellectual and career influence of his wife).[24] Both the fact that the relationship was not publicly known and Gasson's unusual selflessness were important in protecting Arnold from such hazards.

Perhaps most importantly, this account underscores the importance of attending to the role of religion in the lives of twentieth century psychologists. Historian Jon Butler (2004) has critiqued the neglect of religion in modern history (in contrast to histories of the nineteenth century and earlier). This has so far been true of the histories of women in psychology that follow the scholarship of Scarborough and Furumoto. The story of Arnold's life demonstrates the need for historians of psychology to thoroughly explore the influence of religious belief on their subjects' lives. For Arnold, the correspondence makes clear, her conversion shaped not only her psychological theorizing but also her professional struggles and triumphs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank Joan Arnold for so generously sharing her mother's papers and her own remembrances, Stephanie Shields for graciously sharing her Arnold research resources and expertise, the staff of both the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology and Harvard University Archives for their help accessing archival material, and Angela Febbraro, Alexandra Rutherford, Bernard Lightman, Mary Desrocher, Michael Pettit, and Russell Kosits for their wise and valuable feedback on the dissertation from which much of this paper is drawn.

ENDNOTES

[1] 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 twentieth century psychology. Mooseheart was to be similarly influential (Shields, 2006a).

[2] As numerous as these letters are, they are not complete—since they were preserved by Arnold, the majority are Gasson's letters. Although there are enough of Arnold's letters to get the flavor of her missives, we are left primarily with Gasson's writings. Admittedly, this shapes our perspective on their relationship and may bias us to interpret Gasson as more influential than he was.

[3] Apart from Arnold's letters to Allport all of the letters cited in this paper are from Joan Arnold's privately held collection in Tucson, Arizona. She plans to donate them to the Magda B. Arnold papers in the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology.

[4] Confusingly, the term conversion is used to indicate a change from unbelief to faith in general as well as the more specific change from any prior beliefs to communion with the Catholic Church. Arnold experienced a conversion in both senses—a change from nonbelief to belief and a return to the Catholic Church and, while related, these occurred separately. It seems that while Arnold's epiphany in April left her certain that the event would be life changing, it was her friendship with Gasson that determined what direction that change took. Gasson concurred in the importance of that summer: "This summer in Cambridge gets unusualer and unusualer the more I think of it" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, September 27, 1948).

[5] In certain documents (e.g., Arnold, 1976) Arnold recalls this event as occurring in the summer of 1947, which does not seem possible given that she only took the Wellesley appointment in the fall of 1947 and Harvard did not resume its summer school program (suspended during the war) until 1948.

[6] John Augustine Gasson was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1904 ("John Augustine Gasson, S. J.," n.d.), to Lithuanian immigrants ("Elvena Gasson Whitcomb Obituary," 1965). He was ordained in 1933, received degrees from Boston College (AB, 1927; AM, 1928), Gregorian University in Rome (PhD, 1931), and Weston College (S. T. L., 1934) ("Letter from the Trustees," ca. 1978). In 1938, he became a professor of psychology and philosophy at Spring Hill ("SHE Pays Tribute," 1974).

[7] "You are God: we praise you; You are the Lord: we acclaim you!!"

[8] St. Rose Philippine Duchesne (1769–1852) was a French nun in the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who worked with Native Americans.

[9] "Ghetto" is a term Catholics in this era used, often critically, to describe their inward-looking tendencies and isolation from mainstream society.

[10] Barat College, now closed, was located in Lake Forest, Illinois.

[11] Gasson's May 5 letter suggests that the Barat decision happened quickly "This newest development has come so quickly I almost feel it really hasn't happened" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, May 5, [1950]).

[12] Gasson was frequently unwell. This was a source of great concern to Arnold, who recommended stretching, relaxation exercises, and sent him homeopathic remedies.

[13] "By the time I was ready for school, I had stopped looking for love or understanding at home" (M. Arnold to J. Arnold, January 10, 1992).

[14] Sursum corda is the command "Lift up your hearts," from the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer.

[15] Gasson's willingness to help with low-status tasks involved in compiling *The Human Person* contrasts sharply with the common attitude toward such labor in this period—that it was women's work. A typical male academic would have his wife or secretary attend to such tasks, as can be seen in the frequent thanks to unpaid wives in academic monographs.

[16] I am counting the two chapters of *The Human Person* and the book itself as separate collaborations.

[17] As surrogate father Gasson wrote to and visited Joan, who had become a nun, in her convent in upstate New York multiple times, seemingly more often than Arnold did herself. 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… Joan would love very much to have her mother…for Christmas. … And I love Joan, too, and am partial to gladdening her heart" (J. Gasson to M. Arnold, November 4, 1955).

[18] 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).

[19] See Graham (1999).

[20] See Sherif (1983) for discussion of her decision to give Muzafer Sherif the credit for her work.

[21] The repeated references to Marian devotion in the Arnold-Gasson correspondence suggest that Arnold's relationship with the Virgin Mary deserves further exploration. The cult of Mary played a significant role in pre-Vatican II Catholicism; she was present in the devotional practices of faithful Catholics who prayed the rosary daily (this would have included Arnold and Gasson). Mary's submissive attitude has been identified as contributing to Catholic oppression of women, however as Pelikan (1996) documents, the meanings attached to Mary varied. Mary has also been experienced by Catholic women as empowering, just as more broadly some women have experienced Christian spirituality as liberating (see Carr, 1988).

[22] Jesuits make a vow of perpetual poverty, chastity, and obedience, which are reinforced by a daily regimen of spiritual practices, such as the early morning mass offered by the individual Jesuit. Gasson adhered to this tradition; his letters frequently mention of the dilemma of finding a church in which to celebrate mass while traveling.

[23] It is possible that we should not give Gasson too much credit for being selfless since he did not necessarily have the opportunity to compete directly against Arnold, so it may have been in his self-interest to instead promote her. However the very fact that Gasson was not competing at that higher level, despite his clear intellectual abilities, is a sign of his previous choices to abstain from the typical, competitive academic path. One can imagine all manner of ways in which Gasson might have taken advantage of his male privilege while still collaborating with Arnold—expecting her to do the disagreeable chores associated with a project or being annoyed at not being credited or named first author, etc. The fact that he appears to have done none of these things marks his attitude as distinct from the broader masculine academic culture.

[24] Eleanor Gibson's life is the obvious contrast here. Although James Gibson was supportive of Eleanor and aware of the career barriers that she faced, given their relationship status, he was unable to help her overcome Cornell's antinepotism rules ("the slightest tendency to argue the injustice of the nepotism rule in the faculty code was taken to be an expression of that very evil" J. Gibson, 1979, p. xii) or to help her avoid the costs of being known as the wife of an eminent psychologist (see Gibson, 1976, 1979, 2002). For example, James was known by students as Dr. Gibson at Cornell while Eleanor was called as Mrs. Gibson (Gibson, 2002) and people tended to perceive her as frequently collaborating with James despite the independence of most of their work, an impression that both James and Eleanor were careful to correct (Rodkey, 2010b). In contrast, the private and unofficial relationship of Arnold and Gasson allowed her to benefit from his intellectual influence and support without incurring suspicion of her own intellectual capabilities.

REFERENCES

Alberoni, F. (1979). *Falling in love and loving*. Milano: Garzanti.

Arnold, J. (2014). *An oral history with Joan Arnold* (Conducted by Elissa Rodkey, York University, on October 30, 2014). Tucson, AZ.

Arnold, M. B. (n.d.-a). *Magda Arnold autobiography* (Unpublished manuscript). Tucson, AZ.

Arnold, M. B. (n.d.-b). *Personal autobiography* (Unpublished manuscript). Tucson, AZ.

Arnold, M. B. (n.d.-c). Opportunity for Catholic scholarship. Magda B. Arnold Papers (Box M2290, Folder 1). Akron, OH: Archives of the History of American Psychology, The Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, The University of Akron.

Arnold, M. B. (n.d.-d). The psychologist in the intellectual apostolate. Magda B. Arnold Papers (Box M2290, Folder 3). Akron, OH: Archives of the History of American Psychology, The Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, The University of Akron.

Arnold, M. B. (1950). Letter to Gordon Allport. Papers of Gordon W. Allport, 1907–1974 (inclusive) (HUG4118.10, Box 13, Folder A, 1940-1950). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Archives.

Arnold, M. B. (1951) [Letter to Gordon Allport]. Papers of Gordon W. Allport, 1907–1974 (inclusive) (HUG4118.10, Box 20, Folder A, 1951-1953). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Archives.

Arnold, M. B. (1954). Basic assumptions in psychology. In M. B. Arnold & J. A. Gasson (Eds.), *The human person* (pp. 3–48). New York: Ronald Press.

Arnold, M. B. (1960). *Emotion and personality*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Arnold, M. B. (1976). *An oral history with Magda Arnold/Interviewer: C. Rogers Myers. Oral history of psychology in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Psychological Association, Library and Archives Canada.

Arnold, M. B., & Gasson, J. A. (1954). *The human person: An approach to an integral theory of personality*. New York: Ronald Press.

Blanshard, P. (1949). *American freedom and Catholic power*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Bortfeld, H., Smith, S. M., & Tassinary, L. G. (2006). Memory and the brain: A retrospective. *Cognition & Emotion*, *20*, 1027–1045.

Butler, J. (2004). Jack-in-the-box faith: The religion problem in modern American history. *Journal of American History*, *90*, 1357–1378.

Carr, A. (1988). *Transforming grace: Christian tradition and women's experience*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row.

Cornelius, R. R. (2006). Magda Arnold's Thomistic theory of emotion, the self-ideal, and the moral dimension of appraisal. *Cognition & Emotion*, *20*, 976–1000.

Elvena Gasson Whitcomb Obituary. (1965, November 6). *The Berkshire Eagle*, p. 11. Pittsfield, MA.

Gasper, K., & Bramesfeld, K. D. (2006). Imparting wisdom: Magda Arnold's contribution to research on emotion and motivation. *Cognition & Emotion*, *20*, 7, 1001–1026.

Gasson, J. A. (n.d.-a). *A way with Mary [Pamphlet. Copy in the possession of Joan Arnold]*. St. Lewis, MO: The City House Alumnae of the Sacred Heart.

Gasson, J. A. (1951). *The psychological structure of religious experience. A study of the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius from a dynamic point of view*. An abstract [Enclosure in letter to M. Arnold dated April 23, [1951]]. Copy in possession of Joan Arnold.

Gasson, J. A. (1954). Personality theory: A formulation of basic principles. In M. B. Arnold & J. A. Gasson (Eds.), *The human person* (pp. 165–221). New York: Ronald Press.

Gasson, J. A., & Arnold, M. B. (1963). The internal senses: functions or powers? *Thomist*, *26*, 1, 1–34.

Gibson, E. J. (1976). *Oral history interview conducted by Margaret Savino* (Rare and manuscript collections). Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University Library.

Gibson, J. J. (1979). Forward: A note on E. J. G. by J. J. G. In A. D. Pick (Ed.), *Perception and its development* (ix–xii). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.

Gibson, E. J. (2002). *Perceiving the affordances: A portrait of two psychologists*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Graham, L. D. (1999). Domesticating efficiency: Lillian Gilbreth's scientific management of homemakers, 1924–1930. *Signs*, *24*, 633–675.

Gul, P., Korosteliov, A., Caplan, L., Ball, L. C., Bazar, J. L., Rodkey, E. N., … Rutherford, A. (2013). Reconstructing the experiences of first generation women in Canadian psychology, *Canadian Psychology*, *54*, 94–104.

Henold, M. J. (2008). *Catholic and feminist: The surprising history of the American Catholic feminist movement*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Jenkins, P. (2003). *The new Anti-Catholicism: The last acceptable prejudice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

John Augustine Gasson, S. J. (n.d.). Spring Hill College Archives. Spring Hill, AL.

John Gasson, S. J. (ca. 1985). Letter from the trustees and faculty to the President of Spring Hill College regarding Father John Gasson, S. J. Copy in possession of Joan Arnold.

Johnston, E., & Johnson, A. (2008). Searching for the second generation of American women psychologists. *History of Psychology*, *11*, 40–69.

Kugelmann, R. (2009). Out of the ghetto: Integrating Catholics into mainstream psychology in the United States after World War II. *History of Psychology*, *12*, 201–226.

Kugelmann, R. (2011). *Psychology and Catholicism: Contested boundaries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nicholson, I. (2003). *Inventing personality: Gordon Allport and the science of selfhood*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Pelikan, J. (1996). *Mary through the centuries: Her place in the history of culture*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Pycior, H. M., Slack, N. G., & Abir-am, P. G. (Eds.). (1995). *Creative couples in the sciences*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University.

Reisenzein, R. (2006). Arnold's theory of emotion in historical perspective. *Cognition & Emotion*, *20*, 920–951.

Rodkey, E. N. (2010a). *Charming stubbornness: Eleanor Gibson's second generation leadership strategy*. Paper presented at the 81st annual meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Brooklyn, NY.

Rodkey, E. N. (2010b). *Eleanor Gibson and the visual cliff myth: The biography of a scientific object* (Unpublished master's thesis). Toronto, ON: York University.

Roseman, I. J., & Smith, C. A. (2001). Appraisal theory: Overview, assumptions, varieties, controversies. In K. R. Scherer, A. Schorr, & T. Johnstone (Eds.), *Appraisal processes in emotion: Theory, methods, research* (pp. 3–19). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scarborough, E., & Furumoto, L. (1987). *Untold lives: The first generation of American women psychologists.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Schmiesing, K. E. (2002). *American Catholic intellectuals and the dilemma of dual identities, 1895-1955*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

SHE Pays Tribute to Father Gasson. (1974, November 28). *Mobile press register*. Magda B. Arnold papers (Box M2289, Folder 6). Akron, OH: Archives of the History of American Psychology, The Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, The University of Akron.

Sherif, C. W. (1983). Carolyn Wood Sherif. In A. N. O'Connell & N. Felipe Russo (Eds.), *Models of achievement* (pp. 279–293). New York: Columbia University Press.

Shields, S. A. (1999). A conversation with Magda Arnold. *Emotion Researcher*, *13*, 3.

Shields, S. A. (2006a). Magda B. Arnold: Pioneer in research on emotion. In D. Dewsbury, L. Benjamin, & M. Wertheimer (Eds.), *Portraits of pioneers in psychology* (Vol. IV). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Shields, S. A. (2006b). Magda B. Arnold's life and work in context. *Cognition & Emotion*, *20*, 902–919.

Shields, S. A. (2010). *Intersectionality of social identities: Visible lives, disappearing acts, and the politics of legitimate voice.* Mary Whiton Calkins Invited Lecture, presented at the 118th annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Diego, CA.

Shields, S. A., & Kappas, A. (2006). Magda B. Arnold's contributions to emotions research. *Cognition & Emotion*, *20*(7), 898–901.

Stevens, G., & Gardner, S. (1982a). *The women of psychology* (Vol. II). Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing.

Stevens, G., & Gardner, S. (1982b). Unacknowledged genius: Magda Blondiau Arnold (1903-). In G. Stevens & S. Gardner (Eds.), *The women of psychology* (Vol. II, pp. 126–129). Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Elissa N. Rodkey completed her dissertation at York University on the impact Magda Arnold's religious conversion had on her thought and career, and now teaches at Crandall University. She is interested in the women in the history of the psychology, the history of developmental psychology, and the historical relationship between psychology and religion. She recently published the article, Rodkey, E. N. (2016). Far more than dutiful daughter: Milicent Shinn's child study and education advocacy after 1898. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 177, 209–230.

How to cite this article: Rodkey EN. "Very much in love": The letters of Magda Arnold and Father John Gasson. *J Hist Behav Sci*. 2017;00:1–19. https://doi.org/10.1002/jhbs.21864