MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY NEO-THOMIST APPROACHES

TO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY NEO-THOMIST APPROACHES TO

MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

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      This dissertation considers a spectrum of five distinct approaches that mid-twentieth century neo-Thomist Catholic thinkers utilized when engaging with the tradition of modern scientific psychology: a critical approach, a reformulation approach, a synthetic approach, a particular [Jungian] approach, and a personalist approach. This work argues that mid-twentieth century neo-Thomists were essentially united in their concerns about the metaphysical principles of many modern psychologists as well as in their worries that these same modern psychologists had a tendency to overlook the transcendent dimension of human existence. This work shows that the first four neo-Thomist thinkers failed to bring the traditions of neo-Thomism and modern psychology together to the extent that they 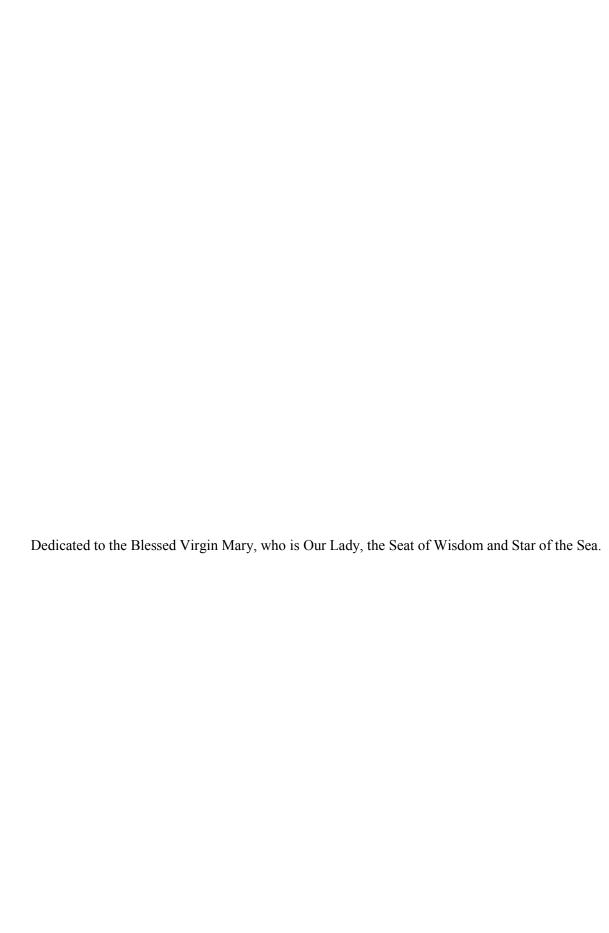suggested purely theoretical ways of reconciling them. Finally, this work concludes that a personalist approach to modern psychology that locates the reconciliation of these two traditions within the practice of individual human beings rather than within a theoretical dialogue between the traditions themselves has the potential to succeed where theoretical neo-Thomist accounts of these traditions failed.

Dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is Our Lady, the Seat of Wisdom and Star of the Sea.

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remain greatly appreciative. Fr. David Brinkmoeller permitted me the opportunity to serve as the

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present work ultimately comes from the Triune God whose eternal Word was incarnate within

time in Jesus Christ. He is the source of all created things and all Catholic theology is ultimately

only good to the extent that it leads us back to Him. When viewed as the eternal Word of God,

Jesus Christ can appear to be aligned with the abstract system of thought instead of with each

particular human being. Yet, when it is recognized that much of early Christology focused upon

the importance of having the correct understanding of the Person of Jesus Christ, traditional

Catholic theology makes many of the same points as the present work. In other words, Catholic

Christology itself argues that the reconciliation of different realities must come about within the

individual person rather than through the development of a theoretical system.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF NEO-THOMISM AND MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

In the mid-twentieth century United States, members of a modern philosophical and

theological tradition commonly known as neo-Thomism engaged with a new scientific tradition

with experimental and therapeutic streams called modern psychology.[1] Both of these traditions

had antecedents in history, and their names paid homage to the fact that they were related to

earlier systems of thought even as their qualifying designations served to distinguish them from

ways of thinking that had existed in previous centuries. And both traditions really were new and

modern in the sense that they both had begun to develop at the end of the nineteenth century and

sought to provide their practitioners with comprehensive knowledge about the world and about

the human person in particular.[2]

From the perspective of the earliest practitioners of modern psychology, their tradition

was new and modern because it was scientific.[3] They conceived of themselves as doing

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[1] Tradition is a complex topic both theologically and sociologically. For the sake of simplicity, this work follows Terrence W. Tilley's basic explanation of a tradition as consisting of a community of practitioners who both transmit and alter the content they have received and who have a unique grammar, special skills and procedures, and shared goals. Terrence W. Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 53-57.

[2] The heart of the modern project "is a faith or self-confidence that an enlightened humanity can discover an apodictic or at least an effectual truth, and that this truth will provide the foundation for an unprecedented human flourishing." (Michael Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity (*Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 257. Both neo-Thomists and modern psychologists were modern in this sense.

[3] Edwin G. Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), 3. As will be explained in more detail later, my primary representative for the perspective of the broader tradition of experimental psychology in this chapter is Edwin G. Boring (1886-1968), who was the author of the dominant American history of experimental psychology in the early and mid-twentieth century. Boring serves as the ideal representative of the broader modern psychological tradition in the United States during this period because the two editions of his text (the first in 1929, the second in 1950) correspond almost perfectly with the major period of neo-Thomist engagement with

something both new and important for the future of human knowledge. They realized that they were measuring things about the living human body that no one in history had ever thought to measure before and were therefore accumulating new data about the source of human life. Although the literal rendering of psychology meant "the study of the soul," there was never complete agreement about whether they were studying the mind or the consciousness, the contents or the acts, or the structures or the functions.[4] Yet, if they did not always have perfect agreement about what it was they were studying, they at least agreed that the study itself was necessary for the intellectual growth of the human race. They agreed, in other words, on the value that the method of scientific investigation had for acquiring data about the world.[5]

Despite their basic agreement on method, by the mid-twentieth century most of the practitioners of the various streams of modern psychology had become firmly established in their different philosophical positions, or in the paradigms that they used to think about their science.[6] Yet these psychologists had also settled into a relative peace with one another regarding their differences in philosophy and areas of research because they retained their agreement on the basic method of scientific investigation. Like many of the earliest practitioners of their tradition, these mid-twentieth century psychologists were pragmatists in multiple senses of the term; they were able to look at the different possible outcomes of the interpretive positions that they held and were able to choose to follow the interpretation that seemed to them to make the most sense.[7] And

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modern psychology. My interpretation of Boring's text relies exclusively on the second edition of his work, which includes, however, a few short excerpts and allusions to his first edition at a few key points.

[4] Ludy T. Benjamin, Jr., *A Brief History of Modern Psychology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 48-51.

[5] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology*, 13.

[6] Robert I. Watson, "Psychology: A Prescriptive Science" in *Historical Conceptions of Psychology*, ed. Mary Henle, Julian Jaynes, John J. Sullivan (New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc., 1973), 20. For Watson, "a paradigm is a continual model, universally accepted by practitioners of a science at a particular temporal period in its development" (13). In the case of modern psychology, in other words, there were several different paradigms that corresponded with a few of the different schools. The most common model, of course, was that of physics.

[7] Ibid., 176. Hunt explains William James' pragmatism as the conviction "that if we compare the implications of opposed solutions to a problem, we can choose which one to believe in and act on." And, of course, there is another sense of the term pragmatist, in which they were just "going with what worked."

these mid-twentieth century modern psychologists decided that what they needed to do was accept the diversity within their discipline, try to learn as best they could from all of its streams, and not worry too much about the differences in their philosophies that underlay their different conclusions about their subject.[8]

This kind of pragmatic decision was relatively easy for most of these mid-twentieth century modern psychologists, in hindsight, because at their core, whatever else they were, they were fundamentally nominalists in philosophy and Baconians in method.[9] They moved between different names for the subject of their discipline with ease precisely because they were not worried about the participation of their subject-matter in any higher reality. They were concerned with something concrete and empirical, not something abstract and metaphysical. From the perspective of many mid-twentieth century modern psychologists, in other words, it was the method they practiced, as well as the results that their method produced, that mattered.[10]

For most practitioners of the neo-Thomist tradition, however, including some of those neo-Thomists who made the decision to engage with modern psychology, this entire way of looking at a tradition of thought like Thomism or psychology was, if not completely incoherent, then at least deeply misguided. Neo-Thomism was a form, albeit a rather peculiar modern form, of a much older philosophical and theological tradition known as scholasticism. Neo-Thomism is the common term that is used for a version of this wider tradition that began developing in the

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[8] Boring, *A History of American Psychology*, 741-2. "Within America there is the internal criticism and complaint that is normal to healthy institutional growth and the men of each field believe that their own *Fach* is weakened by the competition of the others, but the old inferiorities are gone. That is progress."

[9] Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, 36-40. It should be admitted that this is a Thomist philosophical interpretation of what most of the early and mid-twentieth century modern psychologists were rather than something that they would probably have said about themselves. Gillespie and others have demonstrated the dependence of modern philosophy on the proposals of William of Ockham (1285-1347). Neither Hunt, nor Boring explicitly trace the history of modern psychology to Ockham and the nominalists, but both at least mention the inductive method of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) before turning to the method of René Descartes (1596-1650), the French philosopher and mathematician. Hunt, *The Story of Psychology*, 65-74. Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology*, 13.

[10] It should be reiterated that some of my claims about modern psychologists rest upon my interpretation of Boring as the representative of modern experimental psychology. I do not wish to deny that there was significant diversity within modern psychological thought in this period. Indeed, the neo-Thomist Catholic modern psychologists presented in the later chapters of this work are, in fact, examples of that diversity.

middle of the nineteenth century. Like the first practitioners of modern psychology, the early neo-Thomists emphasized that that their basic agreement upon their unitary method was the foundation of their unity and the source for their confidence in their conclusions. Where the majority of the practitioners of neo-Thomism went a step further than the modern psychologists, however, and where they most fundamentally erred, was in their belief that their method gave them an essential continuity with the past as well as an apparent one. For, although the neo-Thomists sometimes referred to themselves as neo-Thomists, they were more likely to think of themselves simply as Thomists. And while we can look back at them today and realize that they were modern thinkers, they thought of themselves as challenging modernity. Yet, despite what they commonly believed, the neo-Thomists were always operating within human history, making assumptions about the texts that they read, and imposing their own questions upon statements that had been meant to answer different questions. In other words, they lacked a sense of historical consciousness.[11]

The mid-twentieth century neo-Thomist Catholic engagement with modern psychology is one example of neo-Thomist engagement with a modern intellectual tradition. Although it is not the only such example, it is one of the most important examples because of the nature of the essential conflict that most neo-Thomists had with modern psychologists. For the sake of philosophical peace, the first modern experimental psychologists made a methodological decision to simply ignore the metaphysical questions upon which their discipline rested and to focus instead upon the unity of their method. Many modern psychological therapists of this same period operated from an equivalent vantage point when they assumed that metaphysical and theological issues were irrelevant to treatment or even harmful to the patient.

Yet, for most neo-Thomists, the value of experimental modern psychology was necessarily found in its ability to examine those higher aspects of the human person that set

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[11]Gerald A. McCool, S.J., *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1989), 203-210. See also Philip Gleason, *Keeping the Faith: American Catholicism Past and Present (*Notre Dame, Indiana: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1987)*, 27.

human creatures apart from all other material beings and called them to a destiny beyond this one. Furthermore, from their perspective, the only reason to practice psychological therapy must be to help patients to become closer to what they ought to be. For neo-Thomists, in other words, any form of modern experimental psychology that failed to take that transcendent element seriously in conducting its examinations was only studying half of the human person just as any psychological treatment that tried to adjust human habits without acknowledging the spiritual element of human life was destined to influence its patients in incorrect ways.

The mid-twentieth century neo-Thomist engagement with modern psychology can be seen as an encounter between two traditions whose members usually held different world-views that were based on differences in metaphysics. Despite the claims of modern psychologists that they were only concerned with the mind or behavior of human beings, neo-Thomists were convinced that the practitioners of modern psychology focused on questions that were intimately related to both the ultimate nature of reality and the spiritual aspect of the human person. In other words, the metaphysical disagreements between the two traditions were the foundation of much larger issues that concerned the nature and meaning of human life.

Thesis and Structure

The research for this project began with the realization that the different approaches to the science of modern psychology of 20th century neo-Thomists could be placed upon a spectrum in terms of their enthusiasm for the new science.[12] The thesis of the present work is that those

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[12] In the present work, modern psychology is used as an umbrella term to refer to several related movements that arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that sought to the study the human person from a modern scientific perspective. Although these different forms of modern psychology had a few different origins and frequently developed into different schools of thought, neo-Thomists usually saw as their practitioners as engaging within the same general discipline. Mid-twentieth century neo-Thomists expressed concerns about the disunity of modern psychology because they imagined that modern psychology should be a unified in the way that they imagined that modern physics and neo-Thomism were unified disciplines. As a result, neo-Thomist criticisms of modern psychology frequently failed to distinguish the various traditions from each other. For this reason, even though the present work recognizes the inherent particularity of the different forms of

neo-Thomists who engaged in these different kinds of approaches to the science of modern psychology were fundamentally united in their unease regarding what they considered to be the basic metaphysical presuppositions of many of the practitioners of modern psychology as well as in their desire to safeguard the transcendent dimension of human existence from the negative repercussions of these metaphysical presuppositions. In simpler language, the argument of this dissertation is that those mid-twentieth century neo-Thomists who wrote about the developing traditions that constituted modern psychology were concerned that the implicit philosophical assumptions upon which modern psychology was founded often led its various practitioners to ignore the spiritual dimension of human life.

The purpose of this first chapter is to establish the basic context within which the five theological profiles that form the bulk of this work should be read. This chapter serves as an introduction to the topic and as a background narrative regarding the development of the various traditions that comprised neo-Thomism and modern psychology in the mid-twentieth century United States of America. This chapter argues that neither one of these tradition should be regarded as an ideal type or substantial entity that existed apart from the views of its human practitioners. While this claim may seem too obvious to require argument in the 21st century, it stands in stark contrast to the language and concepts that many neo-Thomists of the mid-twentieth century employed when writing about the traditions of neo-Thomism and modern psychology. From the mid-twentieth century neo-Thomist perspective, in other words, it seemed obvious that both Thomism and psychology each had an eternal essence and that the views of the practitioners of these traditions could be critiqued in terms of their faithfulness to the ideal vision of what their tradition should be, as well as in terms of its correspondence to the truth.

This chapter is divided into three sections. This first section of this chapter looks at the establishment of neo-Thomist thought in the Catholic Church of the early twentieth century. It

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modern psychology, it will in subsequent chapters usually treat modern psychology as a single tradition without focusing on a particular form in order to more adequately reflect the position of the particular Thomist being considered.

argues that neo-Thomism should be primarily seen as a modern movement rather than as a restoration of an earlier tradition. This chapter also looks at the place that neo-Thomism assumed in the American Catholic subculture of the early twentieth century and shows that American Catholics of this period embraced neo-Thomism out of obedience to Rome as well as because they wanted intellectual coherence for both the American Catholic subculture and the wider American society. This section also demonstrates that some American Catholic neo-Thomists of this period were concerned about how non-Catholic intellectuals outside their subculture understood the Catholic Church's adherence to the principles of neo-Thomist scholasticism.

The second section of this first chapter provides a short history of the scientific discipline of modern psychology as it developed at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. This section, which begins with an overview of some of the members of the first generation of modern psychologists in Europe and in the United States, suggests that American modern psychologists of the mid-twentieth century United States of America are best seen as practitioners of several different yet interrelated traditions of modern psychology rather than viewed as practitioners of a single discipline that lacked coherence and consensus. This second section also provides a brief analysis of one of the dominant historical texts of experimental psychology in the mid-twentieth century, the second edition of Edwin G. Boring's *A History of Experimental Psychology* (1950), in order to demonstrate that at least one of the major streams within the wider tradition of modern psychology believed that modern psychology should be kept separate from philosophy.

The third section of this chapter provides a brief overview of the core principles that characterized mid-twentieth century neo-Thomism. It also looks at another way that neo-Thomist Catholics engaged with modern psychology in the mid-twentieth century that is not covered in this work. In addition, it briefly considers a few different typologies that are sometimes used when considering Christian engagement with modern psychology. Finally, it is gives a summary of the research method of this project. The conclusion of this chapter provides a short restatement

of the content presented in this chapter and then offers a sketch concerning the information that appears in a far more detailed form in the five chapters that follow.

The Story of Neo-Thomist Catholicism

The Establishment of Neo-Thomism

The 1878 election of Pope Leo XIII (Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci, 1810-1903, pope 1878-1903) inaugurated a new era for scholastic thought within the Catholic Church. Long before his election to the Chair of St. Peter, Pecci had been an intellectual disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas.[13] During his seminary days at the Roman College, he had become convinced of the value of scholastic thought through the efforts of its Jesuit rector, Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio.[14] After his election as Bishop of Rome, Pope Leo determined to promote Thomism in the Catholic Church. He immediately "ordered that Thomistic textbooks replace the Cartesian manuals in use at the Roman Diocesan seminary."[15] He also directed that a scholarly edition of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas should be published, required "that the teaching staffs of the Roman seminaries were suitably Thomistic, and appointed Neoscholastics to other positions of influence."[16]

During his long pontificate, Leo released more than eighty encyclical letters on subjects ranging from the rosary to freemasonry to social justice. Yet Leo's third encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) or "On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy," stands out as the announcement of the intellectual program of his pontificate as well as for having inaugurated the neo-Thomist revival.[17] *Aeterni Patris* proclaimed that within Catholic seminaries "all studies should accord

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[13] Gerald A. McCool, S.J., *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1989), 5.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 6.

[16] Philip Gleason, *Contending With Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 108-109.

[17] James A. Weisheipl, O.P, "Commentary" in *One Hundred Years of Thomism: Aeterni Patris and Afterwards, A Symposium*,.Victor B. Brezik, C.S.B., ed. (Houston, TX: The Center for Thomistic Studies,

with the Catholic faith, especially philosophy, on which a right apprehension of the other sciences in great part depends."[18] Furthermore, the encyclical insisted that even sacred theology needed the help of true philosophy so that it could "receive and assume the nature, form, and genius of a true science." For, according to *Aeterni Patris*:

> It is of the greatest necessity to bind together, as it were, in one body the many and various parts of the heavenly doctrines, that, each being allotted to its own proper place and derived from its own proper principles, the whole may join together in a complete union; in order, in fine, that all and each part may be strengthened by its own and the others' invincible arguments.[19]

Aeterni Patris went on to explain that even the great thinkers of antiquity "who lacked the gift of faith, yet were esteemed so wise, fell into many appalling errors."[20] According to the encyclical, the scholastic doctors had been able to discover the truth in the teachings of the pagan philosophers and purge them of their mistakes. St. Thomas Aquinas, in particular, had been able to gather together this collective knowledge and transform it into "seeds of almost infinite truths, to be unfolded in good time."[21] The encyclical also declared that Catholics needed to rediscover "the golden wisdom of St. Thomas" not only "for the defense and beauty of the Catholic faith," but also "for the good of society," and even "for the advantage of all the sciences."[22] The ideal vision of *Aterni Patris*, in other words, would be a Thomism that could respond to the modern world on its own terms in the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas, accept the knowledge that it had to offer, and then perfect it with faith.

1981), 24. Weisheipl notes that *Aeterni Patris* officially had "no title or subtitle," apart from the two Latin words with which it began.

[18] Leo XIII, "Aeterni Patris: Encyclical Letter on the Restoration of Christian Philosophy" in *One Hundred Years of Thomism: Aeterni Patris and Afterwards, A Symposium*, Victor B. Brezik, C.S.B., ed. (Houston, TX: The Center for Thomistic Studies, 1981), 174.

[19] Ibid, 178.

[20] Ibid, 182.

[21] Ibid, 187.

[22] Ibid, 195.

In releasing *Aeterni Patris*, Pope Leo XIII called upon Catholics throughout the world to receive training in the tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas so that they would be able to bring greater philosophical and theological coherence to a modern world that was lost in chaos and confusion. Two of the greatest practitioners of the Thomism that developed in the period immediately after the release of *Aeterni Patris*, Desiré Cardinal Mercier (1851-1926) and Edward Aloysius Pace (1861-1938), were also both vocal proponents for the study of the science of modern psychology. By the mid-twentieth century, American Catholic neo-Thomist historians of modern psychology would remember these two figures for their outstanding contributions to both disciplines.[23]

Desiré Felicien François Joseph Mercier (1851-1926), later Cardinal-Archbishop of Malines, Belgium, became the chair of philosophy of the diocesan seminary of Malines in 1877. Pope Leo requested that the bishops of Belgium establish a chair of scholastic philosophy at the Catholic University of Louvain in 1880, and they chose Mercier to fill it in 1882. Mercier taught Thomist philosophy at Louvain from 1882 until 1889, when Leo approved the plan for the *Institut Supérieur de Philosophie ou l'Ecole Saint Thomas de'Aquin*, also known as the Higher Institute of Louvain, to become a separate education institution.[24] He became the primate of Belgium in 1907 and was made a cardinal the following year.

Mercier instilled the Higher Institute of Louvain with a spirit of neo-Thomism that was universally recognized for its serious engagement with modern thought and that "was summed up in the aphorism that St. Thomas should be a beacon, not a boundary."[25] The courses that Mercier established at the Higher Institute

> included philosophy, history, philology, and sciences; philosophy was studied for its own sake and not merely as *ancilla theologiae*, handmaid of theology; modern science was represented in its own right, and Catholic scientists were taught to be true scientists, to develop laboratories, to conduct experiments, to follow the

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[23] Henryk Misiak and Virginia M. Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology: A Historical Survey* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc.: 1954), 34, 66.
[24] Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology*, 35-36; Gleason, *Contending With Modernity*, 109.
[25] Gleason, *Contending With Modernity*, 109.

findings of the science, and to harmonize them with philosophy; ecclesiastic and lay students were admitted. Mercier's aim was to make the institute an international and truly Catholic center which would bring Thomistic philosophy both to laymen and to men of science and which would demonstrate to the intellectual world the harmony between philosophy and science.[26]

Mercier established the first experimental psychology laboratory in Belgium, as well as the first course in experimental psychology at the institute, in 1891. Mercier was concerned, however, "that without the proper guidance of philosophy the young science would fall into materialistic monism."[27] Mercier was a proponent of philosophical psychology as well as experimental psychology; he insisted that "'neither the work nor the method of experimental psychology is opposed to the principles of spiritualistic philosophy.'"[28] Yet Mercier also believed "that experimental psychology is a separate science, a natural science, which however does not, and ought not, claim to be a substitute for metaphysics or do away with the problems of rational psychology."[29]

Edward Aloysius Pace (1861-1938) was the nearest equivalent to Mercier in the United States of America. He received a doctorate in theology in Rome in 1886 and was sent to Louvain to study philosophy in 1888. He learned chemistry and biology at the Sorbonne in Paris, and then he studied physiology and psychology at Leipzig.[30] In 1891, Pace returned to The Catholic University of America to take up his position as the first chair of the philosophy department, and he soon established an experimental psychology laboratory as well. Pace taught the first courses in psychology at the Catholic University of America and also served as the first head of the psychology department. Pace played an important role in the conception and development of the

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[26] Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology*, 37.
[27] Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology*, 47.
[28] Ibid., 48. Apparent quotation provided without footnote in original.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., 68-70.

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Catholic Encyclopedia.[31] He was an advocate of both modern psychology and neo-Thomism from the very beginning and remained a practitioner of both traditions for the rest of his life.

Mercier and Pace were among the earliest practitioners of the neo-Thomist tradition that would develop in the decades after the publication of *Aeterni Patris*. Over the next seventy years Catholics all over the world gradually came to embrace its directives. Yet, as Catholic scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century came to realize, the various versions of neo-Thomism that developed after *Aeterni Patris* were not identical with the tradition of scholastic philosophy in which St. Thomas Aquinas himself had engaged, nor were any of these schools of neo-Thomism the perfectly unified system of thought that Pope Leo had envisioned.[32] In hindsight, it is now apparent to most historians of Thomism that the drafters of *Aeterni Patris* had an unrealistic interpretation of the inherent unity of earlier forms of scholasticism. The drafters imagined that the works of St. Thomas had formed the apex of a single coherent and completed scholastic intellectual system that had also included the most important elements of patristic thought.[33] As a result, they saw Thomism as an already finished method of inquiry that could simply be applied to the problems of the modern world. What they failed to recognize, of course, was that Thomism is and always was a historically conditioned response to a particular context. In other words, neo-Thomists posed modern questions to the works of St. Thomas Aquinas and his commentators, derived modern answers from those works, and did so for modern reasons.[34]

In the decades that followed *Aeteri Patris*, neo-Thomists from around the world promoted Leo's vision of Thomism without realizing that the true sources of this vision were Thomists from earlier in the nineteenth century. Matteo Liberatore (1810-1892) was an Italian

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[31] James H. Ryan, "Edward Aloysius Pace, Philosopher and Educator" in *Aspects of the New Scholastic Philosophy* Charles A. Hart, ed. (New York: Benzinger, 1932), 5. Pace was one of the editors on the Catholic Encyclopedia and translated some of the articles on theology and philosophy.
[32] McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism*, 205-207.
[33] In other words, the drafters of the encyclical were caught up in the modern project.
[34] Ibid., 227.

realist who "opposed the empiricism of Locke and the critical idealism of Kant."[35] Liberatore

accepted the modern premise that epistemology always serves as the foundation for metaphysics,

anthropology, and ethics. He understood the Cartesian epistemology of intellectual knowledge

and sensation as the origin of subsequent dualisms in Cartesian thought, such as the separation

between soul and body.[36] Furthermore, Liberatore interpreted St. Thomas as an Aristotelian,

proposed the idea that St. Thomas had taught a unitary method, and constructed a common sense

version of Thomist thought as an antidote to Cartesian doubt. Liberatore's epistemology was

based upon the ability of the active intellect to recognize the first principles of thought, including

Being and non-contradiction.[37] His metaphysical system emphasized "act, potency, and the four

causes" while his anthropology focused on "soul, faculty, and act."[38] Finally, Liberatore's ethics

was founded upon all of his previous philosophical assertions as well as upon the recognition of

both Divine law and natural law.[39]

Joseph Kleutgen (1811-1883) was a German theologian who made controversial claims

about papal authority, was involved in a personal scandal, and may have been involved in the

writing of *Aeterni Patris*.[40] Kleutgen's academic work complemented Liberatore's philosophical

claims with a theological interpretation of the history of pre-Cartesian forms of Catholic

philosophy and theology. For Kleutgen, all of scholastic theology had been "one scientific system

built upon one scientific method."[41] According to his interpretation, theology was primarily an

Aristotelian science of faith that remained unified because "God himself was the supreme subject

of whom its scientific judgements were predicated."[42] Yet Kleutgen believed that the method of

theology ultimately depended upon the method of philosophy and that Thomist epistemology

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[35] McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 145.
[36] Ibid., 162-163.
[37] Ibid., 152.
[38] Ibid. 158.
[39] Ibid., 160.
[40] Hubert Wolf, *The Nuns of Sant'Ambrogio: The True Story of a Convent* Scandal (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 345-362.
[41] Ibid., 173.
[42] Ibid., 181.

provided the foundation for "the reliability of the faculties of knowledge through which metaphysics derived its certain knowledge of its necessary first principles."[43]

Liberatore and Kleutgen were in agreement on "the Thomistic unity of knowledge, anthropology, and metaphysics."[44] Yet they both began with Cartesian metaphysical assumptions that they did not recognize, including starting with a universal idea, with first principles, and with a Cartesian conception of certitude.[45] They were also in agreement with each other in their misunderstanding of the Thomist conception of Being, for they both saw it as the Being of Duns Scotus ("pure non-nothing") rather than of St. Thomas, for whom Being "was 'that whose act is existence.'"[46] In other words, neither of their interpretations of the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas were truly faithful to his views at the most fundamental level.

Pope Leo XIII reigned as pope for more than twenty years after the publication of the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879). During that period, Leo repeatedly used his influence and authority to promote Thomist thought in the Catholic institutions of Europe. Near the end of Leo's reign, he released *Testem benevolentiae nostrae* (1899), an encyclical letter that warned the American bishops that the attitudes of America should not be applied elsewhere.[47] After Leo's death in 1903, his successor Pope Pius X (Giuseppe Sarto, 1845-1914, pope 1903-1914) continued to emphasize the value of the tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas for the Catholic Church.

The American Catholic Sub-Culture of the 20ᵗʰ Century

With the release of the apostolic constitution *Sapienti consilio* in 1908, the Catholic Church in the United States "was no longer regarded by the Holy See as missionary territory."[48]

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[43] Ibid., 210.
[44] Ibid., 209.
[45] Ibid., 210.
[46] Ibid., 164-166, 213.
[47] http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/l13teste.htm accessed on 15 October 2016. Gleason, *Keeping the Faith*,164.
[48] John Tracy Ellis, *American Catholicism*, Second Edition, Revised (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 124.

Prior to the Second World War, the majority of American Catholics lived in ethnic subcultures that largely preserved them from association with the wider society. These subcultures were not planned communities as much as they were the inevitable result of immigration from non-English speaking countries. Many Catholics who came to the United States in search of a new life discovered that many aspects of their native language and culture could still be retained within small ethnic communities.[49]

Since the Catholic Church in the United States had reacted to the release of *Testem Benevolentiae* (1899) with firm obedience, there was minimal American Catholic theological engagement with modern scientific thought between the turn of the century and Pope Pius X's official condemnation of Modernism as "the synthesis of all heresies" in his encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907) and the accompanying list of condemned propositions, *Lamentabili Sane Exitu* (1907). Yet, in those relatively rare instances when American Catholic prelates had decided to engage with modern philosophical and scientific thought in the first decade of the twentieth century, they had discovered

> that Rome looked with suspicion upon the efforts of their European counterparts. As they grappled with the specters of evolution and scientific criticism, vital immanence and developmentalism, American priests recognized, with increasing clarity as the new century dawned, that Rome's unswerving ecclesiopolitical commitment to the philosophical-theological system of neo-scholasticism precluded the possibility of a fair hearing for loyal dissenters. When the Vatican's condemnation of modernism came in 1907, these men faced a stark dilemma: respect the strictures imposed upon them by authority, or reject those strictures and thereby repudiate the institution and its exclusive claim of authority to mediate the religious tradition to the faithful.[50]

The Modernism condemned in *Pascendi* bore similarities to the form of theological Americanism repudiated in Pope Leo XIII's *Testem Benevolentiae* (1899), for both were systems

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[49] Gleason, *Keeping the Faith,* 64.

[50] R. Scott Appleby, *"Church and Age Unite!" The Modernist Impulse in American Catholicism* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 4-5.

of thought that the popes understood to be criticisms of the theological teachings of the Church.

It has been argued that the Catholic Church in the United States had taken Leo's warning against

Americanism so seriously that "the papal condemnation of Modernism in 1907 raised scarcely a

ripple in the United States."[51]

The European Catholic response to *Pascendi* was more complex. As Pope Pius X

condemned modernism, he promoted Thomism as the solution. As Philip Gleason notes,

> Thus Thomistic principles underlay the positive portion of the "oath against
> Modernism" that was imposed on all clerics in 1910. And only weeks before his
> death in 1914, Pius X made it clear that when he had earlier said St. Thomas was
> to be studied "particularly," he really meant "exclusively." The "capital theses"
> of Thomism, he now asserted, were not debatable; professors of philosophy and
> theology were reminded of the warning that they courted grave peril "if they
> deviated so much as a step, in metaphysics especially, from Aquinas." Soon
> thereafter the Congregation of Studies in Rome issued a list of 24 Thomist theses,
> adherence to which would guarantee orthodoxy.[52]

In the first few decades of the early twentieth century United States, however, the

predominant Catholic response to the Vatican condemnation of Modernism was not to embrace

neo-Thomism but rather to critique the secular nature of modern forms of knowledge. During the

Progressive Era, for example, American Catholics frequently regarded new secular academic

disciplines, such as the emerging social sciences, with distrust and suspicion. Even early Catholic

proponents of sociology like William J. Kerby (1870-1936), who became the first professor of

sociology at the Catholic University of America in 1897, were cautious about some of the dangers

that this kind of secular knowledge could pose to the Catholic faith.[53] In Kerby's view, even when

non-Catholic sociologists were "not openly hostile to Catholic principles," they nevertheless

"lacked an interpretative framework" based upon the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church.

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[51] Philip Gleason, *Keeping the Faith: American Catholicism Past and Present* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 165.

[52] Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 112-113.

[53] Thomas E. Woods, Jr., *The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholic Intellectual and the Progressive Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 59-60.

In the early twentieth century, these traditional Catholic teachings were invariably expressed in Thomist terms. Pope Benedict XV (Giacomo Chiesa, 1854-1922, pope 1914-1922) maintained the emphasis of Pope Pius X on the works of St. Thomas. For example, the 1917 Code of Canon Law, released in the middle of his reign, Benedict "laid it down as a formal requirement that professors of the sacred sciences were to 'adhere religiously' to 'the method, the doctrine, and the principles of the Angelic Doctor.'"[54] For Benedict, as for his immediate predecessors, Thomism was the intellectual system that Catholics should use if they wanted to keep close to the teachings of the Church.

After the First World War, many Catholics still remained relatively isolated within their subcultures even as they found solace in their visions about the medieval past. The popular Catholic belief during this period that the thirteen century was "the greatest of centuries" actually "rested on a desire to picture Catholicism as the inspirational element in the creation of universities, trade schools, libraries, Gothic architecture, literature, art, and the early beginnings of democratic liberties."[55] Furthermore, the linguistic and cultural barriers that separated American Catholics from their compatriots during this period also "served to protect immigrant and ethnic Catholics from a resurgent nativism in America during the twenties."[56]

As the twentieth century continued, however, American Catholics found a way to leave their subcultures with the aid of a unifying intellectual system that helped them to confront the world outside with a new confidence. American Catholics became convinced that "Catholicism had a golden opportunity to contribute to the reconstruction efforts following the twin disasters of world depression and 'philosophical bankruptcy.'"[57] This principle of unity, this source of

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[54] Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 113.

[55] William M. Halsey, *The Survival of American Innocence: Catholicism in an Era of Disillusionment, 1920-1940* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 66-67.

[56] Anthony Burke Smith, *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 18.

[57] Halsey, *The Survival of American Innocence*, 149.

confidence that gave American Catholics "a sense of security in a world of change and furnished the intellectual cement that could bind religion and culture together," was neo-Thomism.[58]

Although there had been a Thomist presence in American Catholicism for centuries, it was not until the early nineteen twenties that neo-Thomist thought came into vogue among American Catholics in the United States. Once it had been begun to take root in the American Catholic cultural world, however, the popularity of neo-Thomism spread quickly. Phillip Gleason recalls that by the nineteen thirties "terms like 'organic unity,' 'synthetic vision,' 'integral Catholicism,' and 'Catholic culture' became buzz words of the American Catholic discussion."[59] For American Catholics before the Second World War, it was taken for granted that all knowledge should ultimately be able to rise into a unified synthesis.

During this period, American Catholics interpreted all of scholastic philosophy, with particular emphasis on the philosophical tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas, "as the unifying discipline because it was closely associated with the Catholic faith, supporting and elucidating it, and yet was rational rather than fideistic."[60] This Catholic conviction did not require "that any specific formulation of St. Thomas was the answer, but that Neoscholastic theology understood in a generic sense was the ultimate wisdom and that a way would eventually be found to bring everything within its aegis and to communicate the resulting synthesis adequately to students."[61]

Non-Catholic Perceptions of Neo-Thomist Scholasticism

There were, however, significant concerns among American Catholic scholars in the early twentieth century regarding the perception of neo-Thomist thought outside of the American Catholic subculture. On January 3, 1925, John S. Zybura began sending out a questionnaire on scholasticism to "a long list of professors of philosophy, differing in training, tradition, and

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[58] Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1992), 352.
[59] Gleason, *Keeping the Faith*, 140.
[60] Ibid. 143.
[61] Ibid., 149.

mental complexion."[62] Zybura had decided to distribute this questionnaire in the hope that he would be able to use it obtain new data on the views of modern, English-speaking intellectuals regarding scholastic thought. He later published the reactions of these non-scholastics as the first hundred or so pages of a volume entitled *Present-day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism: An International Symposium*.[63] Although not all of the responses that Zybura received were entirely negative, the appearance of several of the same kinds of criticisms provided significant evidence of exactly why modern American thinkers outside the Catholic subculture had such a distinct distrust of the twentieth century Catholic appropriation of scholasticism in general and neo-Thomism in particular. Three particularly prominent examples serve as a representative sample of their major criticisms.

The collection of survey responses opened with the reply of Ralph Barton Perry (1876-1957) of Harvard University. Perry conjectured that "the attitude of non-Scholastic philosophers" was to regard "Thomism as a part of the *history* of philosophy."[64] According to Perry, "the common attitude to Thomism is the historical retrospective attitude, as to a system that has had its day."[65] He insisted that among academics "the lack of sympathetic interest is not due to anything in the doctrines themselves."[66] Instead, Perry indicated that modern philosophers simply have the sense that "that Neo-Thomists and Neo-Scholastics are not really thinking for themselves but merely re-editing a system which they accept on non-philosophical grounds."[67] Furthermore, he explained that modern thinkers regard Scholastic philosophy as "stationary and unprogressive" and have "a general feeling that contemporary adherents of the Scholastic system are living in the

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[62] John Cavanaugh, "Preface," *Present-day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism: An International Symposium* , John S. Zybura, ed. (New York: B. Herder Book. Co., 1927), v.
[63] Ibid. The subsequent four hundred or so pages involved the responses of neo-Thomist scholastic thinkers with regard to the charges that modern philosophers held against their philosophical tradition.
[64] Ibid., 3. Emphasis in original.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid., 4.

past, and that we have, therefore, nothing to learn from them."[68] As an example, Perry noted "that St. Thomas…has become an authority in the sense in which free-thinking and autonomous intellect can acknowledge no authority." As for a way to encourage "a better understanding between Scholastics and ourselves," Perry suggested that Catholics could choose to participate in an organization like the American Philosophical Association and that their contributions "would be warmly welcomed."[69]

Although Wilmon H. Sheldon (1875-1981), a process philosopher at Yale University, noted that he had led "a seminar on the *Summa Theologica* using the Dominican Fathers' translation" and that it "went very well,' he ultimately expressed views very similar to those of Perry, that most philosophers are convinced "that Scholasticism works wholly by authority- that the thinker is committed beforehand to certain conclusions."[70] In other words, it seemed clear to Sheldon that "the stone of stumbling and rock of offence to the Protestant is the feeling that the Scholastic cannot inquire freely and empirically."[71] He insisted, however, that he did not hold this opinion himself, "except in so far as I think any inquiry is bound to give a result agreeing with common sense and what is vouchsafed from divine sources."[72] Nevertheless, Sheldon also noted that the "pragmatic temper is perhaps the greatest influence working against the study of Scholastic philosophy- and indeed against any metaphysics."[73]

Finally, John Dewey (1859-1952) of Columbia University argued that there were "psychological and pedagogical" factors behind the lack of interest among modern philosophers to scholasticism rather than significant reasons based in logic or unfriendliness. Dewey suggested that there were five likely factors, the first of which was "the non-Scholastic thinkers have mostly been brought up in the Protestant tradition" and associate scholasticism with "theological dogmas

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[68] Ibid., 5.
[69] Ibid., 5-6.
[70] Ibid., 12.
[71] Ibid., 13.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., 12.

which they do not accept."[74] The second factor that Dewey suggested was a "decay of acute interest, if not actual belief, in the content of Christian revelation."[75] The third reason that Dewey gave was that scholasticism "seems too rationalistic and not sufficiently empirical" and that "those who are rationalistically inclined seem to prefer to follow…recent mathematics." Fourth, Dewey noted "that it does not seem possible to find harmony between the points of view" of modern science and scholastic thought. And fifth, according to Dewey, modern thinkers were uninterested in scholastic thought because it "does not appear to throw any light" upon modern social and political problems.[76] Dewey closed his remarks with the observation that modern scholastic thinkers have "a tendency…to assume that the truth is so finally and clearly stated in Scholasticism that most modern European philosophy is a kind of willful and perverse aberration."[77]

John Dewey's remarks about scholasticism reflect his pragmatist philosophical outlook and yet Dewey was more than just a pragmatist philosopher. He was, in fact, one of the first Americans to engage in modern psychology, that new scientific discipline that studied the human person from a scientific perspective. Dewey is usually remembered in psychological circles for his early suggestions concerning reflex action.[78] Dewey's willingness to discuss the problems that he saw with American neo-Thomism suggests that there were those who were open to dialogue between modern psychology and neo-Thomism from within both traditions.

The Development of the Traditions of Modern Psychology

If neo-Thomist thinkers in the mid-twentieth century were concerned about how modern philosophers perceived their tradition, they were always at least as concerned that the false philosophical beliefs of these same modern philosophers were having a negative effect upon

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[74] Ibid., 29-30.
[75] Ibid., 30.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 31.
[78] Benjamin, *A Brief History of Modern Psychology*, 86.

American society. While there were many areas of contention in which neo-Thomists blamed the mistaken philosophical premises of modern thought, including sociology, history, and even philosophy of science, one of the most common areas of disagreement between neo-Thomists and modern thinkers in the mid-twentieth century concerned the relatively new scientific discipline of modern psychology. Although early leaders of the neo-Thomist movement, like Mercier and Pace, had been advocates of modern psychology, mid-twentieth century neo-Thomists gradually became concerned that modern psychologists had false metaphysical premises that led them to reach false theological conclusions. Furthermore, the diversity of philosophical approach among modern psychologists was seen as a sign of confusion and disorder because, from the neo-Thomist philosophical perspective, it meant that modern psychologists did not even know their own subject-matter.

The Physiological Psychology of Wilhelm Wundt

Although mid-twentieth century modern psychologists may not have agreed on their subject-matter, they were essentially united in their views about their shared history. Many introductory textbooks of psychology still claim that the modern scientific discipline was effectively born in 1879 at the University of Leipzig with the establishment of the experimental psychology laboratory of Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt (1832-1920).[79] Furthermore, even when historians of modern psychology do not start their narratives with Wundt, they still acknowledge his laboratory at Leipzig as a logical place to begin the experimental part of the story of the various traditions that form the science of psychology.[80]

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[79] David G. Myers, *Psychology*, Sixth Edition (New York: Worth Publishers, 2001), 2. Some histories of modern psychology also start with Wundt. See Ernest R. Hilgard, *Psychology in America: A Historical Survey* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1987), 3. Boring suggests that the beginning of scientific psychology could be 1860, with the publication of Fecher's Elemente der Psychophysik, but then goes on to acknowledge that this is just a matter of convenience. Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition*, 158.

[80] Or, to quote a chapter subheading from one popular history of the subject, the creation of Wundt's lab is "as good a birth date as any." Morton Hunt, *The Story of Psychology*, 140.

Wundt's experimental psychology laboratory continues to have great historical

significance for the science of modern psychology for two main reasons. First, a laboratory is a

location or space in which a particular science is practiced. The fact that Wundt organized a

particular place for his experiments in modern psychology had the effect of locating modern

psychology. In other words, the mere existence of a laboratory turned work in the subject of

experimental psychology into a practice and allowed the first practitioners of experimental

psychology to distinguish their own research from the purely philosophical forms of psychology

that had existed previously. Despite later disagreements, the idea of the laboratory as a particular

space where psychological experiments are conducted would prove to be an area of enduring

consensus among modern psychologists.[81] Second, many of the earliest and most important

practitioners of the new science of modern psychology in the United States had originally studied

with Wundt in his laboratory at Leipzig and continued to use that research as a badge of honor for

the rest of their lives. As a result, the vast majority of early psychology laboratories in the United

States were founded by people who had either studied with Wundt themselves or who had studied

with one of his earliest students, such as G. Stanley Hall.[82] In other words, while there is a

coherent argument to be made that the American form of modern psychology had come about

independently of Leipzig, Wundt's own form of psychology continued to be an important

influence upon generations of American practitioners of modern psychology even after many of

the most important elements of his theories were superseded.

The physiological psychology of Wilhelm Wundt made the contents of consciousness

into its subject-matter. In essence, Wundt modeled his psychology on the elemental system of

chemistry and imagined that "sensations, images and feelings might well be the elements which

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[81] Benjamin cites historian James Capshew's observation that "'the enduring motif in the story of experimental psychology is… the experimental laboratory.'" Benjamin, *A Brief History of Modern Psychology*, 2. James Capshew "Psychologists on Site: A Reconnaissance of the Historiography of the Laboratory," in *American Psychologist* 47 (132-142), 132.
[82] Hilgard, *Psychology in America*, 32.

make up those compounds that are the stuff of psychology."[83] Within Wundt's laboratory, various machines were used to test the psychological responses of his subjects and offer concrete data for analysis. Wundt himself was an advocate of the practice of personal introspection on the contents of consciousness, a technique which bore many similarities to the traditional idea of introspection that was routinely utilized in the philosophical psychology of the scholastics.

Nineteenth Century European Precursors and Early Practitioners of Modern Psychology

Historians of modern psychology often regard Wilhelm Wundt as the first of the modern psychologists.[84] Yet, although they always credit Wundt with having established the first experimental psychology laboratory at Leipzig in 1879, they also acknowledge that Wundt was not the inventor of the psychological experiment. Although he was not a true psychologist, Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801-1887), a physicist and philosopher, conducted the first recorded psychological experiment. Fechner conceived of his plan of psychophysical experimentation in order to refute materialism and support his pantheistic philosophy.[85] According to the story, Fechner unexpectedly recovered from an illness and became convinced that his recovery was due to a miraculous cure. As a result, he came to reject materialism and began to focus on the question of the soul.[86] In his subsequent research, Fechner sought "*to measure, with great precision, the relationship between the physical and psychological worlds*."[87] He imagined that his new experiments in psychophysics would allow him to demonstrate the relationship between bodily energy and mental intensity and prove that life "is composed of both matter and soul."[88]

If the works of Johannes Müller (1801-1858) were less original than Fechner, Müller still had an important role in the development of modern psychology "as an experimentalist, as a

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[83] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition*, 385.

[84] Ibid., 316. Boring notes that those who preceded Wundt were merely dabblers in modern psychology whereas Wundt was "the first man who without reservation is properly called a psychologist."

[85] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology,* 275. Fechner seems to have first had his experimental insight on 22 October 1850. Ibid., 280.

[86] Ibid., 278.

[87] Benjamin, 30-31. Emphasis in original.

[88] Hunt,*The Story of Psychology*, 134.

systematizer of knowledge, and as the teacher of those men who later established the foundations and beginnings of scientific psychology."[89] Müller, a German Catholic physiologist, formulated an influential version of the theory of specific nerve energies that the work of Sir Charles Bell (1774-1842) had previously suggested.[90] Müller also made "investigations of the external muscles of the eye and the problem of space perception," wrote a compendium of research in physiology called the *Handbuch de Physiologie des Menschen*, and "influenced the growth of psychology by the inspiration and training that he gave to such students as Hermann von Helmholtz (1821-1894) and, of course, Wilhelm Wundt."[91]

While Müller's student Hermann von Helmholtz was most often associated with anatomy, physiology, and physics during his own lifetime, he also conducted early psychological research, such as measuring "the speed with which the nerve impulse travels along the nerve fiber."[92] Helmholtz utilized his knowledge of physics in his experimental work on sense physiology.[93] He also collected evidence for what was to become known as "the Young-Helmholtz theory (or the trichromatic theory) of visual perception."[94]

In the late nineteenth century, the primary division recognized within modern psychology was between the content psychology of Wundt and the act psychology of Franz Brentano (1838-1917), a mid-nineteenth century scholar and former Catholic priest from Germany. In 1862, Brentano received a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Tubingen "with a dissertation on Aristotle" and in 1866 wrote a *habiltation* thesis, *The Psychology of Aristotle*, in order "to become a *Privatdozent* at the University of Wurzburg."[95] Brentano "resigned his professorship at

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[89] Henry Misiak and Virginia M. Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology: A Historical Survey* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1954), 21.
[90] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology,* 81.
[91] Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology*, 21-22.
[92] Hunt,*The Story of Psychology*, 128.
[93] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology*, 300.
[94] Hunt,*The Story of Psychology*, 131.
[95] Hilgard, *Psychology in America*, 72.

the University of Würzburg one month before his apostasy" on April 11, 1873.[96] Although

Brentano had rejected the First Vatican Council's declaration of papal infallibility in 1870, he

later declared that his reason for leaving the Church almost three years later to be the result of his

"'wish to serve the higher interests of mankind'" through research.[97] As a Catholic, Brentano had

found it impossible "to resolve to his peace of mind the relationship between faith and reason."[98]

Unfortunately, Brentano's decision to leave the Church caused some Catholics in later years that

were "very scrupulous in religious matters… to fear that the study of science, and of psychology

in particular, might jeopardize an individual's faith."[99] Yet Brentano actually developed his act

psychology after leaving the Church. Brentano served as a professor at the University of Vienna,

where he taught Sigmund Freud, from 1874 until 1880.[100]

Two other early European psychologists, Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850-1909) and George

Elias Müller (1850-1934), both worked on the relationship of memory to nonsense syllables.[101] In

the mid-1870s, Ebbinghaus "found a copy of Fechner's *Elemente at* a second-hand book shop in

Paris." He borrowed Fechner's method of measurement and applied it to memorization.[102] In

essence, Ebbinghaus used nonsense syllables in order to eliminate the factor of subjective

understanding when testing his own memory.[103] Müller studied psychophysics and vision in

addition to memory. He was one of the first European psychologists to focus his attention

exclusively on empirical psychology, although not always via experiment, and had one of the best

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[96] Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology*, 24.

[97] Ibid., 25. Original quotation from "the preface *to Die Lehre Jesu und ihre bleibende Bedeutung* ("Christ's Teaching and Its Last Significance"), published posthumously (1922)." Ibid., 24-25.

[98] Ibid., 25.

[99] Ibid., 23.

[100] The only non-medical courses that Freud took from 1874-1876 were with Brentano. According to Misiak and Staudt, it is "possible that Freud became acquainted with the problem of the unconscious" from him. Ibid., 26.

[101] Hunt, *The Story of Psychology,* 155-156.

[102] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition*, 387.

[103] Hunt, 155.

laboratories in Europe. After the death of Fechner, he became the de facto leader of those modern psychologists who engaged in psychophysics.[104]

Finally, Oswald Külpe (1862-1915) was a former student of Wundt who "later drifted toward Brentano's position and developed what was to be called the Würzburg School of imageless thought."[105] As Kulpe changed his position from content psychology to act psychology even as he also moved away from positivism to a kind of philosophical realism that shared affinities with neo-Thomism.[106]

The First American Experimental Psychologists

The philosopher William James (1842-1910) is usually considered the first American practitioner of modern psychology. James was an eclectic thinker, a pragmatist as well as a psychologist, who was interested in concepts such as the will and consciousness. [107] James wrote a few of the early classics of American psychology, such as *Principles of Psychology* (1890), a comprehensive three-volume explanation of the discipline, a one-volume manual of same name (1892), and *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature* (1902), which was based on his Gifford Lectures.[108] His theory that the physiological state that accompanies an emotion is actually the emotion is sometimes seen as a foreshadowing of Behaviorism.[109] For many early American psychologists, the place of James within the early years of the discipline was unparalleled.[110]

Although written works such as those of James were an important part of the tradition of modern psychology from the very beginning, experimental work is what set the new science apart from the kind of philosophical psychology that had preceded it. A student of James in 1878 and

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[104] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition*, 374.

[105] Hilgard, *Psychology in America*, 73.

[106] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition*, 409.

[107] Hunt, *The Story of Psychology*, 169.

[108] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition*, 511-12;

[109] Ibid., 517.

[110] Hunt, *The Story of Psychology*, 170.

Wundt in 1880, Granville Stanley Hall (1844-1924) is usually recognized as having established the first laboratory of experimental psychology at John Hopkins University in 1886.[111] Yet it was another student of Wundt, Edward Bradford Titchener (1867-1927), an Englishmen who taught at Cornell, who was the person most responsible "for shaping the instruction in experimental psychology in American universities."[112]

Although Titchener shared Wundt's focus on experimental laboratory work, he focused the structural analysis of consciousness, or mental states, rather than upon the contents of conscious themselves. Titchener made a distinction between mind, "'the sum-total of mental processes occurring in the life-time of an individual," and consciousness, "the sum-total of mental processes occurring *now*, at any given present time.'"[113] He was the founder and main advocate of the structuralist school of psychology and coined the term "functionalist" for most other American psychologists.[114] He was also an important advocate for a sound experimental method and for the practice of introspection.[115] Although Titchener's structural form of modern psychology did not last long beyond him, his presence within the psychological tradition helped other modern psychologists to clarify their own more functionalist approaches to the subject.

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[111] Hilgard, *Psychology in America*, 32. Hilgard lists Hall's foundation of John Hopkins University at the top of a list of psychology laboratories on which Harvard University appears twelfth and where The Catholic University of America sits at fifteenth. This list says that Hugo Munsterberg founded the Harvard laboratory in 1891. There is some small debate about this point, however. Thomas Verner Moore noted that although Hall is usually "credited with the foundation of the first laboratory of experimental psychology in the United States," the truth is that "he was preceded by William James, who as early as 1875 had a simple laboratory and was offering instruction in physiological psychology at Harvard." Although he acknowledged G. Stanley Hall as one of the founders of the American Psychological Association and the developer of "the *questionnaire*," Moore considered Hall's contribution to modern psychology in terms of writing and research to be relatively minimal. Thomas Verner Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature and Their Adjustment: An Introduction to the Psychology and Psychopathology of Emotional Behavior and Volitional Control* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1950), 25-26. Emphasis in original.

[112] Hilgard, *Psychology in America*, 34.

[113] Benjamin, *A Brief History of Modern Psychology*, 78. Emphasis in original. Original quote from E.B Titchener, *A Textbook of Psychology* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), 19.

[114] Ibid., 74.

[115] Benjamin, *A Brief History of Modern Psychology*, 79.

As modern psychology moved from Europe to the United States, its focus "shifted from sensation and perception to action and conduct."[116] One important example of this change in emphasis was the work of Edward Lee Thorndike (1874-1949), a pioneer of research on animals, who discovered that animals placed within a box would be more likely to perform the same action if it led to escape or some other reward for their efforts. He noticed that responses that "were not effective were gradually eliminated from the animal's behavior in the box."[117]

Thorndike's experiments anticipated the work of John Broadus Watson (1878-1958), the founder of behaviorism, who focused on animal learning in his early research.[118] Watson rejected introspection and argued that modern psychology should follow the pattern of the other modern sciences, such as modern physics, and only focus on what is observable.[119] He argued that this would make it truly objective.[120] In addition, "Watson also dismissed all dualist discussions of the mind and body, whether couched in metaphysical terms or modern ones."[121]

Among the most influential practitioners of psychiatric medicine in the first half of the twentieth century were Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), an Austrian psychologist who specialized in the unconscious, and two of his students, Alfred Adler (1870-1937) and Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), who would accept many of Freud's basic insights while developing slightly different explanations for some of the core elements of Freud's own theory of the unconscious.

A Dominant Narrative of Modern Psychology in the Mid-Twentieth Century

Edwin Garrigues Boring (1886-1968) was a former student of Titchener at Cornell University. Boring took up the position at Harvard University that had once belonged to William

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[116] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition*, 385.
[117] Benjamin, *A Brief History of Modern Psychology*, 136-137.
[118] Hunt, *The Story of Psychology,* 288.
[119] Benjamin, *A Brief History of Modern Psychology*, 139.
[120] Hunt, *The Story of Psychology,* 290.
[121] Ibid., 291.

James in 1928.[122] The following year, Boring first published *A History of Experimental Psychology* (1929), "revised it in 1950, and for nearly forty years it was considered the authoritative treatment of the history of psychology."[123] Although it would be going too far to suggest that there was complete agreement on the history of modern psychology in the mid-twentieth century United States, there is no question that together the two editions of Boring's *History* provided one of the dominant mid-twentieth century narrative accounts of the development of the experimental streams of modern psychology during this period.

The major character of Boring's *History* is the *Zeitgeist* that propels history forward "again and again."[124] Boring began his account of the history of modern psychology with the development of modern science. He argued that the medieval centuries that preceded the birth of modern science "were characterized by their authoritarianism, and their science by deference for the dicta of Aristotle."[125] Although Boring felt it unnecessary to look at Aristotle's works in his *History*, he did consider the developments in modern philosophy that led to modern psychology, starting with René Descartes, ending shortly after Immanuel Kant, and seeing genuine progress. Yet Boring also believed that modern psychology should be kept separate from philosophy; one of the themes throughout his *History* was the success or failure of that separation. For example, Boring argued that the early division between act psychology and content psychology was actually a conflict between philosophers and experimentalists.[126]

The heroes of Boring's *History* were those who practiced modern psychology as an empirical science without concerning themselves with philosophy. From Boring's perspective,

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122 Hilgard, *Psychology in America*, 106.
123 Benjamin, *A Brief History of Modern Psychology*, xv.
124 Ibid., 3-4. Boring acknowledged two theories of history, the personalistic view, which is that individual people drive history and the naturalistic view, which is that history is inevitable. He ultimately fell on the side of the naturalistic because he believed that it fundamentally includes the personalistic, explaining "You get the personalistic when you ignore the antecedents of the great man, and you get the naturalistic view back again when you ask what made the great men great. On either view there are great men, with nervous systems whose operations provide the opportunities for especially rapid scientific progress." (Ibid., 4).
125 Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition*,
126 Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition*, 385.

Ebbinghaus, Titchener, and G. E. Müller had all managed to keep philosophy and psychology separate whereas "Wundt and Stumpf and eventually Külpe did not."[127] Looking back to the publication of the first edition of his *History* twenty years earlier, Boring compared modern psychology's often troubled relationship with modern philosophy to a "conflict between parent fixation and the need for independence" that had diminished in the period between the publications of the two editions. In Boring's view, this conflict had dissipated because modern psychology had finally "passed beyond adolescence," by which he meant simply that it had more "members of a new generation whose values and patterns of thought have been formed at a later stage of the *Zeitgeist*."[128]

According to Boring, when a psychologist writes a history about psychology, it is "at least in aspiration, a dynamic or social psychology, trying to see not only what men did and what they did not do, but why they did it or why, at the time, they could not do it."[129] While Boring was an experimental psychologist in his training, he was also a historian who longed to write about "Great Men." In the first edition of his text, however, he had to settle for men because he could find no psychologists worthy to be called great. Yet when he published the second edition twenty years later, he could recognize at least four such men: "Darwin, Helmholtz, James, and Freud."[130] For those who would note that Charles Darwin (1809-1882), the developer of the theory of natural selection, was not actually a psychologist, Boring argued that the influence of Darwin's ideas "upon the development of psychology was tremendous."[131]

Despite what Boring himself may have believed, his best demonstration for Darwin's influence on modern psychology was actually his own paradigm for viewing the relationship that the various schools of modern psychology had to each other. Whether he recognized it or not, Boring saw the various schools of modern psychology in terms of a Darwinian metaphor; he

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[127]Ibid., 397.
[128] Ibid., 742.
[129] Ibid., 3.
[130] Ibid. Charles Darwin was the developer of the theory of natural selection.
[131] Ibid., 471.

believed, in essence, that the strongest or most adequate schools of modern psychology were bound to be the ones that survived into the future. This view is evident, for example, in Boring's analysis of the theories of the Gestalt psychologists as having come and gone within his own lifetime.[132] For Boring, as for many other modern psychologists, Gestalt psychology had served a purpose in the development of modern psychology, and had successfully proved what it had set out to prove, but it was now merely a historical curiosity. The best parts of it were now found within other schools that would carry on its own best traits into the future.

Boring's *A History of Experimental Psychology: Second Edition* suggests that mid-twentieth century modern psychologists had a Darwinian philosophical approach to the lack of concensus within their tradition regarding their subject-matter that complemented the earlier pragmatist approach. In other words, some mid-twentieth century modern psychologists came to accept the existence of other schools of modern psychology because they believed that the best theories would be the ones that would ultimately survive into the future. Whether they all shared this Darwinian vision or not, modern psychologists of the mid-twentieth century acknowledged that the adherents of the other schools of modern psychology were capable of contributing knowledge to the wider psychological tradition regardless of what their own premises were. In other words, they remained able to ignore their different views regarding the subject-matter of their discipline and proper areas of focus because they were able to agree upon the basic validity of the method that they shared in common.

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[132] Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology: 2nd Edition*, 600.

The Common Concerns of Neo-Thomists

While many modern psychologists in the mid-twentieth century were relatively comfortable distinguishing themselves according to their differing methods and philosophical positions, the vision that neo-Thomist's maintained of their own tradition as a unitary method of inquiry required them to imagine that they were all operating according to the same basic metaphysical premises. If the modern psychologists of the mid-twentieth century had no need to imagine their tradition in this way, it was because they placed their practice ahead of theory and their results ahead of philosophical consistency. In other words, the fact that many modern psychologists disagreed with one another about their foundational operating principles was simply never the same kind of problem for them as it was for the neo-Thomists because the modern psychologists had ways of demonstrating the effectiveness of their discipline that provided them with increased authority within American society.[133]

Although the majority of neo-Thomists in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century saw themselves as practitioners of a unitary method of inquiry, the truth is that there was always a spectrum of neo-Thomist positions just as there are still many different versions of Thomism.[134] Yet there were also many basic premises and distinctions that most of those who claimed to be followers of St. Thomas Aquinas during this period consistently shared. These agreed upon premises and distinctions can be interpreted as forming the core tenets of neo-Thomist thought. In fact, in the mid-twentieth century United States of America, neo-Thomism was so prevalent among Catholic priests and religious that even those who were primarily formed within another intellectual tradition, such as that of modern psychology, generally shared their

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[133] Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995) Herman shows how modern psychologists gained prestige within America culture based upon the effectiveness of their treatments to soldiers during the two World Wars.

[134] Helen James John, S.N.D., *The Thomist Spectrum* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966), 1966.

same philosophical and theological premises and so should still be considered neo-Thomist within a broad construal of the term.

Despite their differences, mid-twentieth century American Catholic neo-Thomists shared a common vocabulary with one another that they borrowed from the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas and his commentators, including Liberatore and Kleutgen. Neo-Thomists were deeply concerned with a series of dualist concepts, such as act and potency, essence and existence, faith and reason, and nature and grace. They were concerned with preserving a distinction between the natural world and the spiritual world without creating a separation, with preserving the gratuity of God's grace without trivializing it. Following the First Vatican Council's decree *Dei Filius* (1870), neo-Thomists also placed special emphasis on the ability of human reason to demonstrate the existence of God in the forms of the Five Ways of St. Thomas Aquinas found in the *Summa Theologiae* and, in Kantian fashion, saw the first principles of rationality as the basis for all subsequent knowledge.[135]

Beyond these broad strokes, however, there were many subtle differences between the theological positions of mid-twentieth neo-Thomists. Over time, as different schools of Thomist thought emerged, and this divergence of opinion presented a genuine problem for the entire system. Many Thomists became very concerned that the Thomist conception of Being (Esse) should be at the center of Thomist thought and that the Augustinian, or even neo-Platonic, strain within Aquinas work should be recognized. Others would champion a strictly Aristotelian reading of St. Thomas, so that he was understood merely as having Christianized the perennial philosophy of Aristotle. Other neo-Thomists argued for more historical research concerning the writings of St. Thomas in order to situate him within his proper context. There were even those who wanted to read him, not as the antidote to modern philosophical thought, but with the insights that modern philosophy proposed already in mind.[136]

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[135] Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 116.

[136] Such as, for example, the school of transcendental Thomism. McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism*, 225.

Neo-Thomist Engagement with Modern Psychology

American Catholic Neo-Thomist modern psychologists in the mid-twentieth century necessarily looked at the subject-matter of psychology in a very different way than other modern psychologists as well as other neo-Thomists. They did not necessarily all look at it the same way, however. To the extent that they were neo-Thomists, they would necessarily accept certain core philosophical claims about the human person to be true. Yet, to the extent that they were modern psychologists, they were also exposed to the concept that modern psychology should be free of all philosophical assumptions. They did not all navigate these same issues in the same way.

For example, when A.A. Roback (1890-1965), a Jewish American psychologist and historian of modern psychology, suggested in 1952 that the Catholic perspective on the science of modern psychology constituted its own "school of psychology," Henryk Misiak and Virginia Staudt (later Sexton, 1916-1997), two historians of American Catholic psychology, responded to this suggestion with a genuine aggravation and denial that thoroughly puzzled him.[137] For, in *Catholics in Psychology: A Historical Survey* (1954), Misiak and Staudt had argued that their different metaphysical foundations did not make Catholics a separate school of psychology. They argued that psychology is "a separate and autonomous science" and so can be practiced without reference to faith.[138] Furthermore, they insisted that people "should not…expect psychological textbooks or any works in psychology necessarily to refer to philosophy."[139] Yet they also

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[137] Robert Kugelmann, "Neoscholastic Psychology Revisited" in History of Psychology Vol. 8, no. 2 (2005, 131-175), 131-132. Kugelmann explains A.A. Roback had included neoscholastic psychology as a school in his first edition of *A History of American Psychology* (1952) and responded to his confusion in the second edition in 1964. Roback interpreted the concerns of Misiak and Staudt to be that Catholics were being treated separately in order to marginalize them. While that is probably at least partly true, my own suspicion is that there were additional metaphysical reasons that they objected to this characterization.
[138] Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology*, 11. In later chapters, it will become apparent that this is a neo-Thomist argument about the way that a discipline can be studied formally or materially.
[139] Ibid., 11

claimed that if the hylomorphic union had been recognized by the early modern psychologists "much difficulty and confusion might possibly have been avoided."[140]

Misiak and Staudt's *Catholics in Psychology* is not examined in the chapters ahead, and in some ways their views almost seem to contradict the central thesis, and yet they are mentioned here anyway because they show that there were diverse views within American Catholic neo-Thomist engagement with mid-twentieth century modern psychology.[141] They also provide a example of the confusion among different neo-Thomists regarding the relationship of natural knowledge and supernatural knowledge, nature and grace.[142] This confusion is among the factors that led to the dethronement of neo-Thomism as the dominant school of Catholic thought in the mid-1960s.[143]

The Question of Typologies

At this point, I want to provide a brief note on the question of typologies. Several different typologies have been proposed for the engagement of Christian thought with modern psychology over the last several decades. Two of the most recent Catholic proposals are given by the authors of the two major works on the relationship between Catholicism and psychology in the mid-twentieth century, C. Kevin Gillespie, S.J., author of *Psychology and American Catholicism: From Confession to Therapy?* (2001), and Robert Kugelmann, author of *Psychology*

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[140] Ibid., 10.

[141] Misiak and Staudt wrote in the mid-nineteen fifties as the belief that there was a Thomist synthesis was starting to weaken. They abandoned Thomism later and published books on existentialist psychology.

[142] Even though they are explicitly talking about philosophy rather than theology, I think an argument could be made that Misiak and Staudt had a concept of "pure nature" that allowed a science such as modern psychology to be completely free from the influence of faith. I am not, however, trying to make that argument at this time. The mid-twentieth century neo-Thomist confusion over nature and grace has been treated more thoroughly by others. Henri de Lubac, *Mystery of the Supernatural* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1998).

[143] McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism*, 224-230.

and Catholicism: Contested Boundaries (2011).[144] Gillespie follows John Haught in proposing

five types of relationships for psychology and religion: conflict, contrast, contact, confirmation,

and conflation.[145] Gillespie also refers to Haught as recognizing that conflation is a problem

because of the "danger of distinct items from science and religion being used in such a way that

their definitions collapse so that their differences are confused or lost."[146] Kugelmann, although

aware of Gillespie's formulation, suggests instead his own four models, those of "psychology

divorced from philosophy and theology," "psychology bound to philosophy and theology," "A

Christian psychology," and "Psychology instead of religion."[147]

When I first began thinking of this project, I imagined that I would follow a typology of

engagement suggested by Hans Frei in *Types of Christian Theology* (1994).[148] In that typology,

there are five options on a spectrum, with the figure in the middle being halfway between the two

traditions, and those on the ends as the most critical toward the other side. As my research

progressed, however, I decided to abandon my attempt at this kind of typology, which I will

explain at the end of the subsequent section.

Research Method

This present project began as an attempt to understand the various mid-twentieth century

neo-Thomist American Catholic approaches to modern psychology through an examination of the

works of five different neo-Thomist thinkers who engaged with modern psychology during this

period and whose work provided a spectrum of mid-twentieth century neo-Thomist Catholic

approaches to the science of modern psychology.

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[144] C. Kevin Gillespie, S.J., *Psychology and American Catholicism: From Confession to Therapy* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001). Robert Kugelmann, *Psychology and American Catholicism: Contested Boundaries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
[145] C. Kevin Gillespie, S.J. "Patterns of Conversations Between Catholicism and Psychology in the United States," in *The Catholic Social Science Review* 12 (2007, 173-183), 176-177.
[146] Ibid., 179.
[147] Kuglemann, *Psychology and Catholicism*, 10.
[148] Hans Frei, *Types of Christian Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

For the last several years, I have been researching these five figures. I have been to St. Anselm Abbey in Washington, D.C. and to Sister Annette Walters' papers at Marquette University. I have obtained their books whenever possible and read them. I have read the articles by them that I have been able to find. I have read the available biographies of those who have biographies. In the case of Robert Brennan, I reached out to the archivist of the Dominican Order to gain more information about him. In other words, I have come to know each of these five figures very well, almost personally, albeit in different ways.

My examination of the writings of these five figures led me to realize that they all had expressed reservations, albeit to varying degrees, about the way that some modern psychologists viewed the transcendent dimension of human existence. As I continued my research concerning that aspect of their writings, I also noted that each figure also wrote about how the metaphysical presuppositions of many modern psychologists were a problem. It eventually became obvious to me that all five figures were concerned that modern psychologists often ignored the spiritual dimension of the human person because of their metaphysical presuppositions. This ultimately became the thesis of the present work.[149]

My initial impulse to construct a typology for these figures by which to view their relationship to modern psychology (that would exist independently of their engagement with modern psychology and that they would be made to fit into) was eventually abandoned as I read them more closely and repeatedly over the next several years. I eventually determined that there was a typology that could be provided for these five figures, but that it was a typology that had to come from them rather than be imposed upon them.[150] That is the method that I have followed in this work. At the same time, the influence of Frei is still present, and there is a sense that these five figures still appear in an order from most critical, or simply critical, of modern psychology to

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[149] I am, of course, aware that all historical writing requires intellectual construction and is never merely the simple discovery of raw facts without interpretation. See *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question*

[150] It must be acknowledged, however, that in the cases of Sheen and particularly Brennan there were other neo-Thomists who seem to have had similar approaches. In contrast, the approaches of Thomas Verner Moore, Victor White, and Annette Walters are more uniquely their own.

most favorable to it. Yet this is an observation rather than something that I am trying to impose onto them. In other words, there has been no attempt in the chapters that follow to place the five neo-Thomist approaches to modern psychology that appear in this study into a pre-existing, theoretical typology for understanding the relationship between theology and modern psychology. Although the central argument of this work is that all five figures had concerns that the metaphysical principles of many modern psychologists would lead them to misconstrue the transcendent dimension of human existence, that basic agreement is situated within the context of their distinct interpretations of modern psychology rather than upon their unity as neo-Thomists. It is, however, still possible to explain each of these five neo-Thomist thinkers in terms of a typological approach that is uniquely their own, which is what I will now do.

Conclusion

The Structure of the Dissertation

This first chapter began with the establishment of Thomism at the end of the nineteenth century, its place in the American Catholic subculture of the twentieth, and the interest that American neo-Thomists had in being taken seriously by modern philosophers. From there this chapter provided a brief overview of the development of modern psychology in Europe and the United States at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. It followed that with a consideration of Boring's *A History of Experimental Psychology* to show both that there is a Darwinistic undercurrent in the way that some of the schools of psychology relate to each and that at least one important stream in mid-twentieth century modern psychology believed that philosophy ought to be kept separate from psychology. Furthermore, this chapter has considered the core tenets of neo-Thomist thought, provided an example of another kind of neo-Thomist engagement with modern psychology that follows more closely the pattern of Boring, and looked at various models of engagement that others have proposed. Finally, this

chapter has asserted that the typologies that are presented come from the theologies of these figures themselves rather than being placed upon them.

In the second chapter of this book, the life and writings of Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979) are considered. Archbishop Sheen provides the premier example of what I have called the neo-Thomist critical approach to modern psychology. Although Sheen did not completely reject the scientific traditions of modern psychology, he was always highly distrustful of its conclusions. For Sheen, modern science provided the context for his distrust of modern psychology. He believed that modern science needed scholastic metaphysics in order to be intellectually coherent. In addition, Sheen argued that a philosophical and theological practice that he referred to as "the lyricism of science" frequently masqueraded as science when in reality it was merely a quasi-religious reverence for science. In Sheen's view, many of the less scientific streams of modern psychology are really just examples of this lyricism. Sheen opposed the anthropological theories of modern psychologists with his understanding of the anthropology of St. Thomas Aquinas. In addition, Sheen offered common Catholic spiritual practices as alternatives to the therapeutic practices usually associated with modern psychology. Finally, this chapter argues that while Sheen's critical approach to modern psychology did recognize some possible problems, it was too close to rejection and may have kept some people from seeking the treatment they needed.

In the third chapter of this work, the life and writings of Robert Edward Brennan, O.P. (1897-1975), are examined. Fr. Brennan provides the most sophisticated example of what I have called the reformulation approach to modern psychology. Brennan was a Dominican priest from Lima, Ohio who received his doctorate in psychology from the Catholic University of America in the mid-nineteen twenties. Brennan wrote psychology textbooks in the nineteen thirties, forties, and fifties that sought to interpret the experimental science of psychology in neo-Thomist terms. Brennan's interpretation of St. Thomas Aquinas was very Aristotelian, and he kept close to the Vatican's official directives on Thomist interpretation. Although Brennan was not himself an experimental psychologist, his focus was always on interpreting psychological experiments that

others had conducted in neo-Thomist terms. For Brennan, experimental psychology could increase our information about the human person, but it could not supplant the fundamental truths of human nature that Thomist philosophy had already discovered. Finally, this chapter argues that although Brennan saw the ultimate value of psychology in its perfection by theology, his reformulation approach to modern psychology simply did not sufficiently engage with the findings of experimental psychology.

The fourth chapter of this text examines the life and work of Dom Thomas Verner Moore, O.S.B. (1877-1969), who was also known as "Dom Pablo Maria" during his final years of life, when he lived as a Carthusian. Moore is the only figure in this study to reach maturity in the nineteenth century and he was a practitioner of both psychology and Thomism for the entire first half of the twentieth. Moore had many occupations during his long and interesting life; he was a psychologist and a psychiatrist, as well as a priest and a monk, as well as a professor and a clinician. As a young man, he became a Paulist priest and his psychological work was always seen as an apostolate, or area of ministry. Following others, such as his biographer, Benedict Neenan, O.S.B., I have classified Moore as utilizing a synthetic approach to modern psychology. His work within the field of modern psychology was the most extensive of any figure considered in this volume, with the result that careful selection had to be made in the presentation of his material. Like all the figures in this study, Moore was concerned about the metaphysical premises of modern psychologists, which he considered to be incoherent. Yet Moore believed that there was great value in practicing modern psychology even though it could not attain to the same level of knowledge as metaphysics. Moore recognized the value of modern psychological experiment as well as modern psychological therapy. At the same time, Moore believed that Catholic thought and neo-Thomist metaphysics could both provide significant benefits to modern psychology. The chapter on Moore focuses on some of the metaphysical arguments that he utilized to show modern psychologists that neo-Thomist metaphysical principles could enhance their work. It also demonstrates that Moore thought that acknowledging the concepts of the soul, the will, and

human freedom would enrich modern psychology. Furthermore, this chapter shows that Moore utilized Catholic theological practices as part of his therapy with patients in order to help them to grow spiritually. Finally, this chapter argues that, for Thomas Verner Moore, the ultimate purpose of psychology, and all of human life, was spiritual growth.

The fifth chapter of this dissertation examines the life and writings of Victor White, O.P. (1902-1960). Although Fr. White was not a psychologist, he became interested in the writings of Dr. Carl Gustav Jung and gradually developed into an expert in Jungian thought. He serves as an example of engagement with a particular stream of modern psychology, so his approach is described as a Jungian approach. White eventually became friends with Carl Jung and, for a time, it seemed like he might even succeed Jung as leader of his movement. White was critical of other forms of modern psychology and naïvely uncritical of Jungian psychology. White spent a great deal of effort trying to show that Jungian analysts and Catholic theologians could work together on diagnosis and treatment of psychological patients. Yet White's own neo-Thomist metaphysical positions ultimately led to a disagreement between White and Jung that was never fully resolved. In essence, Victor White believed that Jung was wrong in assertions about the nature of evil. Jung argued that he was merely recognizing empirical data but White never accepted this argument. In truth, Jung seems to have been making claims that were based upon his own unrecognized metaphysical assumptions. Finally, this chapter argues that although Victor White's dialogue with Jungian thought suggests fundamental problems in Jungian metaphysics from the neo-Thomist perspective, those problems may not conclusively rule out all further dialogue between neo-Thomists and Jungians provided those assumptions can eventually be recognized and overcome.

The sixth and final chapter of this work looks at the life and work of Sister Annette Walters, C.S.J. (1910-1978). She serves as an example of what I have called the personalist approach to modern psychology. Unlike the other figures in this study, Sister Annette Walters was primarily a psychologist and only secondarily a neo-Thomist theologian. Although she was concerned with the metaphysical premises of modern psychology, and even wrote a textbook on

the science of modern psychology for college students that attempted to overcome those premises, she was ultimately more concerned that there were many Catholics who refused to utilize benefits of modern psychology. Walters approach to the subject of modern psychology concentrated upon individual persons rather than upon theories.

The conclusion of this work offers an assessment of the project as a whole. It notes that the different neo-Thomists whose writings were examined each had their own way of thinking about and addressing the major issues of modern psychology. It recognizes that their diverse approaches to the subject were affected by their cultural locations, their histories, their spiritual lives, and ultimately their theologies. It also assesses the value of their different approaches and their overall contribution to the dialogue between modern psychology and neo-Thomism. Finally, it suggests ways that twenty-first century Catholic theologians and modern psychologists can learn from the attempts of their predecessors to practice engagement.

CHAPTER II

THE CRITICAL APPROACH TO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

OF ARCHBISHOP FULTON JOHN SHEEN

For much of the twentieth century Fulton John Sheen (1895-1979) was among the most

prominent figures in American Catholicism.[1] Although he began his career as a professor at The

Catholic University of America, Sheen is most often remembered as one of the first American

Catholic media personalities. Through his many books, his numerous radio addresses, his various

television appearances, and his efforts as the National Director of the Society for the Propagation

of the Faith, Fulton Sheen sought to evangelize the entire world. He adopted a popular rhetorical

style that William Halsey later characterized as an "everyman's Thomism" that utilized common

sense, humor, and clever phrasing.[2] While much of Sheen's work had ecumenical overtones, his

basic message was that Catholic philosophy, theology, devotional practices, and social teaching

could help people to recognize that life is worth living and to obtain genuine peace of soul.

Fulton Sheen was a critic of modern psychology because he was convinced that it was

often spiritually harmful. In Sheen's view, the metaphysical premises of modern experimental

psychologists prevented them from recognizing the limits of their discipline while those of

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[1] See Mark Massa, SJ, *Catholics and American Culture: Fulton Sheen, Dorothy Day, and the Notre Dame Football Team* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1999) and Anthony Burke Smith, *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2010), both of whom considered the significance of Sheen's influence upon American culture.

[2] William Halsey interpreted Sheen's neo-Thomism as a "vehicle of domination" used to help Catholic innocence "survive the onslaughts of twentieth-century complexity and disillusionment." Halsey viewed Sheen's resistance to both the lyricism of science and modern psychology as a way to way to preserve a "universe of harmony and law" in which it was still possible to believe in the existence of both human reason and moral responsibility. William M. Halsey, *The Survival of American Innocence: Catholicism in an Era of Disillusionment, 1920-1940* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 159.

practical psychologists made it difficult for them to understand the very real spiritual needs of

their patients. Although Sheen never rejected the scientific aspects of modern psychology, he

argued that its practitioners should recognize the limits of their field and stay within them. He

was even more adamant that psychiatrists should confine their treatment to those with serious

mental illness rather than treat people suffering from genuinely spiritual maladies. Recent

scholarly works that have addressed the relationship between modern psychology and American

Catholic culture have sometimes characterized Sheen as a reactionary enemy of the new science

and particularly of the Freudian version of the therapy of psychological analysis.[3]

Although Fulton Sheen was the most prominent neo-Thomist critic of modern

psychology in the United States during the mid-twentieth century, his concerns were typical of

the kinds of metaphysical questions that were raised in any neo-Thomist approach to the new

discipline. For example, Sheen was not the only neo-Thomist who was concerned that modern

scientists, including modern experimental psychologists, lacked the necessary categories to make

valid metaphysical interpretations of reality.[4] Yet Sheen was unique in framing his criticisms as a

rejection of "the lyricism of modern psychology." Sheen used the term "lyricism" to mean "the

interpretation of philosophy, politics, religion, literature, art and God, in terms of the particular

Spirit of the Age enjoying popularity at the moment."[5] Sheen interpreted the lyricism of modern

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[3] See C. Kevin Gillespie, SJ, *Psychology and American Catholicism: From Confession to* Therapy (New York: The Crossroads Publishing Co., 2001), 16-18 and Robert Kugelmann, *Psychology and Catholicism: Contested Boundaries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 193-198. While neither Gillespie nor Kugelmann were personally unfair to Sheen or his views, both focused on his very public criticism of psychoanalysis instead of his broader criticisms of modern psychology. Gillespie explained that Sheen clarified that he was against the atheist element of Freudianism and that the storm of controversy dissipated. Kugelmann acknowledged that Sheen's criticisms of psychiatry were somewhat ambiguous. While these authors were basically correct in their interpretations of Sheen, they were both dismissive of his neo-Thomist philosophical and theological critiques of modern psychology.

[4] This concern was, for example, also a major part of the reformulation approach to modern psychology of Robert Edward Brennan, O.P. (1897-1975). Brennan's position will be considered in the next chapter.

[5] Fulton J. Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion: The Impact of Modern Knowledge on Religion* (New York: Appleton - Century - Crofts, Inc., 1948), 3. Sheen used the terms "Spirit of the Age" and "Spirit of the Times" as his translation of the German *Zeitgeist*. He described each age as producing its own Spirit not organically but mechanically "like the swing of a pendulum." In his view, each Spirit "changes its ideal and this changing of the ideal is frequently called Progress." Sheen argued that traditional philosophy and

psychology as one example of a wider philosophical trend with a prejudice toward metaphysical interpretation that he termed "the lyricism of science."

This chapter will show that Fulton J. Sheen viewed his critical approach to modern psychology as a way to reject the modern metaphysical premises of its practitioners without rejecting the science of modern psychology itself. Like other neo-Thomists who engaged with modern psychology, Sheen interpreted many of the metaphysical assumptions of modern psychology as fundamentally opposed to traditional neo-Thomist metaphysics. Yet, unlike most of the other neo-Thomists who pursued serious engagement with the new discipline, Sheen feared that the spiritual threat that the metaphysical assumptions of modern psychology posed to ordinary people outweighed the benefits that it provided them. Through his critical approach to modern psychology, Sheen tried to limit the potential damage that the false metaphysical presuppositions of modern psychologists could cause to the popular understanding of the transcendent dimension of human existence.

The first section of this chapter provides a brief narrative of Fulton Sheen's life. The second section compares Sheen's interpretation of the modern scientific disciplines to his idealized conception of the scholastic sciences. It accomplishes this task by considering three instances in which Sheen's neo-Thomist metaphysical view of science was in conflict with his interpretation of the metaphysical orientation of modern science: primary causality, the relationship of science to metaphysics, and the hierarchy of sciences. Sheen understood the scientific method to be limited in its application and argued that modern scientists were unable to address metaphysical realities using modern science. The third section examines several areas where Sheen tried to distinguish between what he saw as the genuine conclusions of the science of modern psychology and the anti-metaphysical claims that lyricists offered in the name of that science. Sheen was particularly concerned when modern psychologists made arguments against

theology were independent of the Spirit of the Age and were therefore viewed as "obscurantist and reactionary" by those caught up in it.

the existence of God and the value of religion. The fourth section provides Sheen's view of

modern anthropologies, including a glimpse of Sheen's account of the anthropological theories of

Sigmund Freud and the Behaviorists, and then explores Sheen's attempts to counter the lyricism

of modern psychology with a theological account of the human person that emphasized the

human person's ability to sanctify the natural world. The fifth section considers Sheen's conflicts

with modern psychological therapies and argues that they were based in his conviction that

psychological treatments often prevented people from pursuing the proper treatments for their

souls. The sixth section offers an evaluation of Sheen's position. The conclusion considers

Sheen's critical approach in the context of neo-Thomist engagement with modern psychology.

The Life of Fulton John Sheen

Peter Sheen was born in El Paso, Illinois on May 8, 1895, the oldest son of Newton and

Delia Sheen née Fulton.[6] When he was registered for parochial school, his nickname, "Fulton,"

permanently supplanted his original Christian name. Fulton John Sheen decided to study to

become a priest while his younger brothers pursued secular careers, with one becoming a lawyer

in Chicago, one a doctor in New York, and one pursuing a career in industry.[7]

After graduating as valedictorian from Peoria's Spalding Institute in 1913, Fulton Sheen

attended St. Viator's College and Seminary in Bourbonnais, Illinois until 1917 and St. Paul's

Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota until 1919. Sheen's bishop, Edmund Michael Dunne (1864-

1929), ordained him as a priest of the Diocese of Peoria on September 20, 1919 at St. Mary's

Cathedral.[8] That fall, along with his friend Charles A. Hart (1893-1959), Sheen transferred to

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[6] Fulton J. Sheen, *Treasure in Clay: The Autobiography of Fulton J. Sheen* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1980), 7-9, 363.

[7] Ibid., 8-9.

[8] Thomas C. Reeves, *America's Bishop: The Life and Times of Fulton J. Sheen* (San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2001), 37.

The Catholic University of America.[9] At the Catholic University of America, Sheen was able to

study under neo-Thomist professors such as Edward Aloysius Pace (1861-1938), its first dean of

philosophy and founder of its psychology department and laboratory, and John Augustine Ryan

(1869-1945), a prominent spokesperson for Catholic social teachings, such as those found within

Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), and an activist for the New Deal.[10] Sheen

continued studying at the Catholic University of America until the summer of 1921 even though

the institution conferred both a Bachelor of Canon Law (J.C.B) and a Bachelor of Sacred

Theology (S.T.B) on him on June 16, 1920.[11]

In September of 1921, Sheen travelled to Belgium to begin his studies at the University

of Louvain.[12] Sheen's goal in attending school at Louvain was to learn more about the two things

that most intrigued him: "first, what the modern world is thinking about; second, how to answer

the errors of modern philosophy in the light of the philosophy of St. Thomas."[13] According to his

autobiography, Sheen took required courses in "metaphysics, experimental psychology, rational

psychology, cosmology, Aristotle, modern space and time; these were part of the curriculum for

all doctoral candidates." Sheen claimed to have been "drenched in Aristotle, Plato and the

ancients, and immersed in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas." He also took classes in modern

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[9] Ibid., 37-43. Reeves explained that Sheen and Hart were able to transfer their credits from St. Paul's
Seminary to the Catholic University of America toward their doctorates in philosophy. Hart, who wrote his
dissertation in 1930 under Edward Pace on *The Thomistic Faculty of the Mental Concept*, remained at the
Catholic University of America until his death in 1959. Hart edited *Aspects of the New Scholastic
Philosophy* (1932), a book that the former students of Edward Pace authored and dedicated to him. Both
Fulton J. Sheen and Thomas Verner Moore (1877-1969) contributed essays to this volume.
[10] Sheen, *Treasure in Clay*, 22. For more information on Edward A. Pace, see Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics
in Psychology: A Historical Survey* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co. Inc., 1954), 66-83. For more
information on John A. Ryan, see Patrick W. Carey, ed. *American Catholic Religious Thought: The Shaping
of a Theological and Social* Tradition (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2004), 353-354.
[11] Reeves, *America's Bishop*, 42-43.
[12] Ibid., 44. Reeves notes that while Bishop Dunne, who had studied at Louvain himself, approved of
Sheen's decision to study there Sheen's parents actually financed that period of his education. They also
sent his younger brother Tom with him to study medicine at Louvain.
[13] Sheen, *Treasure in Clay*, 23.

philosophical subjects such as American pragmatism and contemporary French philosophy, such as that of Henri Bergson.[14]

After completing his doctorate from Louvain, Sheen was offered the opportunity to pursue a special degree called an *agrégé*, which meant that one became "aggregated to the faculty." Sheen passed with highest honors in 1925 and published the result, *God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy: A Critical Study in the Light of the Philosophy of Saint Thomas,* in 1926.[15] After receiving the *agrégé* from Louvain, Sheen was offered teaching positions at both Oxford and Columbia University.[16] Instead, Bishop Dunne called Sheen back to Peoria to work in "a parish where the streets were unpaved, in that part of the city which was called the 'lower end.'"[17] Sheen served there for almost a year before he discovered that his bishop had promised him to the Catholic University of America three years earlier.[18]

From the late nineteen twenties until the summer of 1950, Sheen was a professor of philosophy at The Catholic University of America, a popular radio personality, and a recognizable spokesman for the Catholic faith through a variety of books, sermons and public lectures.[19] In 1926, he was "appointed to the School of Theology at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and assigned to the Chair of Apologetics" but various disagreements with other members of the faculty soon resulted in a transfer to the Philosophy Department.[20] He was heard on the radio for the first time in 1927 when he was asked to give a

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[14] Ibid., 23-24.
[15] Ibid., 27-28. According to Sheen, the possible passing grades were "Satisfaction, Distinction, Great Distinction, and Very Highest distinction." At that evening's celebration dinner, the beverage chosen would reflect the grade given. "If you passed with Satisfaction only water could be served at the dinner; if with Distinction, beer; if with Great Distinction, wine; and the Very Highest Distinction, champagne. The champagne tasted so good that night!"
[16] Ibid., 28.
[17] Ibid., 41.
[18] Ibid., 42.
[19] Ibid, 85-128.
[20] Ibid., 42-47.

series of Lenten Sermons by the Paulist Fathers of New York.[21] He premiered on the National

Council of Catholic Men's radio program, the "Catholic Hour," on March 9, 1930 and would

remain a regular on that program for more than twenty years.[22] *Religion without God*, Sheen's

second book, was published in 1928 and dozens of more books followed over the next fifty

years.[23] He eventually became well-known for personally converting famous people to the

Catholic faith, including Congresswoman Clare Boothe Luce, automotive heir Henry Ford II, and

Louis Budenz, a prominent Communist and the managing editor of the *Daily Worker*.[24]

On March 9, 1947, Sheen gave a Lenten homily at St. Patrick's Cathedral that was widely

seen as critical of modern psychology and the psychiatric profession.[25] Sheen followed up this

sermon the following January with a series of thirteen Catholic Hour radio addresses on the topic

of "The Modern Soul In Search of God." The overarching theme of these sermons was the

contrast between the Catholic Church's care for the human soul and the analysis of the human

animal that modern psychology offered. The following year these radio addresses were reworked

to form most of the text for one of Sheen's most well-known books, *Peace of Soul* (1948)[26]

In 1950, Fulton Sheen left the Catholic University of America after being appointed the

National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.[27] Shortly afterward, on June 11,

1951, Sheen received consecration as a bishop in Rome.[28] A little over eight months later, in

February 1952, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen became the host of *Life is Worth Living*, which would

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[21] Kathleen L. Riley, *Fulton J. Sheen: An American Catholic Response to the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Alba House, 2004), 58. Riley notes that this conflicts with Sheen's claim in *Treasure in Clay* that he started on the radio in 1928. Riley cites two letters from Sheen to Fr. McSorley at the Fulton Sheen Archive in Rochester that suggest that this happened in 1927.

[22] Riley, *Fulton J. Sheen*, 63.

[23] Sheen, *Treasure in Clay*, 365-366.

[24] *Time*, April 14, 1952, (73).

[25] For more on the controversy that resulted from this homily, see C. Kevin Gillespie, SJ, *Psychology and American Catholicism*, 16-18 and Robert Kugelmann, *Psychology and Catholicism*, 193-198.

[26]Fulton J. Sheen, *Peace of Soul* (New York: Garden City Books, 1949) *Peace of Soul* has two chapters, "Remorse and Pardon" and "Fear of Death," which are not part of the earlier lecture series. The book also lacks the final lecture on Easter that appeared with the original collection.

[27] Riley, *Fulton J. Sheen*, 171.

[28] Reeves, *America's Bishop*, 220.

become the most popular religious television program of the decade.[29] Sheen hosted the final

episode of *Life is Worth Living* in October 1957. Sheen remained National Director of the Society

for the Propagation of the Faith until 1966, when he was installed as the Bishop of Rochester,

New York.

In 1969, after three particularly unsuccessful years as Bishop of Rochester, Sheen

resigned from this position and moved back to New York City. Shortly thereafter he was named

titular Archbishop of Newport (Wales).[30] During the final decade of his life, Fulton Sheen

continued to speak, write, and make occasional television appearances. On December 9, 1979, the

day after the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Fulton John Sheen

died while keeping his daily Holy Hour.[31] He was subsequently buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral

in New York City.[32]

Scholastic Thought and Modern Science

One of Fulton J. Sheen's greatest intellectual preoccupations was the relationship

between modern science and scholastic philosophy. In his view, the modern sciences should

never have been separated from their relationship with neo-Thomist metaphysics and Christian

theology. Sheen interpreted traditional Christian doctrines as having provided the foundation for

scientific inquiry. For example, he saw the teaching that God is distinct from the rest of Creation

as having encouraged human beings "to study the universe as the universe."[33] As a result, when

Sheen considered modern science in light of his own idealized image of scholastic science he

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29 Ibid., 240.

30 Riley, *Fulton J. Sheen*, 312.

31 Reeves, *America's Bishop*, 360. The "Holy Hour" is a Catholic devotional practice in which a person spends a period of an hour each day in the presence the Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist. The worshipper usually spends that time kneeling in prayer, quiet meditation, or contemplation. The Eucharist may either be exposed in a monstrance or sheltered in a tabernacle during the Holy Hour. As Reeves explains, Fulton Sheen was "a lifelong advocate of the Holy Hour, persuading many to emulate his practice." Ibid., 37.

32 Ibid.

33 Sheen, *Old Errors and New Labels* (New York: Alba House, 2007), 102.

found modern science to be philosophically incoherent because it had jettisoned the very theology and metaphysics that had provided it with a coherent meaning and purpose.

In several of his writings, and in particular in his book *Philosophy of Science* (1935), Sheen set forth his own conception of scholastic science as the standard against which the modern view of science was judged and found inadequate. Sheen's comparison of scholastic science and modern science is especially relevant to his interpretation of modern psychology in three important ways. First, Sheen argued that the scholastic definition of science had assumed that its practitioners sought to understand the world in terms of both primary and secondary causality whereas the modern definition of science only tried to understand secondary causes. Second, Sheen believed that the scholastics had been capable of addressing certain kinds of truths about the nature of reality because they had related their science to their metaphysics whereas modern scientists lacked a coherent metaphysics through which to interpret their science. Third, Sheen claimed that the scholastic hierarchy of the sciences had recognized the natural limitations of the lower sciences whereas the structure of modern science occasionally left its practitioners unable to recognize that a particular scientific discipline had exceeded the proper limits of its operation.

Definitions, Purpose, and Primary Causality

The first way that Fulton Sheen's comparison of scholastic thought and modern science affected his understanding of modern psychology concerned the manner in which each group defined science. According to Sheen, the scholastics had used science to mean "knowledge in the strict sense of the term; i.e., not mere acquaintance which was gained by experiment, classification, and observation, but also an understanding of things in terms of the why and wherefore, and an explanation of things in terms of their principles and causes." Sheen claimed that the scholastics understood science to be composed "of the series of true propositions,

explicative of the order of things in terms of causes both primary and secondary."[34] The

scholastics had sought to understand things in terms of their natures, Sheen suggested, because

they realized that "knowledge of the nature of one thing tells us something about the nature of

another thing."[35] Finally, Sheen argued that the goal of scholastic science was always "the

acquisition of certitude, through causes, for the sake of the perfection and happiness of man."[36] In

other words, Sheen interpreted the scholastic concept of knowledge as having been intimately

related to both the reason that human beings acquire knowledge and a purpose of that knowledge.

He envisioned the scholastics as having pursued knowledge so that human beings might better

understand the reason that things really are as they are with the result that they could become

what they ought to be and achieve the proper end of human flourishing.

According to Sheen, although the concept of science was equivalent to "knowledge for

the Scholastics" the term science merely "means experiment and observation for the modern

mind."[37] Sheen portrayed modern scientists as uninterested in discovering "the intimate nature of

things in the metaphysical sense of the term" because they had reduced the concept of nature to

"common characteristics."[38] He argued that the tools of modern science had succeeded in

producing "greater measurement and greater accuracy in measurement" but that this did not mean

that modern scientists had achieved a superior level of interpretation in terms of ultimate truth.[39]

In Sheen's view, modern science sought mastery over the physical world and domination over

other people as its primary end instead of pursuing human happiness and perfection.[40] Sheen

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[34] Fulton J. Sheen, *Philosophy of Science.* (Milwaukee, WI: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1934), 86.
[35] Sheen, *Philosophy of Science,* 87.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 87.
[38] Ibid., 89.
[39] Sheen, *Old Errors and New Labels*, 102. Sheen did not consider the superior mathematical accounts of physical reality, such as Einstein's theories of relativity, to constitute superior interpretations. From Sheen's perspective Einstein's theories were descriptions in terms of the phenomenal and not explanations in terms of the intelligible.   Sheen, *Philosophy of Science*, 1.
[40] Sheen, *Philosophy of Science*, 90-91. Sheen does not always make this argument directly, choosing instead to supply extended quotations with only minimal commentary. In this instance Sheen quoted an article from *The Clergy Review* by Christopher Dawson that provided an account of Roger Bacon's

asserted that modern science "is necessarily concerned only with secondary causes, like matter, light, force, electricity, but not with the primary cause, which is God."[41]

As a Thomist, Sheen's definition of God as the primary or "First Cause" was less about God as "first in the order of time" than it was about God as first "in the order of rational sufficiency."[42] Sheen believed that God, as Creator of all things, is fundamentally outside the sequence of time and yet is the source for everything that exists within time. Furthermore, Sheen held that God, "the Exemplary and Formal Cause of all creation," is also the source of the intelligibility of the physical world; that the world is intelligible because "it has been made intelligibly."[43] Sheen insisted that scientists relied on this intelligibility in their studies of secondary causes even if they did not recognize its origin in God or acknowledge that their intellectual faculties abstracted communicable forms from matter in order to understand the material world.[44]

Sheen acknowledged in principle that modern scientists had the right to limit their focus to secondary causality in order to answer the questions of their own disciplines more efficiently, remarking that some physicists could even "ignore entirely causation if for no other reason than because physics bases it predictions on statistical laws."[45] Yet Sheen believed that if modern

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influence on modern science. As Sheen notes, Dawson argued that Roger Bacon was not the founder of modern science but merely one of its major influences. Dawson asserted that the inductive method of "verification by hypotheses of experiment" came from Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and that "the discipline and training that were provided by Aristotelian Scholasticism" was also an essential element of "the formation of the European Scientific tradition." Furthermore, Dawson explained that Bacon's major contribution to modern science, apart from his emphasis on mathematics, was to conceive of it in terms of "the realization of…practical results." Finally, Dawson emphasized that Bacon had envisioned science "as an instrument of world conquest and exploitation." According to Dawson, "When Bacon sings the praises of the experimental science that can create automobiles and flying machines and devices that will destroy a whole army in a single instant, he is the prophet of modern science, and his visions have been more realized in these days of airplanes and poison gas: though whether Christendom has been so much the gainer by it all as he believed in another question." ("The Origins of the European Scientific Tradition," *The Clergy Review*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Sept. 1931, pp. 200-203.)
[41] Sheen, *Old Errors and New Labels*, 102.`
[42] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 137.
[43] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 289.
[44] Sheen, *Philosophy of Science*, 116.
[45] Sheen, *Philosophy of Science,* 156.

scientists wanted to interpret the world correctly then they needed to recognize that God is

primary cause of all things, arguing that "just as there can never be science without a scientist, so

neither can there be law and order in the cosmos unless it was made with law and order." [46] Sheen

maintained that the intelligibility of creation is a discovery, not a mental construction, and warned

scientists that:

> Those who refuse to unify the cosmos in terms of Pure Intelligence but content
> themselves with secondary causes may be likened to an all-wise mouse in a
> grand piano who laid the flattering unction to his soul that he had explained
> music by the play of hammers on the strings, the action of which he could see in
> his own narrow little world. 'Scientists catch the tune but not the player.' [47]

Relationship of Science and Metaphysics

Sheen's second philosophical comparison between scholastic science and modern science

concerned the relationship that each enjoyed with metaphysics. Sheen argued that scholastic

thought had "accepted a *distinction* between empirical science and philosophy, but not a

separation."[48] Sheen believed that modern science, in contrast, was based in a nominalist

rejection of traditional philosophy, particularly metaphysics. Sheen argued that modern scientists

lacked the ability to adequately interpret reality precisely because they rejected the metaphysics

that would have provided them with the proper categories for intelligible interpretation.

From Sheen's perspective, the scholastics had been able to consider metaphysical

questions because they had recognized the existence of the "philosophy of nature." Sheen defined

the philosophy of nature as "the application of the principles of metaphysics to observed facts and

phenomena of the universe."[49] For Sheen, these metaphysical principles included "[t]he principle

of identity, the principles of causality and finality, the transcendental properties of being, [and]

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[46] Sheen, *Old Errors and New Labels,* 17.
[47] Ibid.
[48] "Philosophy and Science," Fulton J. Sheen, The New Scholasticism, (Volume VII- 1933, 109-133), 109. Emphasis in original.
[49] Fulton J. Sheen, *Religion Without God* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1928), 239.

the value of ideas."[50] Sheen insisted that these metaphysical principles did not depend on any particular version of science for their validity and so were able to remain constant even when new sciences were developed. In essence, Sheen construed that the philosophy of nature as applicable to modern science as it was to scholastic science, insisting that the discoveries of modern science had not diminished the explanatory power of the philosophy of nature but merely "meant that metaphysics had to *be applied to a new set of observed facts.*"[51]

Sheen speculated that some modern thinkers may have recognized that modern science lacked a coherent metaphysical foundation and that this had led them to construct inadequate alternatives to traditional metaphysics out of their assumptions about physics and mathematics. Despite their ability to predict and describe the material world, Sheen maintained these physical and mathematical interpretations of science could never supplant metaphysics because they were "insufficient as a total explanation of the universe."[52] Although they could describe trajectories of movement and predict the behavior of various particles, Sheen regarded these theories as fundamentally unable to explain reality in terms of the intelligible or offer an account of reality that was truly satisfying to the intellect. Sheen argued that in their haste to interpret the world as mere material or mathematical descriptions these scientists had forgotten that true explanations of events necessarily include their meaning and cannot be reduced to the behavior of objects.

For Sheen, the true meaning of the material world is to be found in the intelligibility that all created things possess by virtue of their participation in being.[53] Following St. Thomas Aquinas, Sheen attributed the underlying intelligibility of the entire universe to God's immanent presence within all created things as the true formal, final, and efficient cause.[54] Sheen asserted that God is present within all of creation in three senses: "as the Wisdom which plans it; as the

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[50] Fulton J. Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion: The Impact of Modern Knowledge On Religion* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948), 184. Sheen, *Religion Without God*, 237.
[51] Sheen, *Religion Without God*, 239. Emphasis in original.
[52] Sheen, *Philosophy of Science*, 2.
[53] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 165.
[54] Ibid., 166.

Will which commands and governs it; as the Power which sustains it."[55] Just as an artist supplies

the meaning of the work, so "God's Wisdom participating in things is not only the reason for their

being and their richness, but also explains our own intelligibility."[56] Sheen saw God's Wisdom as

instilling the world with meaning, God's Will as providing the world with goodness, and God's

Power as supplying the world with continued existence.[57]

The Scholastic Hierarchy of the Sciences

　　　　Sheen's third comparison of modern science to scholastic science had particularly

important repercussions for his perspective on modern psychology. In this third instance, it was

Sheen's contention that modern science had abandoned the scholastic hierarchy of the sciences

and had thereby ceased to recognize the proper boundaries between the sciences. Within Sheen's

neo-Thomist framework, the scholastic hierarchy of sciences served as the basis for the vital

connection between metaphysics and other kinds of knowledge. Sheen explained that the

scholastic hierarchy of sciences was rooted in the insight that every science received its basic

operating principles from a higher science, "for no science, says St. Thomas, demonstrates its

own principles."[58] In other words, the hierarchy of sciences served as Sheen's method of

establishing which areas of knowledge could impact other areas of knowledge. As a neo-Thomist,

Sheen was well-acquainted with the claim that "a science with a more universal object and

principle may be applied to a lower science, as mathematics is applied to music." In other words,

when Sheen explained that theology and metaphysics sat near the top of this hierarchy of

knowledge, with mathematics directly beneath them, followed by physics, followed by biology,

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[55] Ibid., 167.
[56] Ibid., 168.
[57] Ibid., 169-172.
[58] "Since sciences assume their own proximate first principles, which are proved by other superior
sciences, the Scholastics held rigidly to a hierarchy of sciences. The physics of the Middle Ages, for
example, which was a kind of philosophy of nature, received its principles from metaphysics, but physics
in its turn delivered its principles over to botany; arithmetic subordinated itself to metaphysics, and music
subordinated itself to arithmetic." Sheen, *Philosophy of Science*, 57.

with psychology near the bottom of the hierarchy of the sciences, he saw himself as faithfully representing the perennial tradition of the scholastic thinkers.[59]

From Sheen's perspective, the proof for his claim that metaphysics sat near the summit of the pyramid that constituted the hierarchy of sciences was that metaphysics provided most other sciences with the basic principles required for coherence. The basic principles of metaphysics, according to Sheen, included the concepts of being, identity, non-contradiction, and causation.[60] He maintained that these concepts were so essential to all other human thought that they were necessarily applicable to all other sciences. Since all other sciences depended upon these basic principles in order to function, metaphysics sat above them in the hierarchy. Mathematics was directly below metaphysics because it is also applicable to most other sciences. Sheen argued that those sciences that were especially low on the pyramid had principles that were not applicable to any other kind of science because "a science with a more restricted object may not apply its principles to a higher science."[61]

Sheen was concerned that modern scientists did not understand the hierarchy of sciences and erroneously believed that the principles of the scientific method could be directly applied to theology and metaphysics. He frequently argued against this error of "the uniform method of science," or the idea that the inductive method of the natural sciences could be applied to higher realities. He maintained that it was impossible for lower sciences to be applied to metaphysics because the lower sciences required a lower level of abstraction than the science of metaphysics.

The concept of "abstraction" was a vital part of Sheen's metaphysics. He claimed that the human mind abstracts the form of an object from its phantasm in order to understand the object. He argued that the human mind only utilizes "the first degree of abstraction" when it considers

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[59] Ibid., 167. The point, which will be addressed more explicitly in Section 6 of this chapter, is that the Scholastics were not aware of the modern versions of the sciences and, in particular, of modern psychology.
[60] Sheen, *God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy: A Critical Study in the Light of the Philosophy of Saint Thomas* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1925), 150-155.
[61] Sheen, *Philosophy of Science*, 179.

one of the natural sciences, whereas mathematics requires the mind to engage in the "second degree of abstraction," and metaphysics allows the mind to understand reality according to the "third degree of abstraction" and contemplate "being as being."[62]

According to Fulton J. Sheen, the progenitors of modern science had rejected traditional metaphysics. This meant that, in Sheen's view, modern science was not constituted in such a way that it could recognize all forms of knowledge, pursue the right kind of purposes, acknowledge God as the primary cause, or even recognize its own limits. In essence, Fulton Sheen argued that modern scientists could not answer questions of meaning, offer an account of the intelligibility of the world, or even provide a coherent philosophical explanation of their discipline. Furthermore, Sheen maintained that their rejection of the hierarchy of the sciences left the practitioners of the modern sciences ignorant of the relationship that the various branches of science enjoyed with each other and with metaphysics, including where the proper territory of one discipline ended and another discipline began. In other words, Sheen maintained that were unable to recognize the necessary limitations of their own disciplines because of their rejection of metaphysics.

From Sheen's perspective, the modern rejection of traditional metaphysics did not mean that metaphysics had ceased to be necessary. The rejection of metaphysics, Sheen argued, had simply led to improper substitutions for metaphysics. Sheen saw the mathematical theory of science as one inadequate attempt at substitution and the physical theory of science as another failed attempt. Yet, for Sheen, the greatest and most persistent threat to traditional metaphysics was the philosophical impulse that lay behind both of these attempts to construct a philosophy of science: The Lyricism of Science.

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[62] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 182.

The Lyricism of Modern Psychology

Despite his contention that modern science operated according to an inadequate philosophical framework, Fulton J. Sheen acknowledged that modern scientists had achieved real success when examining the material universe and in pursuing technological mastery of the physical world. Throughout the course of his life, Sheen often remarked upon the many benefits that the modern sciences had provided to the human race. At one point, Sheen even suggested that religious people had not always been sufficiently thankful for the many blessings that modern science had provided to them and mused on the possibility of having a "Science Sunday on which there would be a public act of thanksgiving to Almighty God for allowing us to read some of His Wisdom in creation."[63] In other words, Sheen was not a reactionary enemy of modern science and actually saw it as a gift from God to the human race.

After the Second World War, however, Sheen also had to come to grips with the power of the atomic bomb. He determined that military use of the atomic bomb would probably never be justified according to Just War theory.[64] Sheen embraced the benefits of applied atomic research, including the development of new kinds of fertilizer, leather, plastics, and even ladies' stockings.[65] He noted the exciting possibilities offered by nuclear power and had high hopes that using radioactive Carbon 14 on rubber tree plants would help scientists to discover how to make synthetic rubber.[66] Nevertheless, he was convinced that that the hydrogen bomb could have negative psychological repercussions on human character, behavior, and spiritual life.[67] For Sheen, in other words, science was a real benefit but not an unqualified good.

While Sheen had genuine respect for the successes of modern science, the benefits that it had provided to the world, and the power that it had unleashed, he was nevertheless convinced that many modern intellectuals were overly impressed with its achievements. In his view of the

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[63] Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion*, 53-54.
[64] Ibid., 62.
[65] Fulton J. Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1962), 46-47.
[66] Ibid., 47.
[67] Ibid., 63.

matter, "whenever there has been a great change made in scientific outlook, there arise thinkers who demand that even fundamental truths be revised to conform to the new viewpoint."[68] Sheen characterized these poet-servants of modern science as exploring every new scientific fad for evidence about the direction in which the Spirit of the Age was blowing. In one moment, Sheen explained, they imagined the mechanical universe of a watchmaker while in the next they had reinterpreted everything through Darwinism.[69]

Sheen's term for this almost idolatrous worship of the Spirit of the Age instead of the Spirit of God was "lyricism."[70] Sheen saw lyricism as an illicit encroachment of popular theory on metaphysical territory. In an early explanation of "the principle of lyricism," he asserted "that, immediately upon the discovery of any important theory in one science, modern philosophy applies it to its own field whether it is applicable or not."[71]   Sheen later offered a more complete definition of lyricism as "the interpretation of philosophy, politics, religion, literature, art and God, in terms of the particular Spirit of the Age enjoying popularity at the moment."[72]

Sheen wrote about the lyricism of science as both a general trend in modern thought and other times wrote about particular examples where a new scientific theory brought about a new way for modern philosophy to lyricize science. For example, Sheen argued that the modern tendency toward philosophical relativism was a form of lyricism that was based upon the awe that modern philosophers had for the theory of relativity. In this particular example, as in most of Sheen's admonishments against lyricism, his unstated enemy was the modern conception of progress without a genuine *telos* in God.   For Sheen, the problem was not simply that lyricists praised science too much, but that they glorified the creation without recognizing the Creator.

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[68] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 7.
[69] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 62.
[70] Although it is not the subject of the present work, an argument could be made that Sheen's concept of lyricism was a particular version of what Pope Pius X called "Modernism."
[71] Sheen, *God and Intelligence*, 71.
[72] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 3.

"Contemporary Negations of God and Religion"

   Many of Sheen's writings focused on the lyricism of physics both because it was the highest physical science in the hierarchy of sciences and because Sheen saw it as the most fashionable science as a result of its explanatory power. Yet his concerns with the lyricism of science extended to most of the other modern scientific disciplines, including the science of modern psychology. For example, in a short essay entitled "The Lyricism of Science" found in his book *Old Errors and New Labels* (1931), Sheen explained that:

> At the beginning of this century a new science came into vogue with Professor James and Professor Meyer, namely, psychology, and with it a new lyrical theology that explained conversions as an explosion of subconscious states, defined God as a 'mental projection,' and at times reduced religion to a sex libido. This group of lyricizers produced such definitions of religion as this one from Ohio State University: 'Religion is a projection in the roaring loom of time of a concentration or unified complex of psychical values.'[73]

   Fulton Sheen completely rejected the notion that the modern scientists could make theological or metaphysical claims in the name of their scientific disciplines. In his view, modern psychologists were no longer practicing their science when they portrayed their personal opinions about religion as if they were the legitimate conclusions of the science of modern psychology. For example, Sheen interpreted modern psychologists as having become "lyricizers" of science whenever they made claims about the nature of religion. His use of the term "theologies" to describe these claims suggests that he interpreted them as metaphysical speculations that fell within the territory that belonged to theology as well as philosophy. After all, from his perspective they were using the authority of modern psychology to explain away both the existence of God and the importance of religious faith as the products of psychosis. Sheen saw metaphysical questions concerning God and religious faith as both theological and philosophical

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[73] Sheen, *Old Errors and New Labels*, 105.

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and therefore interpreted answers to these questions that purported to be objective conclusions of modern science as "lyrical theologies."

From Sheen's perspective modern psychologists "as psychologists" could never make direct claims concerning God or religion. When writing about the kinds of claims that modern psychologists of religion had made in support of an atheistic position that Sheen referred to as "the contemporary negation of God as the object of religion," Sheen insisted that:

> Psychology, as such, does not hold nor even make for such a position any more than does modern physics or modern biology; it merely attempts to describe the by-products of religion, its emotions, its states and its reactions. In doing this it has rendered much service to the proper understanding of religion. In the words of Professor Flournoy: 'Psychology neither rejects nor affirms the transcendental existence of the religious objects; it simply ignores the problem as being outside its field.'[74]

In order to provide further evidence that "the transcendental existence of religious objects" could not be a subject of psychological investigation Sheen quoted a paper that Dr. Gerald B. Phelan delivered to the American Catholic Philosophical Association that asserted "'Whatever explanation he [the psychologist] may offer, the authority of the psychologist extends no further than the data of his science, which being definitely phenomenological, furnish no grounds for conclusions about the transcendental."[75] From Sheen's perspective, in other words, any conclusions about transcendental realities that were made in the name of modern psychology were simply examples of the lyricism of modern psychology because they could not be conclusions of the experimental science. As a result, even when he was willing to admit that modern psychology could "describe the elements of religion," Sheen continued to insist that "it can never exclude the philosophical or more properly religious explanation."[76]

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[74] Fulton J. Sheen, *Religion Without God*, 48. Sheen's footnote: "Principes de la Psychologie," in *Archives de Psychologie*, Vol. II, pp. 37-41.

[75] Fulton J. Sheen, *Religion Without God*, 49. cf. "Proceedings of the Second Annual Meeting," 1926, pp. 85, 86. See also Gerald B. Phelan, Feeling Experience, and Its Modalities," p. 17, 1925.

[76] Sheen, Philosophy of Religion, 234.

Modern Anthropology and Sacramental Anthropology

In his writings on the relationship between modern thought and the lyricism of science Fulton Sheen maintained that the modern world had produced two different philosophical understandings of the human person that were in essential conflict with each other. He saw these two modern anthropologies as reactions against excesses in earlier accounts of human nature. From Sheen's perspective these modern philosophical conceptions of the human being had parallels in the anthropological accounts of some modern psychologists and had been particularly influential in the development of Behaviorism and Freudian psychiatry.

Sheen opposed the anthropological accounts that he attributed to the lyricism of modern psychology with a theological account of human beings. For Sheen, as for other neo-Thomists, human beings are unique among all other creatures because they are a microcosm of the universe. Sheen proposed that human beings have both a special relationship to God and a sacramental purpose for the rest of creation that more fully explains human existence than any theory of modern psychology.

The Natural Man and the Frustrated Man

Fulton Sheen recognized modernity as having brought into existence two conflicting philosophical anthropologies. According to Sheen, the autonomous "Natural Man of historical liberalism" had served as the dominant anthropology of modernity from the dawn of the Enlightenment to the end of the nineteenth century. This modern anthropology, Sheen explained, developed out of "the Renaissance concept of man, a concept which in a Christian environment discovered the greatness of the pagan past."[77] Although Sheen credited Petrarch and Jean-Jacques Rousseau as the intellectual progenitors of the modern version of the Pelagian doctrine of the

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[77] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 344.

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naturally good human being, he interpreted this anthropology as having originated as an overreaction against the theological claims of Martin Luther.

According to Sheen, Martin Luther had taught that human beings were "'intrinsically corrupt, 'a lost lump, to whom the merits of Christ were extrinsically imputed.'"[78] Sheen argued that liberalism's anthropology of the Natural Man had opposed this Protestant doctrine with an insistence on the natural goodness, infinite perfectibility, and self-sufficiency of the human person. Sheen explained that those who held to this first modern anthropology soon reimagined religion as "a kind of an ambulance to take care of the wrecks of the liberal society until evolution had reached the stage where there would no longer be any poverty, ignorance, or disease."[79] Sheen saw the idea of perfect human goodness as an especially dangerous vision of the human person. In his view, its adherents had a tendency to ignore their own failings while seeking after "the inevitable progress of humanity through science and evolution."[80]

Sheen identified the second anthropology of modernity as that of the "Frustrated Man." Sheen saw the concept of the "Frustrated Man" as a reaction against the perceived failures of the Natural Man anthropology and attributed its the development to the terrible wars of the early 20th century that had "knocked into a cocked hat" the Natural Man anthropology. Sheen argued that modern warfare had "made it difficult to sustain belief in the natural goodness of man." Sheen suggested that its advocates had begun to realize that the freedom that modernity "interpreted as the right to do whatever you pleased" ultimately resulted in "a civilization torn by a conflict of individual egotisms, a conflict which totalitarian philosophies tried to solve by reducing the individual ego to a collective ego."[81]

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[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid., 345.
[80] Ibid., 346.
[81] Ibid., 347.

The Sexual Anthropology of Freudianism

Sheen recognized that the psychoanalytic method was the basis for the anthropological theories of psychiatrists Alfred Adler (1870-1937), Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), and Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). Sheen focused on the theories of Freud because he was the most influential, had trained the other two figures, and had developed the psychoanalytic method. According to Sheen, a report on Freud's theories from the Rockefeller and Carnegie Social Research Council had determined that Freud's interpretation of psychoses and neuroses was simply one of many plausible interpretations of the data that the psychoanalytic method had produced. Sheen insisted that this conclusion and many of his other criticisms of Freud "could be applied equally to the other theorists." [82]

Sheen viewed the theories of the early practitioners of psychoanalysis as simplistic reductions of the human person. He asserted that "Adler concentrates on mind and superiority, while "Freud concentrates on the flesh, or sexuality," and "Jung concentrates on our conditioning to outside reality."[83] Sheen characterized Freudian anthropology as a variation on the Frustrated Man who has become "isolated from himself and the community and from God."[84] Sheen claimed that Freud postulated "erotic desire" as the "nonrational foundation of human life and behavior."[85] Furthermore, Sheen interpreted Freud as claiming that "unconscious, irrational promptings are the guides of action," making the appearance of human freedom simply another example of the "'rationalization' of hidden forces which dominate man."[86]

From Sheen's perspective, Freudian anthropology paralleled the theory of the Natural Man's relationship to society that was advanced by Jean Jacques Rousseau. According to Sheen, Freud had claimed "that a person always desires to return to the primitive feelings of pleasure which he experienced in his infantile stages, but cannot do so." Sheen saw this idea as analogous

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[82] Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion*, 85.
[83] Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion*, 87.
[84] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 343.
[85] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 88.
[86] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 360.

to Rousseau's speculation that civilized human beings "cannot return to a primitive state of society and that democracy is the sublimation of the desire to do so."[87]

Sheen interpreted Freud as trying to explain human beings entirely "in terms of sex in the general sense of the word."[88] Sheen maintained that Freud had held that the lives of human beings are almost completely determined by the first six years of their lives and that human beings seek to recapture the bodily pleasures that they experienced during that time forever afterward.[89] Sheen was critical of this "Freudian assumption that any drive toward self-perfection or culture is basically due to a repression of the sex instinct." Sheen claimed that Freud had maintained "that a person always desires to return to the primitive feelings of pleasure which he experienced in his infantile stages."[90] Sheen characterized Freud's position as claiming that it was only because these historical figures had found themselves unable to return to that past state of pleasure that "they went forward to a cultural or spiritual or political development."[91]

According to Sheen, Freud had taken the traditional view that human beings had held of their place in the world and projected it back onto the human mind. Sheen argued that modern people had come to believe in "three layers or regions" of the mind that act as internal substitutes for the traditional ethics of heaven (superego), earth (ego), and hell (id). For Sheen, the earth is the battleground on which the Church Militant fights the powers of darkness. He contrasted this Catholic vision with his interpretation of Freud's claim that "the ego, or consciousness, is only the battlefield where an incessant war is fought between a person's biological, primitive urges and the powers embodied in the superego."[92] Sheen interpreted Freud's theories as having taught modern human beings to feel trapped within themselves, prisoners of powerful mental forces that they are unable to control but which instead determine their actions for them.

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[87] Sheen, *Science, Psychology, and Religion*, 91.
[88] Sheen, *Science, Psychology, and Religion*, 86.
[89] Sheen, *Science, Psychology, and Religion*, 87.
[90] Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion,* 91.
[91] Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion,* 91.
[92] Sheen, *Peace of the Soul*, 4.

Sheen asserted that Freud was not the only modern thinker to project the traditional view of human destiny into another context. He paralleled the Freudian idea of confinement, in which human beings were lost in a state of internal conflict, with a Marxist confinement where human beings were prisoners of an oppressive economic system. According to Sheen, both systems insist that they alone can teach people how to understand the problems with these underlying structures and to allow the most oppressed sides (the id and the proletariat, respectively) to rise up and destroy those oppressive forces which seek to keep them confined. He interpreted Freudian psychoanalysis as working to unlock the mental prison that alienates people from themselves and Marxism as trying to open the material prison that alienates human beings from one another. Sheen claimed that even "as the Marxists interpreted history in terms of different techniques of production, so Freud interpreted culture and thought as the different ways in which men sought to compensate for the sacrifices they had to make while living in society."[93]

Although Sheen was critical of Freud's theories he did recognize a distinction between the actual theories of Sigmund Freud and the views of "those bandwagon climbers who take Freud too seriously and who explain *all* neuroses as repressed sexuality."[94] In other words, Sheen understood that Freud was not himself a Freudian and admitted that Freud had acknowledged that there are driving forces distinct from the libido, such as the "ego instincts" and the "death instinct."[95] Sheen reinterpreted this Freudian theory within his own neo-Thomist framework, speculating that Freud had stumbled upon the idea that the human being naturally "pursues two ends." He suggested that if the Freudian concept of the ego instinct were reframed, it could "correspond to the instinct of self-preservation" and that Freud's concept of the libido could correspond to "that of the preservation of the species." Yet Sheen also noted that "primordial instincts should not be confused with sexual urges or with any experiences observed in the mature

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[93] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 360.
[94] Sheen, *Peace of the Soul*, 136.
[95] Sheen, *Peace of the Soul*, 148. (chapter endnote)

individual." In other words, for Sheen, even if Freud had recognized a genuine Thomist truth about the human person, his theories had led him to provide it with a false interpretation.[96]

The Reductionist Anthropology of the Behaviorists

Sheen's most severe criticisms of the anthropological theories associated with modern psychology were directed at the behaviorist school. While Sheen recognized that the behaviorist approach was legitimate as a method of study, he characterized behaviorism as "a fad" that interpreted the human person as nothing more than "a series of twitchings, muscle-squirmings, visceral reactions, and gland-oozings."[97] Sheen viewed the philosophical position of the behaviorist school as an even more extreme version of the reductively atheist and materialist philosophy that afflicted much of modern science. He was convinced that the ultimate goal of the behaviorists was to "make psychology a study of the psychological reactions of the organism as a whole; they analyze human nature…into the completely biological reaction of the nervous system to specific stimuli."[98] From Sheen's perspective, the atheist philosophical assumptions of Behaviorism produced an anthropological perspective that would almost inevitably lead to despair and immorality; it was, in other words, spiritually dangerous.

Although Sheen rejected the philosophical assumptions of the behaviorist school, he acknowledged that through their method the behaviorists had attained "great success in interpreting the behavior of human beings, without the assumption that they have minds."[99] Sheen was able to accept the behaviorist method because his neo-Thomist view of science made an important distinction between the method of study and the object of study. According to Sheen, "every science has a double object: a *material* object which is the thing studied, for example, matter in physics; a *formal* object, which is the peculiar aspect or 'angle' of the study, for

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[96] Sheen, *Peace of the Soul*, 148. (chapter endnote)
[97] Sheen, *Old Errors and New Labels*, 127.
[98] Sheen, *Old Errors and New Labels*, 127.
[99] Ibid. (find original source of quote!)

example, in physics matter again inasmuch as it is in movement."[100] As a result, Sheen could acknowledge that behaviorists had the right to study human beings through an empirical method that ignored the human soul just as he could freely admit the that modern scientists would have the right to study the material world through a yellow lens if they chose to do so.[101] Sheen's issue with the behaviorists was not with their method itself but with the fact that they had derived illicit metaphysical premises from their method. In other words, Sheen's critique of Behaviorism was that it had turned a valid method of approach into a philosophical claim about the nature of human beings.

Sheen's argument against the behaviorists was analogous to his argument against those scientists who sought to reject neo-Thomist metaphysics in favor of physical or mathematical theories of science. Sheen believed that both groups were confusing their own methodological presuppositions with the reality that they were studying. In Sheen's view, they were providing insufficient explanations of the actual meaning of their object of study even in those instances when their scientific predictions were successful. He was convinced that those scientists that rejected neo-Thomist metaphysics necessarily failed to discover meaning because their version of science did not have a way to recognize the presence of God's activity within Creation (since they did not have, for example, a conception of God as Primary Cause). In a similar way, Sheen argued that the behaviorists had decided to obstinately ignore the presence of human consciousness within the human body and that this philosophical stance meant that their anthropology was unable to adequately explain the human person.

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[100] Fulton J. Sheen. *Religion Without God.* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1928), 7.
[101] For Sheen, the right to do something did not imply that it was necessarily a good idea. In a humorous explanation of the distinction between method and theory in the introduction to his *Philosophy of Science*, Sheen remarked that even if some scientist decided to utilize the method of observing "the universe through a yellow glass," it would be "quite another matter to say that everything is yellow." Sheen argued that a scientist who made the decision to study the world through a yellow glass and then decided to build a theory about the yellowness of reality from that method would be "converting a method into a theory." Sheen, *Philosophy of Science,* xxi.

On some level, all of Sheen's arguments against behaviorism are reducible to arguments about the spiritual human soul that, for Sheen, was the source of the transcendent dimension of human existence.[102] From Sheen's perspective, the spiritual human soul was the reason that human beings were able to have "mental operations which are independent of matter and organism, such as ideas, art, abiding identity, and consciousness."[103] For example, Sheen was convinced that the desire to be artistic was a result of the spiritual aspect of the human person. Although Sheen did not explicitly address the possibility that an animal might produce art, such as a spider making a beautiful spider web, his definition of art as "the projection of the ideal through the real" implies that art is only possible for beings that are capable of possessing transcendent ideals.[104] In other words, Sheen was convinced that human art was irrefutable proof that the behaviorist theory of the human person was incoherent. He maintained that behaviorism as a philosophy ignored the empirical fact that humans beings pursue transcendence.

Sheen also interpreted the fact that human beings laugh and tell jokes about their lives as evidence of this transcendent spiritual element within the human person. Sheen declared that human laughter is usually the result of "seeing a relationship between two judgments" and argued that "since a relation can be perceived only by something spiritual, it follows that only a man with a spiritual principle can laugh."[105] He insisted that the behaviorist philosophy was unable to offer a coherent explanation for everyday human activities such as humor, laughter, and intentional "nonsense."[106] For Sheen, these kinds of behaviors are only possible because human beings are neither animals, nor machines, and can therefore behave both with and without purpose. In Sheen's view, unlike the animal and the machine, the human person "is spiritual, free, and therefore *ought* to do certain things," and yet is also capable of doing otherwise.[107]

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[102] Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion*, 37.
[103] Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion*, 33.
[104] Ibid., 35.
[105] Sheen, *Old Errors and New Labels*, 129.
[106] Sheen, *Old Errors and New Labels*, 129-131.
[107] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

Fulton Sheen rejected the philosophical position of the behaviorists because he was convinced that human beings have rational souls created directly by God and that animals do not.[108] Sheen believed that anthropologies that reduced human beings to mere animals meant that sooner or later human beings would start to act like animals. Sheen believed that the embrace of "animalism" almost inevitably led to immoral behavior and surrender to despair. The solution, according to Sheen, was a proper understanding of the human person that also acknowledged the purpose of the human being within creation.

Sacramental Anthropology of Fulton J. Sheen

From a metaphysical perspective Fulton Sheen's anthropology began with his definition of life as "immanent activity." Sheen argued that life is a unique kind of activity because it is "supplied from within and not from without, the effect of which remains within the thing itself as its perfection."[109] Sheen interpreted the Thomist principle that "'the more immanent the activity, the higher the life'" to mean that "beings possess life only in proportion to their immanent activity."[110] In other words, Sheen's definition of life meant that something is alive to the extent that it can obtain or actively possess its own self-perfection.[111]

According to Sheen's definition of life, all living things must necessarily possess some degree of internal perfection or self-determination. Plants seek to grow and maintain themselves, which is the most basic pursuit and possession of an internal perfection, but they lack the potential for any greater level of self-determination. Animals possess the same perfections as plants with the additional immanent activities of movement and sensibility, but they lack the

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[108] Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion*, 37.

[109] Fulton Sheen, *The Life of All Living*, 5.

[110] Fulton Sheen, *God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy*, 80.

[111] For Sheen, God is therefore both Being and Life, "for life is Immanent activity, and in Him is perfect activity because His mind has no object outside Himself, and because it has no need of being aroused by anything outside of self." Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 162.

power of self-reflection that would allow them to truly understand the world in which they live. Sheen believed that human beings possessed powers equivalent to those of plants and animals even while he credited the unique human intellect with "a greater immanence of action" than the equivalent power possessed by all other material beings.[112] For Sheen, human beings are uniquely able to reflect upon the material world and achieve a genuine understanding of reality in a way that is not possible for any plant or animal.[113]

The primary textual source for Sheen's understanding of the human person was the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas. Sheen interpreted various sections of the epic work to be referring to three different aspects of the human person that all existed simultaneously within every person. Sheen labeled these three aspects as "Subhuman Man," "Rational Man," and "Frustrated Man." Since Sheen was offering a kind of commentary on the *Summa*, he would not have seen himself as articulating a new vision of the human person but merely as presenting the correct understanding of the human person according to St. Thomas Aquinas.

Sheen's interpretation of St. Thomas Aquinas' anthropology began with what he called the "Subhuman" aspect of the human person. Sheen acknowledged that human beings have existence or being, life, and have "senses like the animal."[114] Sheen's category of "Subhuman Man" served as his official affirmation of the basic continuity that human beings share with all other visible elements of creation, including animals, plants, and inanimate material objects. Although Sheen acknowledged that "Aristotle and St. Thomas included the word 'animal' in their definition of man," Sheen downplayed the similarity between human beings and all other material creatures and suggested that when a human being "believes that he is a beast, then he immediately proceeds to act as one."[115]

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[112] Sheen, *God and Intelligence*, 83.
[113] Although he put angels and even God upon the spectrum of life, with angels being immaterial beings and God understood as Perfect Being, Sheen argued that they do not learn through sense experiences of the material world in the same way that human beings do. Sheen, *God and Intelligence*, 86-92.
[114] Fulton Sheen, *Life is Worth Living*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1953), 5.
[115] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 361.

Although Sheen chose to emphasize that human beings are fundamentally superior to animals rather than physically similar to them he did not regard human continuity with animals as the source of human failure. Instead, Sheen consistently maintained that sin is not due to the animal or "Subhuman" aspect of the human person.[116] From Sheen's perspective, it is impossible for an animal to sin because all animals must necessarily stay true to their natures.[117] Sheen believed that God had made the universe in such a way that every other kind of being must act according to its nature whereas the human creature "merely *ought* to act according to his nature."[118] In other words, Sheen believed the human beings possess wills that provide them with the ability to make choices about their activities, which means that the human will is also what makes it possible for human beings to choose to perform the wrong activities.

Sheen's account of the second aspect of the human person, which he called the "Rational Man," focused on the operation of the human intellect and with the unique relationship that human beings have with God. From Sheen's perspective, the reason that human beings are persons is because human are made in the image and likeness of God. For Sheen, this meant that human beings have intellectual powers "capable of knowing truth" and possess wills "which can choose love and goodness."[119] Furthermore, Sheen insisted that "the imprint of human dignity" that human beings had received from God always remained, no matter what human beings did to deface the divine image with which they had been stamped.[120]

Sheen's anthropology emphasized this rational aspect and, in particular, this tripartite element of the human person. Sheen asserted that every human being possesses a "soul which is life, which seeks truth, which seeks love."[121] He declared that "there are three fundamental

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[116]Sheen, *Preface to Religion*, 31. Since this book is written to the reader, Sheen's actual words are: "Evil is not due to the animal in you." (Emphasis in original).
[117] Sheen, *Preface to Religion*, 32.
[118] Sheen, *Preface to Religion*, 41. Emphasis in original.
[119] Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 362.
[120] Sheen, *Preface to Religion*, 32.
[121] Sheen, *Religion Without God*, 327.

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cravings in the human heart…the craving for *being* or life, for *truth* and *love*."[122] In his account of God's presence in the world, Sheen had maintained that the Wisdom, Goodness, and Power of God is always immanent within creation because God is the ultimate Formal Cause, Final Cause, and Efficient Cause of all created things.[123] In his explanation of human beings, therefore, he interpreted the rational aspect of human nature as providing a yearning within all human beings to know, love, and serve God.[124]

Sheen understood the material world to be filled with imperfect images that participate in the transcendental qualities that of which God is both the source and true fulfillment.[125] In Sheen's anthropology, it is the special duty of the human being "to worship God not only in his name, but in the name of lower creation."[126] According to Sheen, human beings possess the intellectual power to abstract the eternal forms of material things and assimilate them. Sheen claimed that this allowed material objects "to acquire a mode of perfection that is not theirs by nature" and enables the human being to "give glory to God in the name of all visible creation."[127]

Human beings, according to Sheen, are called to both exteriorize and interiorize the forms that they abstract. By exteriorizing, Sheen meant that the human person ought to act according to the best ideals that have learned and must communicate these forms to others "in order thus to ennoble and spiritualize the world itself."[128] When he used interiorizing, Sheen was suggesting that human beings ought to allow the proper ideals to transform their own spiritual lives and, in particular, that humans ought to allow their understanding of the world to help them to develop their connection to "the source of all knowledge, God."[129]

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122 Ibid., 326. Emphasis in original.
123 Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 166
124 Sheen, *Religion Without God*, 342-354.
125 Ibid., 330.
126 Ibid., 356.
127 Sheen, *God and Intelligence*, 121.
128 Sheen, *Religion Without God*, 314.
129 Sheen, *Religion Without God*, 315.

From Sheen's perspective, the "Rational Man" aspect of every human person is always in an uneasy tension with the aspect which he had already referred to as "Subhuman Man." Sheen identified the location of this tension as the third aspect of the human person according to St. Thomas Aquinas. Sheen labeled this aspect of the human person as the "Frustrated Man." He maintained that modern human beings had three underlying sources for frustration. Sheen identified the first and most basic source of all human frustration as the result of the separation of human beings and God that had resulted from free human choice.[130] Sheen saw all the other disorders in human life as fundamentally based in this separation between human beings and God. Nevertheless, Sheen interpreted the second underlying source of human frustration as partially based in the fact that human beings have material bodies. "Matter," claimed Sheen, "by its very nature divides and separates men."[131] As part of a much larger argument against Communism, Sheen explained that even dividing an apple can cause disagreement among people because it means "loss for the one who shared it, and immediately creates the question of my piece, and your piece, and his piece, and who has the largest piece and why."[132]

In addition to these two constant sources of human frustration Sheen claimed that there is a third source of human frustration that is somewhat unique to the modern world. Sheen observed that modern human beings tend to seek God exclusively within themselves instead of looking to creation to provide evidence for God's existence. Yet, since human beings are inherently alienated from themselves as a result of original sin, the attempts of modern people to find God within themselves actually results in an added source of human frustration for them.[133]

From Sheen's perspective, all of these frustrations could either be overcome or at least severely mitigated. Sheen interpreted the modern desire to search for the God within oneself as a result of the modern misunderstanding of the traditional proofs for the existence of God and a

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[130] Fulton Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, 364.
[131] Sheen, *The Cross and the Crisis* (Milwaukee, WI: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1937), 89.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Sheen, *Peace of Soul*, 8.

failure to search for him through the "visible things of this world."[134] He invited the modern

people to look to creation in order to both recognize God's reality and realize that they were not

God.[135] He wanted modern people to prepare their souls with humility in order to welcome God

into their hearts and allow God to break into their egos.[136] He argued that when people develop

the proper kind of relationship with God, when they allow themselves to be guided by their love

for Christ instead of their love of themselves, they discover "much more goodness in the world

than before" and seek to establish community with each other.[137]

Psychological Therapy and Christian Spirituality

Sheen's last and most important kind of criticism of modern psychology had to do with

the spiritual dangers present for those who underwent psychological therapy. Sheen's concerns

with the practices of modern psychological therapy were far more overtly practical than his

concerns with the philosophical theories of the psychologists of religion and the Behaviorists.

Although they were still metaphysical concerns, they were more clearly based in his theological

convictions rather than in his philosophical convictions. Sheen was convinced that modern

psychological therapy frequently stood in the way of spiritual progress of its patients. Although

he suspected that one of the problems with modern psychological therapy was that the atheistic

and materialist convictions of many forms of psychology had influenced its practitioners, he also

expressed three other important concerns in his analysis of psychological therapy. First, Sheen

believed that the relatively normal people were sometimes treated with forms of therapy that were

designed for the mentally abnormal and that this kind of treatment was to their detriment. Second,

Sheen argued that psychological therapy frequently provided faulty interpretations of problems

that Sheen believed were fundamentally moral or spiritual. Third, Sheen maintained that

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[134] Sheen, *Peace of Soul*. 1.
[135] Fulton J. Sheen, *Lift Up Your Heart*, (Garden City, New York: Garden City Books, 1952), 43.
[136] Ibid., 51.
[137] Ibid., 99.

psychological therapy was frequently used as a substitute for a genuine religious conversion. As Sheen understood the problem, a great many people who engaged in psychological therapy failed to engage in the spiritual activities that they should have been practicing instead and this made it detrimental to their spiritual well-being.

Abnormal Psychology

> It has been said that anyone who goes to a psychoanalyst ought to have his head examined. But we should be able to tell by examining out own heads whether we are going in the direction of the normal or deviating to the abnormal. There is no question here of those who are suffering from mental illness or profound psychoses or neuroses, for these belong in the domain of psychiatry and psychiatry belongs in the domain of medicine and not that of normal psychology.[138]

With the above words, Fulton Sheen opened a short collection of popular essays entitled *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion* (1962). Sheen used these words as the introduction for a simple self-test to determine "whether one is tending in the direction of a peaceful and ordered life or whether one is preparing for mental deformity and basic unhappiness."[139] Sheen intended for this self-examination to highlight the differences in the philosophy and theology of what he considered to be the normal person and the abnormal person.

Sheen saw "normal psychology" as being practiced when psychology "considers the make-up of man without reference to any possible abuses of reason, will, and passions." He argued that normal people have specific intentions that drive most of their behavior, including "an over-all ultimate goal in life."[140] Furthermore, Sheen claimed that the normal people are primarily governed by reason and will in their daily activities.[141] While Sheen recognized the dangers of sin, his Thomist anthropology emphasized the inherent goodness of human beings in the face of temptation. As a result, although he acknowledged that all people have emotions, passions, and desires that could lead them astray, Sheen did not believe that normal people were

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[138] Fulton J. Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion*, (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1962), 7.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid., 7.
[141] Ibid., 9.

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usually ruled by these things, insisting that they were instead ruled by their reason and will in the same way that a captain rules a ship.[142] Sheen envisioned each normal person as possessing "a sense of responsibility, and when he does wrong, a sense of guilt."[143] He believed that the normal person recognizes that there is an "objective difference between right and wrong, true and false."[144] Finally, he held that that the normal person has conscious motives and is generally "concerned about the highest and noblest expressions of his personality."[145]

Sheen defined abnormal psychology, in contrast to normal psychology, as "concerned with disproportions, excesses, and derivations."[146] Sheen's characterization of the abnormal person was a sharp contrast to his explanation of the normal person. Sheen believed that the abnormal person operates according to "a rapid succession of moods and attitudes."[147] He also claimed that because abnormal people think that "life lacks purpose, there is often a conscious, or at least an unconscious, desire for death."[148] Instead of being governed by their reason and will, Sheen claimed that abnormal people are ruled "by impulses, emotions, and the subconscious."[149] Sheen argued that the abnormal person ignores responsibility, believing that he "is determined to do what he does either by prenatal influences, or by economic or social or biological circumstances." For Sheen, an abnormal person is "like a ship upside down."[150]

From Sheen's perspective, normal people engaged in behaviors of self-discipline such as asceticism and mortifications in order to perfect themselves. Sheen saw these as practices of normal people as behaviors that ordinary people ought to be engaging in if they wished to become holier. In contrast, Sheen believed that abnormal people refused to participate in such practices,

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142 Ibid., 10.
143 Ibid., 13.
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid., 15.
146 Fulton J. Sheen. *Life is Worth Living. Fifth Series.* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Publishing Company, 1957), 175.
147 Sheen, *Science, Psychiatry, and Religion*, 8.
148 Ibid., 9.
149 Ibid., 10.
150 Ibid., 11.

just as they refused to take responsibility for themselves, and instead sought refuge from spiritual growth by ascribing their problems to "a 'psychological complex' [that] can always be cured by giving it a physiological outlet."[151]

Psychoanalysis and Confession

As Sheen's self-test for normalcy ought to make apparent, the popular therapy of psychological analysis was one of the psychological matters with which he was most concerned. When speaking of psychological therapy, Sheen acknowledged that "due credit must be given to the new methods which have produced a new science."[152] Furthermore, as has already been mentioned, Sheen also conceded "that depth psychology is useful in dealing with the abnormal or what are called mental cases."[153] Nevertheless, Sheen contrasted the method of psychological analysis as he understood it with a practice that he referred to as "self-knowledge" and which he identified with a Catholic practice known as an examination of conscience.[154]

According to Sheen, there were three major differences between psychological analysis and genuine self-knowledge. The first difference between the two methods involved the aspect of the human person that each method sought to understand. In the case of psychological analysis, the unconscious was the apparent object that the person sought to know because, as Sheen explained, "the assumption is that deep in the cellar of our unconsciousness are certain complexes which, if brought to the surface, would disappear." One of Sheen's greatest concerns with this aspect of psychological analysis was that it appeared as if a person undergoing this kind of therapy "can very often be proud of his mental state," even when the mental state provided clear

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[151] Ibid., 16.
[152] Fulton J. Sheen, Life is Worth Living: Fourth Series (New York: McGraw Hill, 1956), 3.
[153] Ibid., 3-4.
[154] Ibid., 12.

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evidence of serious spiritual and emotional problems.[155] Sheen was convinced that the

nonjudgmental attitude of psychological analysis was an abnegation of human responsibility.

Sheen contrasted to those who seek to understand their unconscious selves with those

people who instead seek to achieve true self-knowledge. According to Sheen, this latter group

necessarily seeks to understand their own conscious minds and the "choices, motives, decisions,

values which go to make up character." They recognize their faults and desire to become better. It

was particularly important to Sheen's argument that those who seek to obtain genuine self-

knowledge generally feel guilt for their failures instead of pride in the severity of their illness.

According to Sheen, the second major difference between those who seek genuine self-

knowledge and those who engage in psychological analysis is the level of responsibility that the

members of each group feel for their state of existence. From Sheen's perspective, those who

practice psychological analysis have a tendency to deny that they deserve any blame for their own

misfortunes because the method itself has "no place for responsibility." Sheen argued that

because psychological analysis primarily deals with the unconscious and often concentrates on

childhood experiences it necessarily concludes that other people or aspects of the environment are

to blame for problems and not the person receiving the treatment.

Once again, Sheen contrasted those who engaged in psychological analysis, and thereby

refused blame for their own mistakes, with those whose consciences sought self-knowledge. He

believed that those who listen to their consciences recognize "that every single act of our lives is

like a drop of water that aids the formation of an icicle."[156] In other words, while those people

who follow the worldview of psychological analysis believe that they are only mere "spectators

as we might be in the theater" with regard to their lives, those who seek to follow the path of true

self-knowledge recognize that they are really the makers and breakers of their own character.[157]

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155 Ibid., 4.
156 Ibid., 4.
157 Ibid., 5.

For Sheen, the third and most important difference between the two methods was that those who seek self-knowledge recognize that "there is necessity for amendment, betterment, and the search for perfection." Sheen claimed that those who seek self-knowledge usually understand that their failures can damage the relationship that they ought to enjoy "with the Heavenly Father" and so they seek to repair that relationship.[158] In contrast, Sheen believed that those who practice psychological analysis and subscribe to its worldview are unable to see any necessity for genuine improvement and often doubt that real, positive change is even possible for anyone.

From Sheen's perspective, both self-knowledge and personal change are possible because "man is a spiritual being and therefore can turn back upon himself and reflect on himself."[159] In other words, Sheen believed that it is the spiritual aspect of the human person that provides the possibility of positive change. Sheen held that those who believe that human beings are merely material beings without a spiritual aspect deny that any substantial amendment is either necessary or possible.[160]

Sheen believed that for someone who is trapped in sin to be cured "confession and sorrow are required." Sheen interpreted a passage from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians as making a distinction between sorrow and mere remorse. Sheen cited the passage as "'For the sorrow that is according to God worketh penance, steadfast unto salvation; but the sorrow of the world worketh death (II Cor. 7:10)." Sheen argued that remorse was mere worldly sorrow and that the result of remorse was frequently "worry, jealousy, envy, [and] indignation." Sheen contrasted remorse with the genuine sorrow of recognizing that one has offended God and which "results in expiation and hope.[161] Sheen argued that at its deepest level this sorrow is about

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[158] Ibid., 6
[159] Ibid., 7.
[160] Ibid., 7.
[161] Sheen, *Peace of Soul*, 201-202.

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more than the intellectual knowledge that a law has been broken and derives from the recognition of having "broken off the relationship with Divine Love."[162]

Peace of Mind vs. Peace of Soul

Fulton Sheen acknowledged that modern psychiatry was capable of providing "a certain measure of peace of mind, for it adjusts the mind to the mood and temper of the world; but it never inquires whether we *ought* to adjust ourselves so completely to our present society."[163] He claimed that peace of mind "rests principally on what is called 'sublimation,' which psychology describes as a redirection of an instinct, passion, or energy from a crude, impulsive form to a creative activity which is social and, to some extent, ethical."[164] Yet Sheen also argued that this kind of peace of mind was primarily "the result of bringing some ordering principle to bear on discordant human experiences." He argued that the practice of applying discipline to the human mind was something that human beings had known about for most of history and not something that had been invented by modern psychiatry.

Sheen interpreted this "the peace of those who have convinced themselves that they are animals" as merely "the false peace of the slothful servant who had the same talent at the end as at the beginning because he ignored the judgment which would demand an account of his stewardship."[165] In other words, Sheen contrasted psychiatric "peace of mind" with the true "peace of soul" that he insisted "comes *only from God*."[166]

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[162] Sheen, *Peace of Soul*, 206.
[163] Sheen, *Peace of Soul*, 255.
[164] Sheen, *Peace of Soul*, 255.
[165] Sheen, *Peace of Soul*, 287.
[166] Sheen, *Peace of Soul*, 256. Emphasis in original.

Evaluation of Sheen's Critical Approach

Sheen's critique of modern psychology was predicated upon his concept of the hierarchy of sciences. For Sheen, neo-Thomist metaphysics provided the principles of intelligibility and the philosophy of nature provided the actual means for adequate metaphysical interpretation of the material world. Sheen saw all attempts by modern scientists, including modern psychologists, to offer a philosophical account of the world or the human person as mere lyricism because such narratives inevitably rejected the conclusions of neo-Thomist metaphysics. Furthermore, Sheen believed that an important prerequisite for any proper understanding of the human person was acknowledgement of both the human duty to sanctify the material world and ultimate human fulfillment in God. Since modern psychologists generally lacked this understanding, Sheen viewed both the pronouncements of their experimental science and their therapeutic treatments as theologically suspect and spiritually harmful.

There are many problems with Fulton J. Sheen's position. For example, it is not as inherently obvious that the acceptance of the principles of identity and non-contradiction also require a person to affirm the rest of Scholastic metaphysics in the way Sheen suggests. It is also not clear what particular quality allows a neo-Thomist metaphysician to offer an interpretation of reality according to the intelligible, nor is it apparent that modern scientists necessarily lack this same ability. Sheen's concern, of course, was that modern scientists should not assert that their own philosophical beliefs were the conclusions of their science. In other words, he did not want modern scientist *qua* scientists to be able to make pronouncements concerning matters that he viewed as issues of metaphysics, ethics, or theology. Sheen's critical approach to modern psychology was one way that he drew a clear boundary between these disciplines.

One of the great strengths of Sheen's critical approach was his observation that "current" scientific theories have consistently been a powerful influence upon philosophers. Unfortunately for this aspect of Sheen's argument, his own precious concept of "the philosophy of nature" can be interpreted as an example of the lyricism of Aristotelian science analogous to the lyricism of

modern science that he opposed. Neo-Thomism is a tradition of interpretation and not the default metaphysics that all human beings naturally recognize upon adequate reflection of the world.

Despite the fact that Sheen's arguments do not prove his own claims about metaphysics and the philosophy of nature, he did recognize a very real weakness at the heart of modern science. The descriptive and predictive power that modern science seems to be able to provide for the material world does not, at the end of the day, explain the meaning behind the world. Knowing the science that causes a sunset to happen does provide a sufficient explanation of the feeling of watching a sunset. A scientific answer reducible to "chemicals in the brain" does not explain the meaning of love between two human beings. Furthermore, although Sheen saw himself as making a philosophical argument, the fact that he situated his own explanation of meaning in the context of God's Wisdom in creation makes his argument fundamentally theological. After all, the feelings that one has watching a sunset or being in love take upon a different character when they are seen in the context of the love that the God who created all things has for the great goodness of that creation.

Although Sheen's arguments against modern psychology were somewhat simplistic, he did capture something true about influence that popular psychology had begun to exert upon American culture in the mid-twentieth century. The genius of the ministry of Fulton J. Sheen is found in his understanding of the average American mind during the mid-twentieth century. Sheen recognized the growing popularity of modern psychological therapy and feared that ordinary Americans would begin eschewing religious experiences in favor of such treatments. He was a priest who was convinced that spiritual practices were the proper solution to their difficulties and tried to convince others to engage in those practices instead.

Despite the insights contained within Sheen's various arguments against modern psychology, his practical alternatives to psychological therapy do not fare very well as genuine alternatives. There is no doubt that the practice of psychological therapy has at times been overemphasized in American culture. Furthermore, it is almost certain that there have been

people who have chosen to pursue psychological therapy instead of religion when what they really needed was spiritual healing. Yet it is also unquestionably the case that psychological therapy has developed the kind of positive reputation that it possess in modern American culture because it has been so consistently effective at helping people with their psychological problems. To the extent that Sheen intended to offer alternatives to psychological therapy and succeeded in convincing people who needed to receive psychological therapy not to pursue such therapy, he likely did them more psychological harm than spiritual good.

Although they should not be seen as a substitute for psychological therapy, many of Sheen's alternative practices are worthwhile practices for the enhancement of spiritual life. Sheen was concerned that people would rely on psychological therapy instead of seeking the proper relationship with God. He saw the practices of these traditions as in direct competition with each other. Yet his fear need not be realized for the practices of both traditions could theoretically be used by the same person, as they were in the approaches to psychological therapy that Thomas Verner Moore, Victor White, and Annette Walters each advocated.

Conclusion

Historians of the relationship of modern psychology and American Catholicism are correct in viewing Fulton J. Sheen as a critic of modern psychology, for Sheen's neo-Thomist perspective on modern psychology is best described as a critical approach. Sheen viewed the experimental science of modern psychology as having a very limited territory of competence. He saw atheism and materialism as the philosophical foundation of much of modern psychological investigation. He viewed the anthropology of the school of Behaviorism as this atheist and materialist perspective taken to its logical conclusion. Although Sheen did not completely reject modern psychological therapy in every instance, he did not recommend it as a common practice

and insisted that it should only be utilized as a medical treatment for those cases of mental illness that were the territory of the psychiatrist.

Despite the fact that Sheen consistently warned of the dangers of the lyricism of science, his criticisms of modern psychology focused on the metaphysical assumptions implicit within many of the theories and practices commonly associated with the new discipline. For example, in his arguments against both the Behaviorist theory of the human animal and the Freudian theory of the *libido*, Sheen explained that these anthropological accounts denied metaphysical truths about the human person that traditional metaphysics had recognized. Furthermore, when Sheen advised "normal" people against the psychiatrist's prescription of psychoanalysis and other forms of psychological therapy, he did so because of his concerns about the metaphysical visions of human life that he believed these therapies assumed and ultimately promoted.

Although Fulton J. Sheen was recognized as a critic of modern psychology, he was not universally negative concerning the work of all psychologists and psychiatrists. For example, after his controversial sermon in 1947, Sheen expressed his regard for a New York City psychiatrist from Columbia University, Bernard L. Pacella (1912-2007), who would later become involved in "the early development of pastoral psychology in Catholic circles."[167] More than a decade earlier, Robert Edward Brennan, OP (1897-1975) had expressed thanks to "F.J. Sheen of the Catholic University of America" in the opening Acknowledgements of his *General Psychology* (1937) "for reading the entire manuscript and helping with its final draft."[168] Yet Brennan, whose work is considered in the next chapter, pursued the standard neo-Thomist approach to modern psychology of reformulation rather than the approach of criticism.

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[167] Kugelmann, *Psychology and Catholicism: Contested Boundaries*, 196.

[168] Robert Edward Brennan, General Psychology: An Interpretation of the Science of Mind Based on St. Thomas Aquinas (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), xx.

CHAPTER III

THE REFORMULATION APPROACH TO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

OF ROBERT EDWARD BRENNAN, O.P.

Fulton J. Sheen's critical approach to the subject of modern psychology was essentially the most negative kind of reaction that neo-Thomist Catholics could have to modern psychology. Mid-twentieth century neo-Thomists, like all Thomists, affirmed that all genuine knowledge comes from God, with the result that faith and reason cannot contradict each other. Although other mid-twentieth century neo-Thomists shared Sheen's basic concern that the metaphysical assumptions of modern psychologists might hinder their ability to acknowledge the transcendent aspect of human existence, they usually gave more emphasis to the positive benefits that modern psychology could provide. As a result, the most common neo-Thomist approach to modern psychology was that of reformulation in neo-Thomist terms rather than direct criticism. From the late 1930s until the early 1950s, the works of Robert Edward Brennan, OP (1897-1975) were prominent examples of the neo-Thomist reformulation approach to modern psychology.[1]

During the mid-twentieth century Robert Brennan wrote college textbooks on modern psychology from a neo-Thomist perspective. Brennan's works addressed the spiritual element of human life by focusing on the ultimate human destiny of the human soul. He was a staunch advocate for neo-Thomist interpretations of psychology even while he acknowledged that the

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[1] As Chapter 1 indicated, Brennan's reformulation approach to modern psychology was not unique or particularly creative. In this work, Brennan's writings serve as the representative of the dominant attitude that neo-Thomists of the early twentieth century took toward modern psychology. Brennan was consistently able to obtain advice and publish prefaces for his works from more prominent neo-Thomist thinkers of the period precisely because they shared his basic reformulation approach to the subject of modern psychology.

experimental method had helped the young science to discover physiological data about the physical human body. Many American Catholic college students were first introduced to the science of modern psychology through studying Brennan's various textbooks on the subject in the decades before the Second Vatican Council.[2]

While Robert Brennan acknowledged the value that experimental psychological research had for the understanding of the human person, he was distrustful of the influence that modern thought had exerted upon the development of empirical psychology. Brennan was convinced that the neo-Thomist understanding of the human person was superior to the theories that modern psychologists proposed about the subject. In Brennan's view, modern experimental psychology was caught within the Cartesian mind-body problem. Like Liberatore before him, Brennan argued that the only way to escape from Cartesian dualism to accept the Thomist doctrine of the relationship of the human soul and body.

The neo-Thomist claim that the human being is a hylomorphic union, or a single unified being composed of both soul and body, was the foundation of Brennan's strategy for protecting the transcendent dimension of human existence from the unrecognized philosophical premises of modern psychologists. Brennan asserted that this hylomorphic union was a pre-investigative fact of human experience and, as such, ought to be a premise of any true psychology rather than a subject of scientific experiment. In Brennan's view, when the hylomorphic union was acknowledged, the transcendent dimension of human existence was also necessarily recognized and affirmed. Brennan envisioned the most perfect form of modern psychology as one that would use neo-Thomist principles of interpretation, including the hylomorphic union, that would consist

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[2] Although Misiak and Staudt were dismissive of any future value in Brennan's work, they noted in *Catholics in Psychology* (1954) that he "still occupies a unique place in the history of psychology among American Catholics in that he furnished them with textbooks which in their day were instrumental in bringing experimental psychology to the attention of Catholic students." Furthermore, they noted that Brennan's "first edition of General Psychology and his Thomistic Psychology enjoyed wide use when they first appeared and they helped to arouse an interest in experimental psychology at Catholic colleges and universities." (Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology*, 246).

in a study of human nature in terms of human acts, powers, and habits, and that would be situated in the context of the origin, purpose, and destiny of the human person.

Like other neo-Thomists who engaged with modern psychology, Robert Brennan was concerned about the metaphysical presuppositions of its practitioners. Unlike Sheen, Brennan was focused exclusively on the experimental forms of modern psychology rather than with psychological therapies such as psychoanalysis. Brennan opposed what he saw as the false metaphysics in the experimental science by translating neo-Thomist philosophical claims into the language of modern psychology and by incorporating modern scientific discoveries into his own neo-Thomist framework. Brennan insisted that the best way to interpret modern psychological data was according to neo-Thomist philosophical insights. Although Brennan's rigid vocabulary and his failure to engage with the latest scholarship eventually caused other Catholic thinkers to reject his academic writings, his claim that modern psychology should be based upon human nature was a precursor of later person-centered neo-Thomist approaches to modern psychology.[3]

This chapter argues that Brennan's reformulation approach was an attempt to interpret the experimental science of modern psychology according to neo-Thomist metaphysics so that the transcendent dimension of human existence would be recognized and affirmed. The first section of this chapter provides a narrative of the life of Robert Edward Brennan, O.P. and includes an overview of some of his major writings. The second section offers an explanation of Brennan's version of neo-Thomist thought. This section focuses on his dissertation, *A Theory of Abnormal Cognitive Processes According to the Principles of St. Thomas Aquinas* (1925) and an essay, "The Thomist Revival," that Brennan published in the *Ecclesiastical Review* in 1941. The third

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[3] Brennan was the last American Catholic psychologist to be profiled in the sixteenth chapter, "Other Pioneers in America," of Henryk Misiak and Virginia M. Staudt (later Sexton)'s history *Catholics in Psychology* (1954). According to Misiak and Staudt, the Revised Edition of Brennan's *General Psychology* "fails to reflect any appreciation by the author of the most recent literature in experimental psychology." Despite their disdain for Brennan's work, they noted that he had always maintained that the entire human person should be the subject of psychology and recognized him as a forerunner of the work of person centered approaches to psychology, such as that of Sister Annette Walters, CSJ (1910-1978) . Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology*, 246, 284-285.

section looks at Brennan's ideal of what psychology should be through both his criticisms of the metaphysical premises of modern psychology and a short piece entitled "My Psychological Credo" from *The Catholic School Journal* in 1948. The fourth section provides a general overview of Brennan's version of modern psychology, beginning with his various definitions of psychology, continuing with his neo-Thomist interpretations of memory, and concluding with an explanation of his focus on the nature, origin, and eternal destiny of the human person. The fifth section offers an evaluation of Brennan's position. The conclusion considers Brennan's approach in the context of mid-twentieth century neo-Thomist engagement with modern psychology.

The Life of Robert Edward Brennan, O.P.

Robert Edward Brennan was born in Lima, Ohio on July 29, 1897 to Edward and Bridget Brennan née O'Brien.[4] He was the oldest of their seven children.[5] Brennan received his primary and secondary education at St. Rose's Parochial and High School. After finishing at St. Rose, Brennan went on to attend St. Charles College in Catonsville, Maryland. Brennan graduated from St. Charles College in 1917 and began studying for the priesthood at Mt. St. Mary's Seminary of the West in Cincinnati, Ohio.[6]

Robert Edward Brennan received his Dominican habit at St. Joseph's Priory in Somerset, Ohio on April 30, 1918 and took his middle name, Edward, as his religious name. He professed vows on July 2, 1919 and transferred from Mt. St. Mary's Seminary to the Dominican Studium at

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[4] Walter Romig, *American Catholic Who's Who* 1960 and 1961, Volume XIV, (Walter Romig: Gross Pointe, MI, 1960), 37.

[5] Mac Donald, Dominican Archives, 5 May 2015. This is an e-mail correspondence with Robert C. Mac Donald, Assistant to the Archivist, of the Dominican Archives of the St. Joseph Province of the Dominican Order (archives@providence.edu). According to Mac Donald, one of Robert Brennan's younger sisters, Catherine Celestine, also became a Dominican at St. Mary's of the Springs. She took the name of Sister Mary Alfred, OP.

[6] Robert Brennan, *A Theory of Abnormal Cognitive Processes According to Principles of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Dissertation, "Vita," 76. I originally found some of the information on Brennan's early life in the *Vita* on the final page of his Dissertation. Much of it was later corroborated by e-mails from Mac Donald and by the fourteenth volume of *American Catholic Who's Who*.

St. Rose Priory in Springfield, Kentucky where he studied philosophy from 1919 to 1920.[7] In

1920 Brennan moved to Washington, D.C., "where he continued his philosophical and

theological studies."[8] Brennan studied philosophy at the Dominican House of Studies in

Washington D.C. from 1920 to 1922, and followed this period of formation with the requisite

training in theology from 1922 to 1926.[9]

While in formation to become a priest, Brennan also became a graduate student at The

Catholic University of America in 1921. He took graduate courses from both Edward A. Pace

(1861-1938) and Thomas Verner Moore (1877-1969).[10] Brennan was ordained to the priesthood

at St. Dominic's Church in Washington D.C. on June 17, 1925 and obtained his doctorate in

psychology from The Catholic University of America that same month. He received the

Licentiate of Sacred Theology (STL) in August of the following year.[11]

Brennan was sent to the American Dominican Missions from 1926 to 1931. For his first

assignment Brennan "served as prefect of schools in the Kienning-Fu district of Fukien

Province" and ministered to "the parish of Our Lady of the Rosary in Kienning-Fu (now

Kienow)."[12] During this period Brennan reportedly "traveled throughout all of Europe and the

Near Orient."[13] Brennan later claimed that he "began his academic career by teaching the

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[7] Mac Donald, Dominican Archives, 5 May 2015.

[8] Robert Brennan, *A Theory of Abnormal Cognitive Processes*, "Vita," 76.

[9] Mac Donald, Dominican Archives, 5 May 2015.

[10] Ibid. In Brennan's Vita, the coursework from The Catholic University of America is listed in this way: "Here he pursued courses in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, under Dr. Smith, O.P.; Genetic Psychology, under Dr. Dubray, S.M.; Social Psychology, Personality, and Cosmology, under Dr. Pace; Psychiatry, under Dr. Moore, O.S.B.; and Biology, under Dr. Parker. He also attended a series of lectures on psychiatrical problems given at St. Elizabeth's Government Hospital for the Insane, by Dr. White."

[11] Mac Donald, Dominican Archives 5 May 2015.

[12] This is a direct quotation from the e-mail received from the Dominican Archives, dated 5 May 2015. Kienow is in the Fujian Province, on the coast of the Chinese mainland, and is the area that is geographically closest to Taiwan.

[13] From an "About the author" in the front of a copy of *The Image of His Maker: A Study of the Nature of Man* located in the general collection stacks at the University of Dayton. Brennan seems to have begun his work in China during the same month that he received his STL.

elements of psychology to the children of the Flowery Kingdom."[14] After leaving the missions he

published a short book entitled *Common Prayers in Chinese and Latin* (1931).[15]

Brennan was sent to the Dominican community at Providence College when he returned

to the United States. He remained formally assigned to the St. Thomas Aquinas Priory there until

1951.[16] He was made Professor of Philosophy and Psychology at Providence College in 1931.[17]

In 1935, he also began teaching courses in psychology during the summers at St. Mary of the

Springs in Columbus, Ohio.[18] He was the founder and became the first director of the Thomist

Institute of Providence College in 1937. Later that same year he released the first edition of his

first textbook on the science of modern psychology, *General Psychology: An Interpretation of the

Science of Mind Based on St. Thomas Aquinas* (1937).

In the preface of *General Psychology* (1937), Dr. Rudolf Allers (1883-1963) of the

University of Vienna praised "the spirit that pervades the entire text" as "just the one that I should

like to see at work everywhere in psychology."[19] Allers asserted both "that psychology can hope

for ultimate progress only by becoming rooted in metaphysical strata" and "that of all the various

current philosophies, the one upon which Dr. Brennan has founded his theories is by far the most

profitable for a genuine science of mind."[20] Allers viewed *General Psychology* as "not only an

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[14] Robert Edward Brennan, *The Image of His Maker*, viii. This statement is found near the front of the book and at the end of the acknowledgements that accompany the book's 7th printing. In context, Brennan was pleased with the fact that a Chinese version of the book was being considered.

[15] Romig, *American Catholic Who's Who* 1960 and 1961, 37.

[16] Mac Donald e-mails, 11 June 2015; 5 May 2015.

[17] Mac Donald e-mail, 15 May 2015.

[18] Mac Donald, Dominican Archives, May 5, 2015. St. Mary of the Springs later became Ohio Dominican University.

[19] Rudolf Allers was a Viennese-born psychologist and psychiatrist. Allers, a former associate of Sigmund Freud, travelled to the United States in 1938 in order to become professor of both psychology and Scholastic Philosophy at the Catholic University of America. Among his most notable books were *The Character of Psychology* (1932), which was "a Thomistic formulation of Adlerian psychology," and *The Successful Error* (1940), which rejected the use of Freudian method and doctrine. Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology*, 242. Brennan later wrote a very favorable review of Allers' *The Successful Error* in *The Thomist* (October 1940), 581-585.

[20] Brennan, *General Psychology*, vii. Preface, Rudolf Allers, M.D. University of Vienna, November 13, 1936.

important contribution to science, but a step forward towards the rehabilitation of mind and humanity."[21]

After the preface, *General Psychology* (1937) opened with a page of acknowledgements followed by a prologue that considered both the traditional psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas and Brennan's notion of general psychology.[22] The textbook was divided into three large sections, or books, for the three parts of the human soul according to neo-Thomist thought: Organic Life, Sensory Life, and Intellectual Life. Throughout the book Brennan explained current psychological theories of the time. If there was a relevant neo-Thomist theory then Brennan explained it as well, usually implying that it was correct. In cases where there was no relevant neo-Thomist metaphysical theory, such as the mechanics of hearing, Brennan presented evidence for the current theories with minimal argument.[23]

Following the publication of *General Psychology* (1937), Brennan engaged in a variety of activities related to his neo-Thomism. Brennan held the position of director of the Thomistic Guilds of Providence College from 1937 until 1942.[24] Brennan also began editing *Essays in Thomism* (1942) during this period.[25] Perhaps most importantly, Brennan became a regular

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[21] Ibid., xix.

[22] Brennan listed "F.J. Sheen of the Catholic University of America" among the various psychologists and Thomists that he wished to thank for having read the whole manuscript and helping him to prepare the final draft.

[23] Ibid., 161-163.

[24] Romig, *American Catholic Who's Who* 1960 and 1961, 37. The Thomistic Guilds of Providence College appears to have been a program of the Thomistic Institute that Brennan founded at Providence College in 1937. It consisted of several groups of professionals who met together under the guidance of a priest to learn about and promote the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. The Thomistic Guilds included a nurse's guild, a doctor's guild, a teacher's guild, a lawyer's guild, and a telephone operator's guild. An article about the Thomistic Guilds in "The Cowl," the student newspaper of Providence College, suggests that the Institute ceased operating for a time during World War II but that it had resumed "its normal peacetime activities" by the end of 1946. The minutes from the most recent meetings of the guilds are listed below this information. ("The Cowl," November 9, 1946).

[25] *Essays in Thomism* was a collection to which several prominent Thomists had contributed articles. One of the most prominent, Virgil Michel, was apparently involved in a heated exchange with Brennan that is recorded in their written correspondence. Michel died in the midst of this exchange, however, and *Essays in Thomism* (1942) was later dedicated to him. William M. Halsey, *The Survival of American Innocence: Catholicism in an Era of Disillusionment, 1920-1940*, (Notre Dame, IN: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 163.

contributor to *The Thomist* beginning with an article on "The Mansions of Thomist Philosophy" in the very first issue in April 1939. In this piece Brennan claimed that Christian von Wolff's order of teaching the philosophic disciplines had departed from the plan of Aquinas and had placed a malformed "ontology" in front of psychology. One result of this change, Brennan argued, was that "the unsuspecting mind of the student is exposed to the danger of overlooking or missing completely the deep importance of *metaphysics*."[26]

With the publication of *Thomistic Psychology: A Philosophic Analysis of the Nature of Man* (1941) Brennan altered his efforts from translating neo-Thomist concepts into the language of modern psychology to discussing the science of modern psychology in explicitly neo-Thomist terms. In the introduction, Mortimer J. Adler invoked Cardinal Mercier's dream of "saving good scientific work from the crippling incubus of a bad philosophical inheritance" by utilizing the knowledge of human nature that Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas had each provided.[27] Adler suggested that *Thomistic Psychology* was the fulfillment of Mercier's dream and that "at last is the unity of psychology achieved— a body of knowledge, well-defined in subject matter, and unified by a right ordering of philosophy and science."[28]

Thomistic Psychology was structured in three parts: the Psychology of Aristotle, the Psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas, and the Moderns. The first fifty pages considered the Aristotelian view of the soul. The three hundred pages that followed considered the view of Aquinas that the human person is a composite of body and soul. Facts about human anatomy that modern scientist had discovered, such as information about cells, the brain, and the spine, were generally included in this second section along with Thomist philosophical claims about subjects such as the will, the mental faculties, and the appetites. The final section of about thirty pages on

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[26] Robert Edward Brennan, OP, "The Mansions of Thomistic Philosophy," in *The Thomist*, Volume I, April 1939, 78. Emphasis in original.

[27] Robert Edward Brenna, OP, *Thomistic Psychology*, vii. Introduction, Mortimer J. Adler, University of Chicago, May, 1941.

[28] Ibid., viii

the theories of modern psychologists was almost a complete a reprint of an article on "Modern Psychology and Man" that Brennan had published in *The Thomist* in January 1941.

According to the records of Providence College, Robert Edward Brennan, O.P. "became professor of psychology at the University of Montreal" in 1942 and remained there until at least 1946.[29] The Dominican Archives records that he spent the 1943-1944 academic year as a lecturer at the University of Montreal and that he resided there with the Dominicans of Notre Dame de la Grace. In 1944, Brennan was officially granted the degree of Master of Sacred Theology from the Master General of the Dominican Order.[30]

Brennan's *History of Psychology from the standpoint of a Thomist* (1945), written while he was still at the University of Montreal, was an attempt at a popular narrative of psychology. In this text, Brennan tried to show the continuity between the philosophical and experimental forms of psychology from within a neo-Thomist historical framework.[31] In a prefatory note at the front of the book, Jacques Maritain observed that as

> the philosopher comes to the end of your book, the great problem with which he
> is confronted is that modern psychology– all the while tending toward the pure
> type of scientific knowledge, in which reality is analyzed, conceptualized and
> defined, not in terms of intelligible being, but in terms of observable and
> measurable sense-data, and empirical ways of verification – cannot, nevertheless,
> undergo full mathematical symbolization and systematization, as physics does,
> because psychological phenomena, even observed from a merely empiriological
> point of view, are imbued with the vital unity and totality, dynamism and finality

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[29] Mac Donald, Dominican Archives, 11 June 2015.

[30] Mac Donald, Dominican Archives, 5 May 2015. "The Master of Sacred Theology is a degree conferred upon the Order of Preachers to those of its members who have made an outstanding contribution to the theological sciences. This is not a degree conferred for a particular course of studies, but for a life of outstanding scholarship." http://www.opeast.org/2013/06/11/masters-of-sacred-theology/ accessed on 11 October 2016.

[31] The first hundred pages of Brennan's *History of Psychology* consisted of a history of philosophy focusing on the soul. This was followed by fifty pages dealing with the soul according to modern philosophy and then a hundred and fifty page presentation of Brennan's view of the history of modern psychology. The final ten pages provided one of Brennan's most direct criticisms of modern psychology for failing to embrace Thomist philosophy.

of the ontological reality they express, and cannot be scientifically grasped without at least some indirect consideration of these characters.[32]

Maritain went on to explain that even though most modern psychologists refuse to accept "the strictly ontological conceptualization of Thomistic philosophy" and while many of them even have clear positivist prejudices against it, "nevertheless modern psychology, in its general mood and inspiration, makes a kind of growing affinity with this philosophy appear, as you point out at the end of your book."[33] Maritain concluded his note with the affirmation that modern Thomist thinkers had the duty "to bring to light the reasons for this affinity, to make clear the inconsistencies of the positivist prejudices, and to achieve, in the psychological field as in the other fields of human knowledge, the rapprochement and reconciliation between science and metaphysics."[34]

Brennan continued his efforts to reach a more popular audience in his subsequent book, *The Image of His Maker: A Study of the Nature of Man* (1948).[35] Brennan simplified his usual highly technical neo-Thomist vocabulary, employed a conversational style, and ended with an argument about human resurrection. In many ways, the basic structure of this book was the same as that of *General Psychology*, for it followed the divisions of the tripartite soul, but Brennan's commentary was more poetic and the issues considered were less academic in the latter book.[36] *The Image of His Maker* apparently filled a need among those who wanted to understand the neo-

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[32] Robert Edward Brennan, *History of Psychology from the Standpoint of a Thomist* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1945), viii. Prefatory note by Jacques Maritain, vii-ix.

[33] Ibid., ix.

[34] Ibid.

[35] In the Acknowledgements from the original 1948 edition of *The Image of His Maker*, Brennan still lists himself as "of the University of Montreal." Robert Edward Brennan, O.P., *The Image of His Maker: A Study of the Nature of Man* Milwaukee, WI: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1948.

[36] For example, Brennan began a section on visual sensation with the following observation: "One of the loveliest things the human eye has ever looked at is the rainbow. In it we can find all the colors of nature: reds and oranges, yellows and greens, blues and violets, and over a thousand hues that we do not ordinarily see because they are too close to each other. It is one of the most perfect gifts that could have been given to man. But we are so accustomed to the colors that have been spread over the universe, in sky and clouds, in grass and trees and flowers, that very few of us stop to ask how our vision of color takes place" (Brennan, The Image of His Maker, 99). This style of prose is not found in *Thomistic Psychology* or in either edition of *General Psychology.*

Thomist position on human nature without having to learn the technical vocabulary, for by its 7th printing in 1962, *The Image of His Maker* had "been translated into French, German, Spanish and Japanese" and there were developing plans "for a Chinese version of the text."[37]

According to the Dominican Archives, Robert Edward Brennan, O.P. had transferred to St. Joseph's in Somerset, Ohio by 1949, ostensibly to write full-time. Two years later, in 1951, Brennan was officially moved to St. Mary's of the Springs (which later became Ohio Dominican University) and he remained officially stationed there until 1963. Yet he also served as a visiting professor at both Providence College and the University of Montreal at various times between 1952 and 1956. For example, the title page of *General Psychology: Revised Edition* (1952) indicates that Brennan was a visiting professor of psychology at the University of Montreal.[38]

General Psychology: Revised Edition (1952) contained only minor modifications from the version that Brennan had written fifteen years earlier and indicated virtually no subsequent engagement on Brennan's part with any new scientific advances. Brennan's revision merely consisted of more partisan scholastic jargon and hardened terminology rather than the embrace of any new possibilities. Where Brennan had used "mind" in his original version, he now used "soul." Where he had previous written of a "theory of matter and form" he now asserted a "doctrine of matter and form." There was also a new preface from Charles A. Curran (1919-1978) of St. Charles College Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, praising the revised work, but in reality there was very little to distinguish it from the previous edition.[39]

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[37] Ibid., viii. All of the copies of this text that I have seen are from this seventh printing. Brennan acknowledged that the publishers had allowed him to "point up the style here and there" (presumably, he meant something like "to make the language more poetic") for that edition, with the result that some quotations made from this text may not be the same in the original edition.

[38] The Dominican Archives does not have very good records on where Brennan was during this period of his life, which is somewhat unusual. Mac Donald, Dominican Archives, 11 June 2015

[39] Charles A. Curran was a Catholic professor of psychology who specialized in the work of Carl Rogers (1902-1987), one of the founders of the humanistic approach to psychology. Curran later taught at Loyola in Chicago. Like Magda Arnold (1903-2002), an experimental psychologist who specialized in the Thomist account of emotions, Curran was a Thomist thinker. Curran's area of expertise was spiritual counseling.

In his acknowledgements to the 1952 Revised Edition of *General Psychology*, Brennan explained that he had personally taught hundreds of students using the original edition. He also noted the valuable assistance that he had "received from professors who have read or used the book since its first appearance in 1937" and listed several of them because of their persistent interest, advice, and patience.[40] Brennan also thanked "the Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs Academy and College, Columbus, Ohio, who gave so generously of their time in reading the proofs of the second edition" without, however, referring to any of them by name.[41]

It is of course possible that Brennan never actually knew their names. During his periods at St. Mary's of the Springs Brennan essentially lived in isolation from the rest of the Dominican community. He frequently travelled during this period of his life, making "at least two trips to Europe where he consulted with the noted Thomists A. Sertillanges, O.P. in Paris and R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. in Rome."[42] Since he was not teaching and was frequently away on long trips, "his apparent lack of any occupation was causing a great deal of speculation among the Sisters and novices."[43] Their speculations became such a problem "that in 1954 the bishop felt the need to ask the provincial just what Brennan's duties were."[44] Brennan had no regular teaching assignments and was supposed to be focusing on his writing, yet the only book that he published during his time at St. Mary's of the Springs was his *Irish Diary* (1962).[45]

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[40] Robert Edward Brennan, O.P., General Psychology: A Study of Man based on St. Thomas Aquinas, Revised Edition (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), xxii. Brennan listed "Mortimer J. Adler of the University of Chicago; Charles A. Curran, of St. Charles College, Seminary, Columbus, Ohio; Charles DeKoninck, of Laval University; Walter Farrell, O.P., formerly of the Dominican Studium, Chicago; Benjamin U. Fay, O.P., of the Dominican Studium, Somerset, Ohio; Charles A. Hart, of the Catholic University of America; Noël Mailloux, O.P., my confrère at the University of Montréal; Jacques Maritain, of Princeton University; Anton C. Pegis, President of St. Michael's Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto; and Joseph C. Taylor, O.P., of the Dominican Studium, Somerset, Ohio."
[41] This decision was in sharp contrast to the many men that Brennan thanked, here and elsewhere. Sister Annette Walters would later suggest that religious sisters were frequently treated as personnel rather than as persons.
[42] Mac Donald, Dominican Archives, May 5, 2015.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Mac Donald, Dominican Archives, May 12, 2015.
[45] Ibid.

Brennan purportedly had an important mystical experience in 1963 and for the rest of his life he "spent 10 to 14 hours daily before the Blessed Sacrament."[46] He was transferred back to St. Joseph Priory that same year and became confessor to the novices. Brennan turned toward spiritual writing during this period and published *The Seven Horns of the Lamb: A Study of the Gifts Based on St. Thomas Aquinas* (1966). In 1968 Brennan wrote a pamphlet sized book on the history of his local Dominican community, *Cradle of the Faith in Ohio: Sesquicentennial of Saint Joseph's Catholic Church, Somerset, Ohio, 1818-1968*. He remained at St. Joseph until 1975 when poor health required him to be sent to Marion Manor, a care facility in Lebanon, Kentucky. He died at Marion Manor on June 17, 1975, the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination, and his body was laid to rest in the community cemetery at St. Joseph's Priory.

The Neo-Thomism of Robert Edward Brennan, O.P.

Robert Edward Brennan, OP, was profoundly committed to the neo-Thomist synthesis. His writings are filled with neo-Thomist terminology, principles, references, and explanations. Brennan saw neo-Thomism as the true philosophical system, the continuation of the perennial philosophy of Aristotle in the modern world, and the key to the proper understanding of science. Neo-Thomism was such an important aspect of Brennan's writings on psychology that it is important to understand his neo-Thomist intellectual commitments in order to fully grasp his reformulation approach to the science of modern psychology.

Brennan's Theory of Abnormal Cognitive Processes

The neo-Thomist convictions and his reformulation approach to modern psychology of Robert Edward Brennan, OP, were already linked together in his dissertation on *A Theory of*

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[46] The original source of this quotation is a Fr. Luke Tancrell, who wrote it in a special "Tributes to Father Brennan" section of the first issue of the *News Digest*, the provincial newsletter that appeared after Brennan's death. I have not actually seen this issue; it was quoted to me in the Tuesday, May 12, 2015 e-mail from Mac Donald.

Abnormal Cognitive Processes According to the Principles of St. Thomas Aquinas (1925).

Brennan opened his dissertation with the observation that modern psychological research into

abnormal cognition consistently emphasizes empirical facts "without, however, much effort being

made to give us a philosophical interpretation of the mental phenomena that have been

observed."[47] Furthermore, Brennan argued that "a distinct cleavage has been made between the

metaphysical and the scientific methods of handling psychological problems: each has come to be

regarded as a distinct discipline in itself." Against this position, Brennan asserted that the

structure of traditional philosophical psychology allowed it to provide "the broad metaphysical

view of such facts as are brought to light with the progress of science" and that "there is no

reason why the application of its solid principles should not disclose interesting and enlightening

meanings for those phenomena of mind that range outside the curve of normalcy." Brennan's

goal was "to set forth a metaphysical interpretation of abnormal processes of mind in accordance

with the traditional point of view, and based upon the principles of St. Thomas."[48]

In the introduction to his dissertation Brennan referred to four different texts, each of

which gives some insight into both his version of neo-Thomism and his interpretation of modern

psychology.[49] First, Brennan mentioned the work of Maurice de Wulf, author of a *Historie de la*

Philosophie Medievale (1924), as having recognized "that the attitude of prejudice which has

crept into the minds of many students respecting the worth and significance of the traditional

psychology may be explained by the fact that the principles of Scholasticism have not yet been

sufficiently examined in their possible relationship to the problems of modern psychology."[50] For

much of the twentieth century, historians of scholastic thought viewed the historical accounts of

Etienne Gilson (1884-1978) and Maurice de Wulf (1867-1947) as rival interpretations of the

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[47] Brennan, Dissertation, 5.
[48] Ibid.
[49] The term text is being applied loosely in this instance to describe several different kinds of writings, including collections of writings, and, where applicable, is used as shorthand to describe the views of the person who is considered to be the author of the text to which Brennan referred.
[50] Ibid., 6.

Scholastic tradition without also recognizing their essential continuity and indebtedness to the

narratives of Joseph Kleutgen (1811-1883) and Albert Stöckl (1823-1895).[51] Like de Wulf,

Brennan held that Scholastic thought had been a unified system and that St. Thomas Aquinas had

been the apex of the Scholastic tradition. After noting his own agreement with de Wulf's claims

about the value of Scholasticism for modern psychology, Brennan reiterated "that the principles

of the traditional psychology, when employed in their proper capacity, that is, as norms of

interpretation, may render invaluable assistance to the empiricist by giving him a solid foundation

upon which to construct an orderly system out of the phenomena that he observes."[52] In other

words, Brennan saw neo-Thomism as providing the proper intellectual framework for the

interpretation of modern psychological research.

Brennan followed his mention of de Wulf with an allusion to the writings of St. Thomas

Aquinas himself. Brennan invoked Aquinas in order to demonstrate that his own usage of mind

within his dissertation was in keeping with a usage that the Angelic Doctor had often employed.

Brennan argued that St. Thomas utilized the term "mind" as a synonym for "intellect" in order to

differentiate it from "sense." Since Brennan's dissertation sought to use St. Thomas Aquinas to

show the relationship that both the immaterial intellect and physical senses had with insanity, it

was important to him to argue that this distinction was based in the work of St. Thomas.[53]

The third text that Brennan noted within the introduction of his dissertation was the

decree of approval of the twenty-four fundamental Thomist theses that the Sacred Congregation

of Studies had published on July 27, 1914.[54] These statements included the assertions that in

living beings there is "a substantial form, called the soul, [that] requires an organic disposition or

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[51] See John Inglis, *Spheres of Philosophical Inquiry and the Historiography of Medieval Philosophy* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 1998), 11.

[52] Brennan, Dissertation, 6.

[53] It is worth reiterating, however, that Brennan himself later ceased using the term "mind" and replaced with the term "soul." It is likely that Brennan originally used mind because some modern psychologists were still using the term and that he ceased bothering to use the term because most of them had stopped referring to the mind.

[54] https://franciscan-archive.org/thomas/24theses.html accessed on 26 June 2015.

heterogeneous parts,"[55] that "the human soul subsists by itself, and is created by God when it can

be infused into a sufficiently disposed subject, and is incorruptible and immortal by nature,"[56] and

that the "rational soul is so united to the body as to be its single substantial form."[57] The theses

also declared that while both the organic and inorganic faculties "naturally spring from the human

soul," and even though the organic faculties "to which the sense belongs" depend upon both the

body and the soul, nevertheless, the inorganic faculties only depend upon the soul, making the

human intellect a spiritual "faculty intrinsically independent of any organ."[58]

Brennan asserted that these twenty-four theses constituted the true principles of Thomism

and were necessarily of great importance to all Catholic philosophers "because of the high

sanction they have received from the Church." With regard to psychology, Brennan explained

that nine of the theses "very clearly express the basic psychological principles of the Medieval

Doctor."[59]   Brennan's reference to these twenty-four Thomistic theses make it clear that he

affirmed them as true and that he understood them to constitute the Catholic Church's official

interpretation of teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas on psychology.

The context of Brennan's strict adherence to the twenty four Thomistic theses was the

Vatican's official condemnation of the Modernist errors in *Lamentabli Sane* (1907) and Pope Pius

X subsequent explanation of the Modernist doctrine in *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907). The

Dominicans, as the order to which St. Thomas Aquinas himself had belonged, often saw

themselves as uniquely charged with upholding his teachings.[60] As a Dominican priest whose

spiritual formation occurred in the early 20th century, Brennan was intellectually formed to see

the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas as the best response to the errors of the modern world and to

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[55] Thesis XIII.

[56] Thesis XV.

[57] Thesis XVI.

[58] Thesis XVII.

[59] Brennan, Dissertation, 8.

[60] "Many scholars and administrators in White's order [the Dominicans], conscious of the heritage of St. Thomas and the Dominican teaching tradition, felt especially delegated to maintain conservative neo-Thomistic standards." Ann Conrad Lammers, *In God's Shadow: The Collaboration of Victor White and C.G. Jung* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 41.

respect the Church's official position, even on a matter of science or philosophy, with religious faith.[61] After all, one of propositions that that *Lamentabili Sane* had explicitly condemned was that because "the deposit of Faith contains only revealed truths, the Church has no right to pass judgment on the assertions of the human sciences."[62]

The fourth and final text mentioned in the introduction of Brennan's dissertation was Pope Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* (1879). Brennan referred to *Aeterni Patris* in order to provide context for his belief that true Thomist principles "by proper and careful handling, will find their ripest development in fields of modern research."[63] *Aeterni Patris* is often recognized as the foundational document of the neo-Thomist movement because of its emphasis on the role of Scholastic philosophy in providing a basis for an understanding of the sciences. As Gerald McCool explained in *The Neo-Thomists*, the encyclical also officially endorsed the claim that philosophy and theology should be distinguished so that philosophy could be employed as a support for revealed truths "without compromising the transcendence of Christianity's revealed mysteries."[64] Brennan's use of the encyclical demonstrates that he saw *Aeterni Patris* as urging the use of the principles of Thomist philosophy in order to engage with modern knowledge.

While Brennan was always focused upon experimental psychology, he never personally engaged in psychological experiments, his dissertation is the closest that he ever came to offering a detailed neo-Thomist interpretation of specific psychological data. Brennan provided a Thomist explanation of normal cognitive processes, beginning with "the material processes of sensation, memory, and imagination" continuing with both sensory and intellectual versions of perception,

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[61] It is also worth remembering that the 1917 Code of Canon Law stated "*Philosophiae rationalis ac theologiae studia et alumnorum in his disciplinis institutionem professores omnio pertractent ad Angelici Doctoris rationem, doctrinam et principia, eaque sancta teneant*." (found on http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0813/_P4D.HTM accessed 12 October 2016) This can be translated loosely as "In the formation of students in rational philosophy and theology, professors of these disciplines must teach according to the method, doctrine, and principles of the Angelic Doctor [St. Thomas Aquinas] and should hold to them faithfully (1917 Code of Canon Law, Canon 1366 .2)
[62] Lamentabili Sane, Proposition 5.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Gerald McCool, *The Neo-Thomists*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 2001. 34.

and concluding with the intellectual powers of judgment and reason.[65] Brennan argued that

illusions, hallucinations, and delusions are always based in the material elements of the sensory

faculties rather than in the intellectual powers themselves.[66] Although mental disorders were often

interpreted as products of judgment or reason, Brennan claimed that the proper use of these

intellectual faculties always depended upon the senses as the source for their raw materials.[67]

Brennan interpreted the source of insanity as material processes like sensation, memory, and

imagination rather than intellectual judgement and reasoning.[68]

In the conclusion of his dissertation, Brennan asserted that insanity is based within "the

sphere of phantasy, whose representative and associational functions, in the psychological order,

immediately precede the operations of the intellect." Brennan claimed such errors "may originate

either from the unsound condition of the faculty of imagination itself and its physiological

instrument (the brain), or from some disruption in the structure of systematic functioning of the

other material faculties with which imagination is closely associated."[69] Brennan insisted that it

is impossible to have a "primary disorder of the rational faculty" because it is a spiritual power.

For Brennan, a genuine intellectual disorder was impossible precisely because the "integrity of

the intellectual faculty is intrinsically independent of nervous or cerebral processes."[70]

Brennan intended his dissertation to confirm the claim of the 24 Thomist theses that the

human soul is the basis for two kinds of powers, "one organic and purely material with all the

limitations of matter" and one "inorganic and wholly immaterial."[71] Brennan concluded that

since the human soul is not diminished by insanity "the subject of mental abnormality always

remains a rational creature, however irrational the products of intellection may appear."[72] For

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65 Brennan, Dissertation, 26.
66 Ibid., 37-43.
67 Ibid., 50.
68 Ibid., 54-55.
69 Ibid., 69.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., 68. Thesis XVII.
72 Ibid., 69.

Brennan, in other words, the essential value of the human person remains intact even when the person is completely insane because the person still possesses an immortal and incorruptible rational human soul from which their value derives. He maintained that

> No purely materialistic theory has ever satisfactorily accounted for man's intellectual life or explained the parts of his cognitive procedures in the manner that St. Thomas expounds them. Nor can such a theory ever give a consistent meaning to the phenomena of mental abnormality; the wide gulf between it and the problem it would solve must ever remain impassible upon a materialistic basis when it attempts to apply a purely mechanical rule to facts that are wholly insubservient to the laws of matter. The diversity of man as the object of thought and the subject of thought can never be understood in terms of mere physical or chemical formulation.[73]

Brennan's Interpretation of the Neo-Thomist Revival

While Brennan's dissertation displayed the foundational influences of his neo-Thomism, his 1941 essay on "The Thomist Revival" offered the mature edifice.[74] The only article that Brennan ever published in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, "The Thomist Revival" provided his view of the practice to which neo-Thomists should aspire in their engagement with modern thought.

Brennan opened this essay with an acknowledgement that the neo-Thomist revival was the source of either hope or fear to many different people. He saw hope in those who recognized that while there had been many other attempts at "compounding all the principles that underlie reality into one organic whole," it was only through the synthesis of Aquinas that this "ambitious goal [was] realized so completely."[75] Against those who feared that neo-Thomist philosophy was merely a mask worn by neo-Thomist theology, Brennan admitted their basic continuity, noting that "the Thomist synthesis is first and foremost a theology" even while he argued that Thomism is "a theology whose distinguishing mark is its abounding philosophic character."[76] Brennan

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[73] Ibid., 68.

[74] Robert Edward Brennan, O.P., "The Thomist Revival," in *The Ecclesiastical Review: A Monthly Publication for the Clergy* (Volume CIV, January-June 1941, 12-25).

[75] Ibid., 12-13.

[76] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 13.

declared that the Thomist theological system "could not have been constructed… unless it had borrowed heavily, both for its method and for its subject matter, from a philosophy rich in its own principles" and that while "theology is the master, philosophy is the indispensable servant."[77]

For Brennan, while modern neo-Thomism was theological, it sought to be "a continuance of the philosophic tradition of centuries, a creative amalgamation of what is true in the old with what is true in the new, to the advantage of learning, of the liberal arts, of the natural sciences, of ethics, politics, sociology, and education."[78] According to Brennan,

> if the human mind is to continue its development and if religion is to remain a vital force within the world, then the work which Aquinas began must be carried on and made significant for our own day. Our objectives, therefore, are clear: the combining of high speculative thought with profound spiritual conviction, the reconciliation of newly discovered truths with the wisdom of the perennial philosophy.[79]

Brennan did not view neo-Thomism as the only source of wisdom. He noted that "the seeds of truth have been scattered over the face of the earth" and that in any instance where "the thoughts of men have exhibited an enduring character, they will be found, on examination, to contain some germ of veracity."[80] Yet he interpreted the Thomist synthesis of knowledge as "analogous to the most profound synthesis in cosmic nature, the hylomorphic union." In his view, "the philosophy of Aquinas is most fittingly compared to man himself" because he understood it to have "a body and a soul." Brennan argued that the unchangeable truths of the Thomist synthesis were like an eternal soul and were "the very essence or truth of it, the thing that sets it apart at once from all false interpretations of reality." In contrast, Brennan saw the temporal body

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[77] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 13.
[78] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 16.
[79] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 17.
[80] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 17.

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of the Thomist synthesis as changing "with the growth of time, with the slow grandeur of centuries, with the discovery of new information."[81]

According to Brennan there were two primary tasks at the current stage of the Thomist revival. First, neo-Thomists should conduct "careful and intelligent expositions of the thought of the Angelic Doctor." Second, they must pursue "a complete modernization of the thought of Aquinas." Brennan argued that neo-Thomists "have the tools to do constructive work, because we have the principles on which all straight thinking is founded." He suggested that current problems must be addressed in the spirit of St. Thomas "by men who, on the one hand, are thoroughly sympathetic with the Zeitgeist and its particularities, and who, on the other, are keen enough in philosophic insight to discern its basic errors and strong enough in philosophic virtue to apply the remedial measures."[82] Furthermore, Brennan claimed that

> These are the marks of a vital and personalistic philosophy: when it becomes the food and sustenance of the mind; when it answers our present difficulties; when it fortifies us against the mistakes of the past; when it gives us an earnest of peace and refreshment for the future. With a wisdom such as this we shall be protected against our own psychological inversions which would shut us off from the world in which we live. We shall realize, too, that neither the body nor the soul of a philosophy can be neglected if we would have a complete vision of its truth.[83]

Brennan declared that Thomist philosophy should "be able to discuss modern problems in the language of the moderns."[84] Although he insisted that this did not require "the abolition of all technical expressions," he suggested that "it does involve a studied effort to clothe the principles of the Thomist heritage in symbols that are familiar to the eyes and ears of everyone."[85] He noted that great scholars learned to speak in the vernacular and were able to "find equivalents for most

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[81] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 19.
[82] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 20-21.
[83] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 21.
[84] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 22.
[85] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 22-23.

of the technical words" of the perennial philosophy.[86] Furthermore, he acknowledged that "the work of making Aquinas intelligible is not completed in the transcription of Thomistic thought into the language of the day." In Brennan's view, neo-Thomists had a "correlative duty of trying to understand what the moderns mean by their use of symbols," even when it proved difficult.[87]

According to Brennan, modern views of human nature were the source of much of the difficulty that neo-Thomists experienced engaging with the modern world. Brennan argued that modern educators simply did not recognize "the truth about the human mind and its active potentialities for learning." Brennan declared that Aquinas had understood that the human soul "is everything precisely to the extent that it can know everything, since knowing is becoming." In Brennan's view, Aquinas had taught that the human soul seeks knowledge of all things and yet "can be satisfied only by the vision of Divinity Itself." For Brennan, Aquinas had known that the meaning of reality must be "grounded in a personal self-subsisting Deity, Who is the last end to which all the actualities and potentialities of being, life, and mind are ordained."[88]

Brennan suggested that the adherents of positivism, that "most vicious of modern heresies," had failed in their attempts to use "the experimental methods of science to free the world of the incubus of philosophic thinking." He proclaimed that Thomism must again be made accessible to those modern people who were abandoning their focus on themselves and "turning again to the only Object that is capable of lending support and steadiness to the tottering ego of humanity."[89] Brennan asserted that modern people could still "learn to appraise the ever-changing creations of science and art and politics, not with the eyes of positivism, which discerns reality only in the data of sense, but in the light of first philosophy which, by its very principles, is withdrawn from change and established on a rock of timelessness."[90]

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[86] Brennan, "The Thomist Revival," 23.
[87] Ibid., 23.
[88] Ibid., 24.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid., 25.

Brennan's Criticisms of Modern Psychology

> If it is admitted, as I think we can admit, that psychology has the potentialities of becoming a well-established science, this does not mean that it can do so without the aid of philosophy, or in spite of such aid. Aristotle could have foretold the confusion and polemic of modern psychology had he known the false metaphysical premisses [sic] with which the majority of investigators begin their studies, or the equally false metaphysical conclusions with which many end their labors. Mere acquaintance with the facts of the laboratory does not warrant the making of philosophic pronouncements on the nature of man; yet, acquaintance with the nature of man is required if the observer of the facts is properly to understand them, even in their scientific aspects, and if he is to exercise the correct perspective upon them in their relation to the whole of psychological knowledge.[91]

Although Robert Brennan was not a critic of modern psychology in the way that Sheen was, he was nevertheless convinced that modern psychology was built upon an improper metaphysical foundation. Brennan noted that even though the practitioners of modern psychology sought to construct a proper science "psychology appears to have little more than confusion and conflict to show for all its efforts at development."[92] As a neo-Thomist, Brennan was convinced that in order for modern psychology to be a true science it was necessary for its practitioners to agree about the subject-matter of their discipline. Brennan expressed his concern that "having lost its soul, its mind, and its consciousness, in that order, psychology is now in danger of losing its scientific standing."[93]

In Brennan's view, the first great mistake of modern psychology was the Cartesian false dichotomy that had led modern psychologists to believe "that the sole subject matter of scientific

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[91] Brennan, "Modern Psychology and Man," 22.

[92] Brennan, *Thomistic Psychology*, 54.

[93] Ibid.

psychology is either consciousness and its phenomena, or behavior and its phenomena."[94] He also noted that "even in the field of consciousness alone, or of behavior alone, there is the further failure to distinguish between phenomena that are rational in kind, and phenomena that are simply sensitive or vegetative in character."[95] Although Brennan recognized that "phenomena constitute the proper area of investigation for the scientist, in psychology as in any other discipline," he insisted that "concentration on phenomena alone…tends to reduce psychology to the level of pure physiology."[96]

Against this dilemma, Brennan asserted the Thomist doctrine of matter and form, and of the human person as a unity of body and spirit. He argued that "it should be clear to the scientist *pre-investigatively*, that man is an essential composition of soul and body."[97] For Brennan, this claim meant that scientists ought to recognize the metaphysical truth "that the relation which obtains between the psychic and somatic parts of human nature…between mind and its material substrate, is substantial in character."[98] For Brennan, this "balanced dualistic view of man… is the only satisfactory norm by which to investigate, set in order, and pass judgment upon the results of scientific research."[99] Furthermore, Brennan held that "it should be obvious to the scientist, *post-investigatively*, that human thinking and human willing are irreducible to purely sensitive acts." In other words, Brennan maintained that that the data of modern scientific psychologists ought to make it obvious to them that certain uniquely human abilities, such as higher intellectual functions, were activities of the human spirit alone. Brennan asserted that understanding this fact would save modern scientists "from the error of identifying the abstract insights and volitional impulses of man with the sensations and passions of the animal."[100]

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[94] Ibid., 361.
[95] Robert Edward Brennan, O.P., "Modern Psychology and Man," in *The Thomist* (Volume III, January 1941, 8- 32), 30.
[96] Ibid., 31
[97] Ibid., 8.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 10
[100] Ibid.

According to Brennan, it was crucial for modern psychology to approach the human person with the proper metaphysical foundation. The solution to this problem, according to Brennan, was neo-Thomist thought, and so he declared that the "philosophic nature of the perennial psychology furnishes a framework of synthesis and an ultimate point of reference for the factual offerings of the scientist."[101] Furthermore, he maintained "that no single group of experiments, no analysis of individual operations, no exclusive use of one method, will give us a complete picture of human nature." For Brennan, "no amount of factual information which is not properly ordered and integrated with a true philosophic concept of man, can ever serve its final purpose of being built up into a permanent science of psychology."[102]

From Brennan's perspective, the unique composition of the human person made modern experimental psychology different than the physical sciences. He noted that the modern world had produced "no theoretic psychology, in the sense that we have a theoretic physics or a theoretic chemistry." Rhetorically, he asked "where are the universally recognized laws to cover such processes as sensation, perception, imagination, memory, learning, intellection, attention, association, emotional response, volition, in the same way that universally recognized laws cover the phenomena of matter?" Brennan acknowledged that modern psychologists had "accumulated enormous quantities of data" but insisted that "the most significant generalizations that have been achieved thus far, are nothing more than common-sense records of matters of public experience, to attain which no expert knowledge or instrumental technique is required." He agreed that there had been physiological advances but asserted that almost no "purely psychological descriptions have been contributed by the investigator to the content of scientific psychology and that "just as few, if any, successful attempts have been made to formulate a system of theoretic principles as a working basis for future psychological research."[103]

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[101] Ibid., 10.
[102] Brennan, "Modern Psychology and Man," 25.
[103] Brennan, "Modern Psychology and Man," 26.

In Brennan's view, most of the practitioners of modern psychology attempted to interpret the whole human person through one single aspect of human nature. He noted that Behaviorists tried to explain the human person through reflexes, that gestaltists interpreted everything about consciousness through "perceptual patterns, with isomorphic structures in the nervous system," that Freudians made "the interplay of instincts" the basis of human action, and that "for the disciples of the Marburg school, the eidetic image is the supreme fact in the development of the human personality." In contrast, Brennan observed that "reflexes, percepts, images, and instincts are only particular problems in the whole of man's psychological life."[104] He argued psychology should be "the study of man, as man, not as a concatenation of reflexes, or a sum of perceptual configurations, or a series of imaginal processes, or a complexus of instinctive responses."[105]

For Brennan, modern psychology had been brought into existence on the shaky foundation of Wilhelm Wundt's psychological parallelism. Even though Brennan acknowledged Wundt's contribution to modern psychological thought, he insisted that "the work of Wundt was vitiated by false philosophical prejudices." According to Brennan, Wundt's writings had been influenced by both "a long tradition of idealism" and were "pulled just as strongly in a positivistic direction by the enormous development and successes of the experimental sciences." He insisted:

> If, as Mercier points out, he [Wundt] could have disengaged his mind from the grip of false metaphysical premises [sic], inherited from his Cartesian forebears; if he could have rid himself of his Kantian notions of substance, and freely followed the implications which his own research imposed upon him, he would have been led logically to the hylomorphic position of the Aristotelians. Certainly, he never could have limited the subject matter of psychology to the investigation of the facts of consciousness. Moreover, there is little doubt that he would have accepted, in all its richness and exuberance of meaning, the traditional notion of soul as the first actuality of living matter, the ultimate source of man's vegetative, sensitive, and rational operations. This is the only empirically-evolved concept which can give shape and substance to the phenomena of human life. But Wundt was never quite able to master the idea.[106]

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[104] Ibid., 27.
[105] Brennan, "Modern Psychology and Man," 27.
[106] Ibid., 11.

Robert Brennan's "My Psychological Credo"

Brennan provided a brief summary of his own perspective on psychology in a short article entitled "My Psychological Credo" that was published in *The Catholic School Journal* in 1948. The publication of "My Psychological Credo" in a journal for teachers suggests that Brennan meant for this short work to provide the stance from which his books should be understood and taught. Brennan's "My Psychological Credo" consisted of a series of affirmations that were each followed by an explanatory paragraph or two explaining the original statement. The first few affirmations concerned aspects of human nature and the last several dealt explicitly with psychology.

In the opening statement of "My Psychological Credo," Brennan declared his faith in "the *natural dignity and importance of human nature*" and explained that he viewed human beings as "the center of the visible cosmos." He noted that human beings hold in common "existence with elements," "life with plants," "senses with animals," and "intellect with angels." He proclaimed that each human being is the "paragon of all animals" as well as "a world in miniature or a "*microcosmos*." Brennan suggested that intellect and will allow human beings to "shape the course of events" and live virtuously so that they can "attain the only true goal of all human striving: to be a lover as well as a knower, a saint as well as a scholar." Yet he conceded that for each person "it is enough if he is just good, if his learning does not match his holiness."[107] For Brennan, in other worlds, spiritual growth was a greater priority than intellectual growth.

Brennan also proclaimed his faith in "the *scientific importance of human nature*."[108] He remarked that science seeks "to tell us how a thing is built up and how it works" and yet that "there is nothing in creation more complicated than man in his make-up and man in his behavior."[109] For Brennan, "the science of psychology, which is the science of human nature,

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[107] Robert Edward Brennan, O.P., "My Psychological Credo" in *The Catholic School Journal*, 48 (228-30, S'48), 228.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.

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here runs into trouble" because "man is not a mere mechanical affair, like the movement of the moon around the earth." Brennan argued instead that the human person "is a corporeal substance, a besouled organism, with matter and spirit united in delicate balance." He asserted that science is at its best "when it can measure and manipulate; so that it [psychology] is strictly scientific only in reference to the material part of man's nature."[110] Yet Brennan acknowledged that "science has done wonderful things; and it will continue to do wonderful things in making man the unknown into man better known, perhaps, some day, the best known creature on the earth."[111]

Brennan followed his affirmation of the scientific importance of human nature with a parallel statement of his belief "in the philosophic importance of human nature." Brennan saw the human person's "inner being, his beginning, and his end" as the most significant aspect of human life. He argued that the nature, origin, and destiny of human existence are central to the human essence and insisted that each person "is made up of matter and spirit, with spirit acting as the dominating force or factor; and flowing immediately from spirit are two powers that characterize him, at once, as a human being: his mind and his will." In essence, Brennan held that the scientific perspective of the human person should rest upon the metaphysical context.

Brennan's declaration of "the theological importance of human nature" showed the foundation of his philosophical conviction. Brennan insisted that whether human beings recognize it or not, they were "meant for a supernatural life." He asserted that God should ideally be "the final frame of reference" for everything that a person does and argued "that everything in the natural order should subserve the interests of the supernatural." Furthermore, Brennan declared that "Psychology… should find its perfection in theology, just as nature finds its perfection in grace, and man finds his perfection in God" because "a psychology that does not

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[110] Ibid. As an example, Brennan explains, "It can predict that if John Doe jumps from a high building, he will crash to the ground; but it cannot predict that John Doe will jump."
[111] Ibid.

show the way to God and the beauty of the good life is imperfect, at best." [112] In other words,

Brennan saw the ultimate context of psychology as the relationship of the human with God.

Brennan's final anthropological affirmation concerned "the *essential knowableness of human nature*." Brennan maintained that human beings gain a basic understanding of what it is to be human from an early age, that their ability to understand increases with time, and that every human person spends a lifetime growing in understanding of herself or himself. From Brennan's perspective, "if this gift of consciousness were not supposed, it is hard to see how a human being could ever be educated." Furthermore, Brennan maintained that if the human person cannot be known, then "nothing else in the realm of the physical is able to be known." [113]

After making these anthropological claims, Brennan made a series of assertions about his view of psychology. First, Brennan declared that he believed in "the *essential teachableness of psychology*." He noted that human beings learn about themselves for their entire lives and that "there is no level of mentality which cannot grasp at least the grand outlines of those truths that lie at the base of human nature." Brennan went on to explain that

> At the tender age of six, a child is told that he is a creature composed of body and soul; that his body is fashioned from dust and some day must return to dust; that his soul is a spirit and brought into being by creation; that the real purpose of his life on earth is to know and love God so that he can be happy with Him in heaven. Tremendous matters, truly for the budding mind, and the groundwork of a whole psychology of human nature! So, why stop at this point? Why not give him the reasons of these things where the reasons can be couched in simple language?[114]

Brennan proclaimed his faith in "the *cultural importance of psychology*" as the source of his conviction that an understanding of oneself helps one to understand other people and other cultures. Perhaps as a result of his experience overseas in the late nineteen twenties, Brennan saw cultural differences as "purely accidental" in the Thomist sense and maintained that they "do not

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112 Ibid. 228-229
113 Ibid., 229
114 Ibid.

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touch the inner nature of man but are simply varying manifestations of that nature." In Brennan's

view, all human beings share the same essence and so true knowledge of human nature makes it

possible to know something about all peoples. Brennan held that "a good deal of the trouble in the

world today can be traced to wrong psychological emphasis; to the stressing of what is accidental

in human nature, at the expense of what is essential; in fine, to focusing on minor points wherein

men differ instead of on major points wherein they are the same."[115]

When Brennan asserted his belief in "the *humanistic importance of psychology*," he

meant simply that the psychologist should examine every aspect of the human person, so that

"nothing in human nature should be strange or alien or excluded from study and discussion."

Brennan acknowledged that this was a difficult thing to accomplish in the case of

> a creature so unique as a man, who embraces matter and spirit in his being; who
> is both an horizon and a meeting place of heaven and earth; a masterpiece worthy
> of a divine Artist; a thing impossible, yet real; the elfish sort of offspring that
> might result from the wedding of an angel and an animal; a kind of supercosmos
> in which body and soul, sense and intellect, passion and reason, instinct and will,
> all have a role to play. From the paradox that is man it follows that he is neither
> matter nor mind alone. But neither is he matter *and* mind alone, since there is
> also a moral side to his nature that is every whit as essential and far more
> significant for a future life than the material or the mental… Thus, man has a
> dignity and a destiny, of which he should justly be proud. Within his soul, if he
> listens carefully, he can hear the strains of an enchanting melody that came out of
> heaven when he was first created. To see himself within the larger pattern of an
> eternal harmony, to sense and feel, to think and will, with an eye on a goal
> beyond the grave, to grasp the truth of human nature within the larger framework
> of divine revelation- all this, I firmly believe, falls within the scope of a
> psychological analysis and is part of the well-rounded view of human nature.[116]

Brennan also asserted his belief in "the *characterological importance of psychology*," by

which he meant that the idea that learning psychology could help a person to build character.

Brennan believed that the truth about human nature needed to be understood in the context of the

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

purpose of the human being and that understanding the purpose for which human beings were created aids them in the pursuit of that destiny. Brennan argued that "if our schools are to turn out good craftsmen, good artists, good doctors, and good lawyers, they must be sure that they turn out good men" because "it is hard to be good at anything else if one is not good at being good." Brennan claimed that "the only proper kind of psychology is that which studies man as a whole and which insists upon the education of all his human powers." He maintained that character formation "must be part of the complete education of every man; and character formation is a matter of knowing and using one's powers, but particularly one's will and instincts, with a view to an eternal reward."[117]

Brennan followed his affirmation in the characterological importance of psychology with his belief in "the integrative importance of psychology." In essence, Brennan was proposing that psychology could be made "a principle of integration for many, perhaps most, of the matters that are taught in school." Brennan noted that young people were already taught in school

> something about their bodies and how to keep them fit and clean; about the wonders of life which they share with the animals and plants; about the society into which they were born, and which should be a better place for their having become part of it; about the history of the human race and the efforts of people to express their national spirit; about the great books and the great works of art, wherein pen, brush, and chisel have been used by the hand of genius to depict the meaning of human life about the religion that they bear in their souls and the practice that it engenders.[118]

Brennan closed his "My Psychological Credo" with the quiet assertion that he believed "in the importance of a Thomistic psychology for modern thought." Brennan was convinced that St. Thomas Aquinas "went about as far as a mind can go in probing the problems of philosophy

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[117] Ibid., 230. As this passage makes plain, Brennan's vision of psychology has clear affinities with the focus on the whole person of the humanistic stream of modern psychology that began to develop more prominence in the latter half of the 20th century.
[118] Ibid.

and theology" and "that he had as fair a philosophic notion of the meaning of human nature as anyone before or after him."[119]

Brennan's Neo-Thomist Reformulation of Modern Psychology

Robert Brennan was committed to the position that modern science ought to be integrated into the synthesis of Thomist philosophy. In Brennan's view, the understanding of the human person that traditional Thomist philosophy articulated was necessarily superior to any possible account of the human person that modern psychology could provide without such guidance. He argued that it was possible to be ignorant of the scientific understanding of the human being as an animal and yet still have an adequate view of a human person if one had a true philosophical account. In contrast, Brennan insisted that it was impossible for someone who lacked a true philosophical account of the human person to have a correct view of human nature.[120]

Like many neo-Thomists, Brennan saw Desiree Cardinal Mercier as the model for "the position which philosophy must occupy in reference to contemporary psychology."[121] Brennan claimed that Mercier "was thoroughly familiar, through long years of study, with all the fields of traditional philosophy" and yet "was equally at home in the experimental laboratory and the intricate techniques of psychological investigation."[122] In Brennan's view, Mercier had recognized that the philosophical conflict between positivism and extreme idealism was at the heart of most modern psychology and yet had been able to "accept the data of the laboratory while also proclaiming a definition of psychology that was strictly in accord with his Thomistic training."[123] For Brennan, as for many neo-Thomists who engaged with modern psychology, Mercier was the exemplar to be imitated in both Thomist doctrine and psychological practice.

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[119] Ibid.
[120] Robert E. Brennan, OP, *History of Psychology from the Standpoint of a Thomist*, 7.
[121] Robert E. Brennan, OP, *Thomistic Psychology*, 336.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Robert E. Brennan, OP, *Thomistic Psychology*, 337.

Brennan's Definitions of Psychology

In the first edition of *General Psychology* (1937), Robert Brennan explained that science is often identified with positive science and noted that people use the term to refer to "the facts of observation and to the fewest and simplest hypotheses, theories, and laws to be derived from these facts."[124] Using these insights, Brennan defined general psychology as "*the scientific study of mental experience and of the principles on which this experience is ultimately founded.*"[125] He explained General Psychology as "a systematic and reasoned exposition of facts, laws and causes" focusing on "*mental experience* or the recognized processes of contents of mind."[126]

Brennan had also used the term "mind" in his dissertation. After the publication of the first edition of *General Psychology*, however, he began to use the word "soul" in most of the equivalent contexts.[127] In *Thomistic Psychology* (1941), for example, he began with Aristotle's definition of psychology as "the study of the soul" and later added "through its acts, powers, and habits" to this most basic definition.[128] According to Brennan, Aristotle had used the Greek word *psyche* (soul) to refer to "the principle of natural life" or even "the principle of life in the organism; that is to say, a principle which, in the deepest reaches of its nature, is designed to inhabit matter."[129] Brennan elaborated on this definition with a variety of related explanations of what Aristotle understood by the term soul, including that the soul "is a form which has a basic unitive relation to matter," "is the substantial form of a natural body," and "*the first actuality of a natural body which is potentially alive*."[130]

After turning from the Aristotelian account of the soul to the philosophy of St. Thomas, Brennan clarified that the "adequate subject matter" of psychology "is every besouled organism"

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[124] Ibid., 19.

[125] Brennan, *General Psychology* (1937), 20. Emphasis in original.

[126] Ibid., 21.

[127] For example, the title of the very last section of the original edition of *General Psychology* is "The Nature of the Human Mind." The last section of General Psychology: Revised Edition (1952) is titled "The Nature, Origin and Destiny of the Human Soul."

[128] Brennan, *General Psychology* (1937), 6, 48.

[129] Ibid., 6, 48.

[130] Ibid., 7. Emphasis in original.

and that psychology's "proper subject matter is the human organism."[131] Brennan declared that the human being is "an intellectual creature" by nature whose powers are nevertheless those "of a sensitive and vegetative organism." He suggested a preliminary definition of psychology as "a study of the acts, powers, and habits of man."[132]

According to Brennan, philosophical psychology and the science of modern psychology had "the same subject matter and the same starting point, namely, the acts, powers and habits of man."[133] Brennan viewed these two fields of rational inquiry as primarily distinguishable in terms of their "standpoint or goal," which he explained in terms of substance and accidents. For Brennan, modern scientific psychology "limits itself to acts, powers, and habits- all of which are accidents, belonging to the phenomenal order of man's life." Brennan argued that the science of modern psychology "is peripheral," "is interested primarily in the laws of operation and their relationships," and is concerned with studying what a human being does. In contrast, Brennan believed that philosophical psychology "advances its analysis beyond the facts of induction and does not repose until it has reached some notion of the nature or substance of man." Brennan viewed philosophical psychology as "central," focused on "laws of being," and concerned with studying what a human being is.[134]

Both philosophical psychology and scientific psychology are concerned with human experience, according to Brennan. He acknowledged that science and philosophy should be distinguished for the benefit of both disciplines and yet insisted that this did not mean that philosophy should be cast aside in favor of modern science.[135] Brennan argued that traditional philosophical psychology provides a more certain kind of knowledge because it based upon personal introspection. For Brennan, the neo-Thomist concept of personal introspection consisted of individual reflection on one's own thoughts and experiences, making it a universal method that

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[131] Brennan, *Thomistic Psychology*, 50.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., 51.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Robert E. Brennan, OP, *History of Psychology from the Standpoint of a Thomist*, 3.

is open to all human beings. Brennan saw personal introspection as a more certain form of knowledge than experiment because introspection was founded upon "the facts of public experience, facts in which all men share by virtue of their possessing the same kind of sensory equipment which is exercised upon the same kind of material."[136]

In Brennan's view, scientific psychology is characterized by the fact that it utilizes "special experience, exemplified in what is called the experimental procedure."[137] Brennan was convinced that no conflict was possible between these two methods because "special experience does not alter common or public experience, but merely supplements it with more abundant detail."[138] In other words, Brennan was committed to the position that psychological experiments could provide a greater degree of precision with regard to human psychological knowledge than introspection but he did not admit that they could not provide a different kind of knowledge than what can be obtained via traditional philosophical psychology.

Brennan acknowledged that the method of introspection was open to both experimental psychology and philosophical psychology. He explained that for experimental scientists such as Oswald Külpe and the Würzburg school introspection had meant "a particular kind of attitude, the adoption of which enables the investigator to observe his experience in detail, as though under a microscope." Brennan noted that for experimental scientists these mental experiences are "recorded methodically and broken up, for analysis, into fractionized periods." He suggested that experimental scientists who used introspection sought to attain precision through repetition of the same activities "so that the account may be corrected and amplified."[139]

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[136] Brennan, *Thomistic Psychology*, 51. For Brennan, laboratory experiments were particular kinds of experience, analogous to a singular term in Aristotelian logic. They could not give certain knowledge because they could not be properly be universalized. In contrast, Thomist introspection was something anyone could engage in and thereby verify. In his mind, this made it analogous to a universal in Aristotelian logic. It could provide genuine knowledge.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid., 52.
[139] Ibid., 59.

Brennan contrasted experimental introspection with what he acknowledged as the more "naïve" form of introspection practiced by philosophical psychology. Brennan argued that the introspection of philosophical psychology

> derives immediately from the public experience of all men. It requires simply that the powers of sense be in a normal condition, and operating within the normal dimensions of space and time. Because common experience is shared by the brotherhood of men, the possibility of its being in error is reduced to a minimum. It observations take on the character of universal pronouncements, since they do not depend on any single individual- though any single individual, with his five wits about him, can report such observations.[140]

Brennan had accepted a preliminary definition of psychology that characterized it as the study of the "acts, powers, and habits" of the human person. After distinguishing philosophical psychology from experimental psychology he proposed a revised definition to show that even though the science of modern experimental psychology was unable to directly consider questions of human nature that did not mean that this aspect of the human person was entirely unknowable to traditional philosophical psychology. Brennan's revised definition of psychology combined his understanding of both philosophical and experimental psychology into a single explanation of psychology as "*the study of the acts, powers, habits, and nature of man*."[141] In Brennan's view, this was the kind of knowledge that modern psychology ought to pursue.

Despite his idealistic vision of what modern psychology ought to be, Robert Brennan recognized that experimental psychology could not directly consider human nature. Furthermore, he understood that modern experimental psychology had obtained new knowledge about the human animal that neo-Thomist philosophical psychology had never been unable to discover. Nevertheless, Brennan envisioned a partnership between philosophical psychology and modern scientific psychology that would allow the two forms of psychology to complement each other.

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[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid., 53. Emphasis in original.

From Brennan's perspective, philosophical psychology could provide to modern experimental psychology both an insight into its own theories and a proper understanding of the nature of the human person that placed the information that modern psychology gathered in its proper context.

Brennan's Neo-Thomist Interpretations of Memory

Although Robert Edward Brennan, O.P. published entire books that were concerned with interpreting modern psychology in the light of neo-Thomist principles, his account of memory is sufficient as an example of his basic reformulation approach to modern psychology.

Brennan defined memory "as *an ability to recall events of the past and to identify them as past*."[142] He recognized that animals have memories and so pronounced it as a composite power instead of a purely spiritual ability like intellectual judgment and reason.[143] He declared that it must have three phases: original impression, retention, and restoration. Brennan also noted that modern thinkers made a distinction between recognition, in which there is a stimulus to memory, and recall, in which there is not.[144] According to Brennan, "St. Thomas was well aware of the basic relation of memory processes to the cortex" and had "pointed out that lesions of cortical substance, or temporary conditions of stupor brought on by drugs, may have a decided effect on both imagination and memory, and actually prevent the recall of previous knowledge."[145]

While Brennan acknowledged that memories were in some sense dependent upon the human brain "first, from a structural standpoint, through the presence of traces or cortical patterns that determine the nature of the memory record; secondly, from a functional point of view, through the repetition, at least in part, of the nerve activities that went along with the first tracing of records," he also insisted that there was a spiritual element to conscious recall within human

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142 Brennan, *General Psychology* (1937), 240; Brennan, *General Psychology* (1952), 194.
143 Brennan, *General Psychology* (1952), 194-195.
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid., 195-196.

beings.[146] Brennan explained that St. Thomas Aquinas had recognized that both animals and humans possess "simple recall" but that human beings have the power of "reminiscence" in which reason can guide memory. He argued Hermann Ebbinghaus had kept "the Aristotelian teaching in his distinction between experiences that are brought back to consciousness in a purely natural and spontaneous way, and those that are recalled on by a voluntary or rationally controlled process."[147]

St. Thomas Aquinas, Brennan argued, had followed Aristotle's laws of association with regard to memory. Brennan explained that the law of similarity stated "the fact that like suggests like," that the law of contrast recognized "that like has a way of suggesting unlike," and that the law of proximity indicates "that what is near something else may cause an association."[148] Brennan declared that experiments had "confirmed the introspective findings of Aristotle and St. Thomas" even while they had also discovered new elements of memory. Brennan gave two examples of modern discoveries: the fact that "free-rising images" sometimes "appear in consciousness without any special reason for their recall" and "the preservative tendency of memory" that George Müller had noted, in which "*an image which has once appeared in consciousness is apt to become conscious again very soon*."[149] For Brennan, modern psychology could supplement the truths that neo-Thomist philosophical psychology had already recognized as long as the new truths fit adequately within the neo-Thomist framework.

The Nature, Origin, and Destiny of the Human Soul

From Brennan's perspective, modern psychologists should be able to recognize that human beings are a composite of body and soul. Brennan saw this as a "pre-investigative" truth that need not be proven or disproven by any experiment of modern psychology. He insisted that

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[146] Ibid., 196.
[147] Ibid., 197.
[148] Ibid., 198.
[149] Ibid.

the hylomorphic union was the only coherent philosophical explanation for the human person and that all other explanations fundamentally misunderstood what it is to be a human being. Brennan believed that interpretations of the human person that lacked this account of the relationship between the human body and the human soul could not adequately explain the full range of human experience. Yet, for Brennan, questions about the nature, origin, and destiny of the human soul were primarily metaphysical, or even theological, rather than psychological. While Brennan consistently discussed these issues at the end of his textbooks on psychology, he saw them as questions best addressed by philosophy and theology rather than modern science.

In the last section of *General Psychology: Revised Edition* (1952), Robert Brennan explained that Aquinas had taught that the human soul is "immaterial, substantial, and simple." Aquinas, Brennan argued, had seen the human soul as an immaterial form that "does not depend on matter for its existence of its operations."[150] Brennan thought that introspection proves the human soul is immaterial because

> although the idea arises from a datum of sense, yet it constantly appears within consciousness as something abstract and impalpable, free of the contingencies of matter, and lifted out of the spatial and temporal contexts that surround our percepts and images.[151]

Brennan credited St. Thomas Aquinas with recognizing that the human soul cannot be material. According to Brennan's interpretation of Aquinas, the human ability to understand material bodies would not be possible if the soul itself was material. As an analogy, Brennan argued that "if the tongue itself had a bitter flavor, then everything else would taste bitter; and it could not have perception of sweet, salty, or sour."[152] For Brennan, the human soul had to be spiritual because it was the source of other spiritual powers and "if thinking and willing are

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[150] Brennan, *General Psychology: Revised Edition* (1952), 406.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.

immaterial acts, they must proceed from powers that are immaterial."[153] Brennan claimed that the activities of thinking and willing are clearly accidental rather than substantial properties of the human person because they are "constantly shifting from object to object." Yet he insisted that "they must have a subject of inherence" and so "must be products of the soul which brings them into being."[154]

Brennan explained that the soul "is not composed of separable parts, either essential or quantitative."[155] It is not, in other words, the Cartesian soul that connects to the human brain in a single location, nor is it an object that can be broken into pieces. For Brennan, the fact that the human soul cannot be "made up of essential parts is obvious from the fact that it is itself the substantial form of man's nature- a form which, by its union with matter, becomes the principle of man's being." He argued that personal introspection leads a person to recognize that "a thought or a judgment cannot be sliced into halves, as we divide an apple" and that "if the contents of intellect are simple, then so is the power that produces them, and so is the soul in which the power is rooted."[156]

Brennan imagined the human soul as more than "the subject of our intellectual powers and the source of our thinking and willing" but as "also the primary principle by which we live, sense, feel, and move about." Brennan insisted that while "the soul is present everywhere in the body, it does not exercise its properties everywhere."[157] While Brennan held that "the human soul has certain functions that are properly its own and in which the body is not able to share, such as thinking and willing," he claimed that there are activities "that belong to soul and body together," such as "those sensations and emotions which are both psychic and somatic in origin."[158]

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153 Ibid., 407.
154 Ibid.
155 Ibid, 408.
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid., 409.
158 Ibid., 412.

Brennan considered a few different possible origins of the human soul before ultimately concluding with the position that St. Thomas Aquinas and the Catholic Church officially held. Brennan noted that there were those who believed that that the human soul could pre-exist the human body, then asserted that this view "is without foundation, and runs counter to all that we know about man's substantial form" because "the very reason of being of a rational soul is to be united with matter."[159] Brennan claimed that without a body the type of soul that human beings have "would be unable to move; and without movement of some sort, its existence would be futile."[160] Yet he insisted that the human soul would not cease to exist without a body because in that circumstance "the mind has already laid up a number of ideas on which it can reflect."[161]

Brennan dismissed the concept of reincarnation or the "transmigration of souls" because St. Thomas Aquinas had taught that "the matter and form in man's nature actually constitutes a single essence."[162] Brennan claimed "that each individual soul is so intimately united with the particular body in which it is enmattered, that it cannot become essentially related to any other body without yielding up something that is part and partial of its nature."[163] In other words, Brennan asserted that each particular human soul is intended to be united to a particular human body and only that body.

While he was normally an almost unquestioning disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas, Brennan considered one area in which he (and the Catholic Church of the 20th century) disagreed with St. Thomas Aquinas: on the origin of the soul, which he referred to as the theory of successive forms. Brennan acknowledged that St. Thomas had theorized that "the material substrate which eventually becomes a human body by union with a rational soul" must first possess less perfect kinds of souls. Brennan noted that this would mean that "the fertilized egg

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159 Ibid., 416.
160 Ibid. For Brennan, the human soul needs to move about so that it can come into contact with other things, abstract the forms from their phantasms, become those forms, and thereby "grow."
161 Ibid., 416.
162 Ibid., 416-417.
163 Ibid., 417.

first exists as simple vegetative organism, and then as an animal, before it actually becomes a human body by the creation and infusion of the human soul." Brennan argued against the theory of St. Thomas Aquinas concerning successive forms on the basis of the knowledge of modern biology. According to Brennan, St. Thomas' theory lacked an understanding of "the epigenetic progression of the fertilized egg toward human perfection- a goal, let us note, that is present from the moment of conception."[164] Brennan also pointed out that St. Thomas Aquinas attributed the change to an animal soul to "a 'formative virtue' in the seminal fluid."[165] Yet Brennan explained that this theory was made without "our present day knowledge of the fluid media of gametes."[166]

In his rejection of this position of St. Thomas Aquinas, Brennan was actually supporting the teaching of the 20th century Catholic Church "that the rational soul, and no other form, is present in the organism from the first instant of conception; that is to say, from the moment that the nuclei of sperm and egg fuse and bring into being the zygote."[167] Brennan noted that "the embryologists themselves declare" that "fertilized human ovum has all the potentialities of becoming in time a perfect human body."[168] According to Brennan, "just as an infant is born a person and does not metamorphose into one, so the fertilized egg, which results from the act of reproduction, is actually a human being and is not, by the stages of gestation and the subsequent appearance of the human of the soul, transformed into one."[169] In essence, although Brennan was in disagreement with a theory of St. Thomas Aquinas on this point, he was simply agreeing with the position of the modern Catholic Church.

Brennan's philosophical examination of the destiny of the human soul followed a similar pattern. Brennan first examined the view of the "extinction" of the soul that he claimed had throughout all of history had among its adherents "a certain number of material-minded men who

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[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid., 418.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.

have held out against immortality, apparently convinced that when the body disintegrates in death, the soul corrupts and disappears with it."[170]   Brennan insisted that their metaphysical premises required them to adhere to a theory of extinction "by implication," insisting that these are people who believe

> First, that all mental processes are finally explained in terms of physical and chemical events, or as phenomena of a purely mechanical system; secondly, that thought and volition are reducible to sensations, images, feelings, or any other datum of animal life; thirdly, that intellectual consciousness is the product of the general emergent tendencies of nature. For, it is plain that whatever can be interpreted in terms of mechanics, or whatever is confined within the limits of the particular and concrete, is material in character, and must therefore be subject to the same laws of disintegration as control all matter.[171]

After considering the extinction of the soul, Brennan went on to consider the possibility of impersonal survival advocated by those who believe that "the final goal of the human soul is absorption into a conscious or unconscious absolute, in which it loses its own identity."[172] Brennan provided no direct philosophical or scientific arguments for or against this position but merely noted that some form of impersonal survival is held by those "with a pantheistic outlook" as well as those who practice "oriental religions, particularly among the followers of Buddha."[173]

Brennan contrasted these positions with "the well-reasoned position of St. Thomas, who declares that the soul of man is naturally incapable of destruction."[174] Brennan declared that because the human soul "is an individual form, it must continue to exist as such; not, of course, as a person, since only the composition of body and soul as the nature of a species, but with a subsistence that is separate and individual and hence of a personal character."[175]

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[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid., 419.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid., 419.

In support of the doctrine of the human soul's personal immortality, Brennan advanced a series of proofs. The first proof, which Brennan labeled as an "ontological proof," was based on the claim that the human soul "is an immaterial substance." Brennan's argument was that even though "the exercise of intellect and will is objectively conditioned by the data of sense," actual thinking and willing are "abstract and immaterial contents, and as such, intrinsically free of the appendages of sense."[176] For Brennan, this meant that powers of the soul are capable of doing things without the body and so the soul must be capable of continuing in existence without the body. Furthermore, Brennan argued from the human soul's simplicity that its absence of parts necessarily means that "it is lacking in elements whose separation would entail its corruption." Brennan argued "that neither by the corruption of itself, nor by the decay of the body of which it is intrinsically independent, is the soul of man able to lose its existence."[177]

Brennan followed this argument with the claim that contemplating "the designs of the Creator, Who is both efficient and final cause of man's soul" reveals that the destruction of the soul "is excluded by the essential wisdom of God, Who made the human form immortal by its very nature." Brennan went on to assert that "any suggestion of this kind is particularly repugnant to the scientific mentality which is committed, by all its training and background, to the principle of inviolability as far as the laws of nature are concerned."[178] In other words, Brennan claimed that the human soul cannot be destroyed because it would contravene the natural laws of existence that allow the soul to be both immaterial and immortal.

Brennan also proposed psychological and moral proofs for the soul's immortality. As his psychological proof, Brennan insisted that the human intellect seeks "to know absolute truth" and that the human will seeks "to possess supreme good" as their final ends. Since these kinds of goals can clearly not be realized in the present world then the soul must be immortal so that it will

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[176] Ibid., 419-420.
[177] Ibid., 420.
[178] Ibid.

have a further opportunity "to satisfy the natural inclinations of its powers."[179] Brennan's moral

proof was simply that the proper "rewards and punishments" for the just and the wicked can only

be applied if the human soul is immortal. Brennan maintained that in this life the wicked often

prosper and the righteous suffer and that morality would be meaningless if there is "no after-life

in which virtue and vice are fittingly recompensed."[180]

From Brennan's perspective the close relationship between the human body and the

human soul meant that the ultimate destiny of the human soul provided a clue to the ultimate

destiny of the human body. Brennan believed that if the human soul is immortal then it is only

fitting that the human body must eventually become immortal as well. The reason, according to

Brennan, is that "the soul of man needs a body for its full perfection; that is, for the unfolding and

maturing of all its various properties."[181] Furthermore, Brennan argued that the human body's

companionship with the soul requires that it should receive the same eternal reward that the

human soul received. Yet Brennan's main argument was simply that the essence of the human

person requires both body and soul. And from Brennan's perspective, "a rung would be missing

on the ladder of being, were there no future rejoining of body and soul."[182] For Brennan:

> There are good philosophic reasons, then, for the prediction that at some future
> time man will reappear, whole and entire, with the material and immaterial
> elements in his nature wedded together again in a substantial union.[183]

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179 Ibid.
180 Ibid., 421.
181 Ibid., 421-422.
182 Ibid., 422.
183 Ibid., 422.

Evaluation of Robert Brennan's Reformulation Approach

Robert Brennan saw neo-Thomist theology and philosophy as existing in a partnership in which philosophy served as an indispensable assistant. Although a similar analogy is possible concerning his view of the relationship between neo-Thomist philosophical psychology and the experimental science of modern psychology, he did not consider modern psychology to be completely indispensable. For Brennan, it was more important to have the proper view of human nature than it was to have a functioning experimental psychology. In other words, although Brennan was a proponent of the experimental science of modern psychology, he imagined that it belonged within the framework that traditional neo-Thomist philosophical psychology provided.

As a neo-Thomist of the mid-twentieth century, Brennan made a firm distinction between natural reason and supernatural faith. In general, Brennan viewed his engagement with the science of modern psychology as an exercise of his reason rather than his Catholic faith, or of his Thomist philosophy rather than his Thomist theology. He would have characterized the approach that he took to modern psychology within his textbooks as primarily philosophical; this is why he is willing to consider and then reject theories about the human soul that he knows, by faith, are wrong. If this was his perspective, it would explain why Brennan bothered to consider philosophical theories about the origin and destiny of the human soul when he was only going to immediately reject them. He would have seen it as necessary to consider them because he was supposed to be engaging in neo-Thomist philosophy. He also would have felt it important to immediately reject them, however, because he was actually engaging in neo-Thomist theology.

Brennan's neo-Thomist distinctions notwithstanding, his psychological works were at least as theological as they were philosophical. In his "My Psychological Credo," Brennan declared that his personal belief that the true perfection of psychology was found in theology. Furthermore, his psychological writings were consistently directed toward the ultimate destiny of the human person, which Brennan himself would have recognized as a theological matter. Since Brennan understood the ultimate destiny of the human person to be the thing that most mattered

about human life, the theological nature of his writings would not necessarily have bothered him. Yet, to the extent that his writings were theological, they were simply not going to be acceptable to those modern scientists who did not already share Brennan's faith commitments.

Unfortunately, despite his poetic aspirations concerning what neo-Thomist practice ought to be, the greatest problem with Brennan's works is that they clearly lacked a healthy spirit of intellectual inquiry. Brennan was always happy to use modern psychology to find support for neo-Thomist doctrines but he was completely unwilling to allow modern thought to genuinely challenge neo-Thomist assumptions. Furthermore, Brennan was personally invested in the neo-Thomist intellectual tradition, including its vocabulary and philosophical formulations, and was unwilling to allow even minor challenges to its interpretation of St. Thomas Aquinas or Aristotle. Brennan's change from "mind" to "soul" in his two editions of *General Psychology*, as well as the lack of new scholarship when given the opportunity for a revision, indicates clearly that he chose to retreat into the familiar instead of accepting the challenges that the future offered him.

Brennan's writings suggest an inherent problem with the reformulation approach to any subject: To some degree, mere reformulation will always necessarily be more about the translation of a pre-existing "truths" than about the discovery of something new. Brennan's psychological work demonstrates that the person engaging in mere "reformulation" already has all the important answers to the questions they are considering. As a result, while the other side can raise new questions that contribute to the existing body of knowledge, the other side is never allowed to suggest substantial changes to what has already been received.

Conclusion

Robert Brennan engaged in a neo-Thomist reformulation approach to the science of modern psychology as a way of overcoming the metaphysical presuppositions held by its practitioners. Brennan made the neo-Thomist concept of the hylomorphic union of body and soul into the foundation of his approach to modern psychology. Furthermore, he maintained that the hylomorphic union was the best explanation of the relationship of the human soul to the human body. From Brennan's perspective, recognition of the hylomorphic union also required the acknowledgement that human existence possesses a transcendent dimension. Brennan believed that failure to recognize the truth of the hylomorphic union led to complete rejection of the soul (materialism), or to a kind of Cartesian dualism (psychophysical parallelism), or to the rejection of the material world (idealism).

Brennan's reformulation approach to modern psychology reflects a common attitude that neo-Thomists had toward modern psychology in the first half of the twentieth century. Brennan sought to translate neo-Thomist thought into the language of modern psychology and rebuild modern psychology within a neo-Thomist framework. In both cases, Brennan saw modern psychology as the discipline that needed to learn and neo-Thomism as the system with the correct answers. Brennan's engagement with modern psychology, while less critical than that of Fulton J. Sheen, was nevertheless unwilling to receive insights from modern psychology. In contrast, the synthetic approach of Thomas Verner Moore (1877-1969), recognized that the insights of modern psychology could prove valuable to neo-Thomist thought, even while Moore had his own concerns about the unrecognized metaphysical presuppositions of modern psychologists.

CHAPTER IV

THE SYNTHETIC APPROACH TO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

OF DOM THOMAS VERNER MOORE, O.S.B.

By the middle of the nineteen fifties, many American Catholic intellectuals had become highly critical of the writings of Robert Edward Brennan and frequently faulted him for failing to engage with recent advances in modern psychology. Yet their disdain should be understood as a criticism of Brennan's work rather than as a rejection of all forms of neo-Thomist psychology. Less than a generation earlier, one of Brennan's former professors from the Catholic University of America, Thomas Verner Moore (1877-1969), had advocated a Thomist approach to modern psychology that American Catholic intellectual leaders had respected and that modern American psychologists had acknowledged as a valid form of psychology. Unlike Brennan, Moore was able to reconcile his Thomism with the scientific knowledge of the modern experimental method while respecting the contribution of both traditions. Moore integrated the scientific aspects of modern psychology into his neo-Thomist philosophical framework without allowing the scholastic principles to completely control the findings of the science. As a result, both the Catholic intellectual and modern scientific communities of Thomas Verner Moore's period were generally respectful toward his writings and his scientific contributions; less than two decades later, however, those same communities would come to reject the scientific value of Robert Brennan's psychological works for their lack of serious scientific engagement.[1]

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[1] The dissertations of Brennan and Moore provide an analogy for their different approaches to the discipline of modern psychology. Brennan's dissertation sought to show that psychology conformed with Thomist principles yet Brennan did not conduct any psychological experiments when writing it. Thomas Verner Moore, in contrast, conducted experiments on reaction time and movement for his

In the American Catholic subculture of the 1940s, of course, Brennan's writings had

enough prestige that he was able to criticize Moore's work for being insufficiently Thomist. In a

review of Moore's *Cognitive Psychology* (1939) for *The Thomist* in 1940, Brennan chastised

Moore for invoking the Thomist concept of hylomorphism "last rather than first in the exposition

of his psychological material."[2] Brennan went on to critique Moore for asserting that the

organism and soul "'are not two substances, but only one.'" Brennan argued instead that while

the human soul "is an incomplete substance, in the sense that it is not, in and of itself, a species"

the fact that the human soul continues to have existence apart from the body requires that it be

thought of as a substance.[3] Brennan also faulted Moore for his usage of contemporary terms like

"psychobiological," "perception," and "intelligence." For example, Brennan asserted that "the

hylomorphist eschews the practice of referring to the cognitive achievements of animals as

'intelligence.'"[4] Moore responded to Brennan's criticisms with the claim that he had actually

been using "terms whose significance was quite clear in the context and whose true meanings

would be grasped by the psychiatrists of our day much more easily than the Latin terminology of

certain neoscholastics."[5] In essence, Moore's scientific training provided him great competency

in scientific terminology as well as a more flexible approach to neo-Scholastic terminology than

Brennan and most other neo-Thomists.

Throughout his various writings and in spite of his sincere desire to engage with modern

thought on its own terms, Robert Brennan was convinced that neo-Thomism was always superior

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dissertation. While Thomas Verner Moore regarded the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas as an
important interpretive structure, his work also provided new scientific data to the discipline of
modern psychology. As a result, a psychologist who was entirely untrained in Thomism could still
appreciate Moore's scientific research while that the same psychologist would likely find Brennan's
work somewhat incomprehensible.

[2] Robert Edward Brennan, "Cognitive Psychology, by Dom Thomas Verner Moore," in *The Thomist*,
Volume II, (January 1940, 156-163), 157.

[3] Ibid, 158.

[4] Ibid., 159.

[5] Thomas Verner Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature and Their Adjustment: An Introduction to
the Psychology and Psychopathology of Emotional Behavior and Volitional Control* (New York: Grune and
Stratton, 1950), 45. Footnote 112.

to modern thought; for Brennan, most of the value of modern psychology was to be found in the support and clarifications that it could provide for pre-existing neo-Thomist doctrines. For Thomas Verner Moore, on the other hand, the importance of modern psychology was always to be found in the benefits that it could provide to human spiritual development. Moore had originally chosen to practice the science of modern psychology because he saw it as a potential "apostolate," or area of missionary activity, that would be compatible with life as a Paulist priest. Moore never abandoned this vision of his psychological work or denied this basic missionary task even when he decided to alter other aspects of his religious vocation. After his ordination Moore became a doctor of psychology and a professor of psychology, then a student of Wilhelm Wundt, then a medical doctor, and eventually joined the ranks of practicing psychiatrists. Moore served as a Paulist priest for over twenty years before resigning from his community, joining the Benedictine Order, and becoming one of the founders of St. Anselm Priory in Washington, D.C. Then, after more than twenty years as both a leader of his monastic community and the head of the psychology department at the Catholic University of America, Moore gave up both of these honors and spent the final two decades of his life as a simple Carthusian monk in both Spain and the United States. Through all of these personal changes, Moore consistently regarded modern psychology as a means for helping people obtain both psychological healing and greater spiritual growth.

The first section of the chapter is a brief account of Thomas Verner Moore's life that highlights his attempts to educate other Catholics in modern psychology. The second section of the chapter looks at Thomas Verner Moore's synthetic approach to the science of modern psychology through an overview of his published writings and his definition of psychology. The third section of the chapter summarizes Moore's views about the Thomist concepts of causality, the human soul, the human will, and human freedom. The fourth section of this chapter explores Moore's understanding of the role that religious belief plays in the preservation of psychological health. The fifth and final section of the chapter assesses the strengths and weakness of Thomas

Verner Moore's synthetic approach to the science of modern psychology. The conclusion examines Moore's work in light of the other figures considered in this study.

The Life of Thomas Verner Moore

Thomas Verner Moore was born in Louisville, Kentucky on October 22, 1877.[6] He was the second of the three sons of John Neuton Moore (1845-1882) and Charlotte McIlvain Moore (1855-1896).[7] He was named after his paternal grandfather Thomas Verner Moore (1818-1871), who had been a well-known Presbyterian minister during the Civil War; he also had an uncle named Thomas Verner Moore (1856-1926) who was also a Presbyterian minister.[8] Moore's father, who had fought in the cavalry under Jeb Stuart for the Confederacy during the Civil War, died from tuberculosis while Moore was still a young child.[9] Moore and his brothers, Banks and Stuart, were raised as Catholics. Although their mother had first hired tutors and then sent them to public school for their primary education, she sent them to prominent Catholic schools for their secondary education.[10] Moore seems to have discerned his vocation to the priesthood when he was about eight years-old and to have immediately begun studying ancient Greek.[11]

For most of his youth Moore's mother supported their family through the meager income from her late husband's investments supplemented with income from her own writings.[12] After publishing a story in *Ave Maria* magazine in the late 1880s Charlotte cultivated a friendship between her family and its editor, Fr. Daniel Hudson, C.S.C.[13] Charlotte moved the entire family from Louisville to New York City in 1890 because she wanted her sons to have "superior

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[6] This is mentioned in the short biography on the front of his Dissertation. Thomas Verner Moore, *A Study in Reaction Time and Movement* (1904).
[7] Benedict Neenan, OSB Thomas Verner Moore: Psychiatrist, Educator, Monk, 21.
[8] Ibid., 22
[9] Ibid., 22-24.
[10] Ibid., 28.
[11] Ibid., 32.
[12] Ibid., 26, 34.
[13] Ibid., 26.

educational opportunities" without being separated from her.[14] Moore soon became an altar boy

at the parish that his family had joined, which happened to be St. Paul the Apostle, the original

Paulist parish, located on the West Side of Manhattan near the Paulist headquarters.[15]

Moore officially began his classical studies at St. John's College in Fordham, New York

in January of 1891.[16] The following year he switched to St. Francis Xavier's College in New

York City and remained there until 1894.[17] After Moore's family began to suffer increased

financial difficulties as the result of a bad real estate investment during "a nationwide economic

depression," Moore left school and "found work as an office boy at the same company for which

his father had worked, the Continental Insurance Company."[18] Moore was eventually offered a

promotion that included a higher salary with the condition he would promise to remain with the

company for more than five years. Moore lost the promotion after he instead explained that he

intended to become a priest.[19]

Moore was initially uncertain about whether he ought to join the Society of Jesus or the

Society of St. Paul but a weeklong visit at the Paulist summer camp on Lake George helped him

to determine his course. During the visit, Moore met Edward A. Pace (1861-1938), a diocesan

priest who was both a professor at The Catholic University of America and "a good friend of the

Paulists." Pace told Moore about "the new psychology that was being developed in Germany and

of the laboratory that he had established at the Catholic University of America in Washington,

D.C." and Moore soon decided to join the Paulist community and pursue "'scientific study and

research as a field of apostolic labor.'"[20] Although he asked for immediate entrance to the

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[14] Ibid., 28.
[15] Ibid., 34.
[16] Moore, *A Study in Reaction Time and Movement*, Biography. Fordham was the name of a village that eventually became an area of the borough of the Bronx. St. John's College was renamed Fordham University in 1907.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Benedict Neenan, OSB *Thomas Verner Moore: Psychiatrist, Educator, Monk*, 34.
[19] Ibid., 37.
[20] Ibid., 42.

novitiate, the Paulist superior general, Augustine Francis Hewit (1820-1897), was initially

hesitant to accept Moore "because his family was still dependent on his income."[21]

After the death of Moore's mother in late 1896, the leaders of the Paulist community

deemed Moore's family obligations fulfilled. Shortly afterward, Moore moved to Washington,

D.C., to pursue religious formation with the Paulist community and soon became a student at The

Catholic University of America. In 1897, while still an undergraduate student, Thomas Verner

Moore pursued studies in "psychology, logic, mathematics and the natural sciences" while

simultaneously studying philosophy and theology under the Paulists at St. Thomas College. In

1899, as the period of his spiritual formation drew to a close, Walter Elliott (1842-1928), author

of *The Life of Father Hecker*, became Moore's third and final novice master.[22]

After completing his formation, Moore was received into the Paulist community on

December 20, 1900, and was ordained a priest of the Congregation of St. Paul the Apostle on

December 21, 1901.[23] In June of 1903, Moore received his Ph.D. in psychology from the

Catholic University of America.[24] Moore's Paulist superiors assigned him to be a teaching fellow

in psychology at the Institute of Pedagogy that the Catholic University of America had recently

established in New York City for the 1903-1904 academic year.[25] While teaching in New York,

Moore "took a course in educational psychology from Edward Lee Thorndike (1874-1949) at

Teachers College, Columbia University."[26] Despite their philosophical disagreements, Moore

wrote a paper for Thorndike on "The Evolution of Intelligence" and gained his respect.[27]

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[21] Ibid., 43. Moore discerned his clerical vocation and decided on his path of scientific research almost five years before Pope Leo XIII issued his condemnation of Americanism and more than a decade before Pope Pius X launched his assault against modernism.

[22] Ibid., 54. See Chapter 1. Elliott is usually remembered in US Catholic history because the French preface of his biography of Isaac Hecker was the occasion for Leo XIII's apostolic letter, *Testem Benevolentiae (1899)*, which condemned theological Americanism while permitting balanced American patriotism.

[23] Benedict Neenan, OSB *Thomas Verner Moore: Psychiatrist, Educator, Monk*, 61.

[24] Ibid., 72.

[25] Ibid., 78, 80.

[26] Ibid., 82. Thorndike is often remembered for his experimental use of animals to study intelligence.

[27] Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 42.

After his assignment to the Institute was concluded Moore travelled to the University of

Leipzig in Germany to study psychology under Wilhelm Wundt. Moore soon decided against

pursuing a formal doctoral degree because he had already received a Ph.D. in psychology from

The Catholic University of America.[28] Moore's research at Leipzig focused on the relationship

between the "mental image and intellectual idea" and followed the approach of one of Wundt's

earlier students, Oswald Külpe (1862-1915).[29] Moore developed tuberculosis while in Leipzig,

and his studies abruptly ended when he "went to a sanatorium in the Black Forest for about eight

months, during which time the condition cleared up completely."[30]

After his return to the United States in 1906, Moore was assigned to serve as the chaplain

of the Newman Club for the University of California at Berkeley.[31] During the two years that

Moore was in California, he was able to serve as both a sacramental minister to the students and

as a teaching fellow in the psychology department.[32] Moore left Berkeley in 1909 and returned to

St. Thomas College at The Catholic University of America where he was assigned to teach

philosophy and ethics.[33] In 1910, Moore became an instructor in psychology at The Catholic

University of America and also began teaching classes at the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur's

Trinity College.[34] Over the next several decades, Moore would go on to teach courses in

philosophy, biology, experimental psychology, clinical psychology, and mental hygiene at Trinity

College. Moore would also mentor several women graduate students from Trinity College in their

acquisition of Ph.D.'s in modern psychology.[35]

By 1911, while continuing to teach part-time at both The Catholic University of America

and Trinity College, Moore had begun taking classes at Georgetown Medical School with the

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[28] Benedict Neenan, OSB *Thomas Verner Moore: Psychiatrist, Educator, Monk*, 83.
[29] Ibid. 75, 82-83.
[30] Ibid., 84.
[31] Ibid., 86-87.
[32] Ibid., 90-91.
[33] Ibid., 94,
[34] Ibid., 95-96.
[35] Ibid., 96. These Ph.D.'s were initially granted through a partnership with Trinity College and eventually
through The Catholic University of America).

goal of eventually opening a psychological clinic for children in Washington, D.C., that would be similar to one that he had visited at the University of Pennsylvania.[36] In order to augment his medical training with both psychiatry and experimental psychology, Moore travelled to Germany in 1913 and studied under both Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926) and Oswald Külpe at the University of Munich.[37] While engaged in these studies Moore "spent a week of retreat… at the Carthusian Charterhouse of St. Hugh's, Parkminster, England, and was deeply moved by the experience."[38] After Moore returned to the United States in 1914, he conducted clinical work in psychiatry at the Phipps Psychiatric Clinic, "where he worked primarily with children and learned to use various therapeutic methods, including psychoanalysis," and concluded his medical studies at John Hopkins University Medical School in Baltimore.[39] Moore finally opened his Clinic for Nervous and Mental Diseases at Providence Hospital in Washington, D.C. in January 1916.[40]

In the summer of 1918, Moore accepted a commission to be a captain in the U.S. Army medical corps and was assigned to the American Expeditionary Force in Europe.[41] Moore was transferred five times during the six months that he served in the medical corps.[42] Moore was officially a psychiatrist yet he was also actively collecting psychological data and anecdotes for his future written works while he treated his patients. Furthermore, Moore sought to fulfill his priestly obligations whenever possible.[43] While attending a spiritual retreat at Downside Abbey in England in February 1919, however, Moore privately resolved to give up his scientific work, resign from the Paulists, and become a member of the Benedictine community at Downside.[44] The following month, however, Moore was promoted to major and scheduled for release. And by

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[36] Ibid., 97.
[37] Ibid. 100.
[38] Ibid., 115.
[39] Ibid., 101, 103.
[40] Ibid., 103.
[41] Ibid., 109.
[42] Ibid. 110.
[43] Ibid., 111.
[44] Ibid., 120

May of the same year, Moore had been honorably discharged from the army, had returned to the United States, and had resumed his many teaching, research, and clinical duties.[45]

Moore's desire to join the Benedictines did not disappear, and he gradually found a small group of men in the vicinity of Washington, D.C., who wished to simultaneously pursue a Benedictine religious vocation and engage in scientific research.[46] In December 1921, after almost two years of stressful interactions with the Paulist community, Moore officially resigned from the Congregation of St. Paul the Apostle after almost exactly twenty years as a Paulist priest and was briefly incardinated into the Archdiocese of Baltimore on February 3, 1922.[47] In March of 1922, Moore was made the first full professor of psychology at the Catholic University of America.[48] After negotiations with several other English Benedictines communities failed, Moore and five other American novices were accepted into the novitiate at Fort Augustus, an English Benedictine Congregation at in Scotland, on September 7, 1923.[49] The following September, they completed their novitiate at Fort Augustus, professed simple vows, and returned to the United States to form the St. Anselm Monastery in Washington, DC.[50]

Although he was now officially a Benedictine monk, Moore's active life outside the monastery actually increased over the next decade. Moore was recognized as the ranking member of the psychology department in 1922. In a barn located on the grounds of St. Anselm Priory, Moore founded the St. Gertrude School of Arts and Crafts in Washington, D.C., in 1926. St. Gertrude, which was staffed by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica's Priory in Duluth, Minnesota, was a school for girls with special needs that had served hundreds of young girls by the time that it closed in 1992.[51] Moore was officially appointed head of the psychology

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[45] Ibid., 112.
[46] Ibid., 130
[47] Benedict Neenan, OSB, *Thomas Verner Moore: Psychiatrist, Educator, Monk*, 129.
[48] Ibid., 172.
[49] Benedict Neenan, OSB Thomas Verner Moore: Psychiatrist, Educator, Monk, 150.
[50] Ibid., 152.
[51] Ibid., 186, 189.

department of The Catholic University of America in 1929.[52] That same year, St. Gertrude's was finally able to move to "a spacious, homelike building on an adjoining piece of property."[53]

Moore was less successful with his dream of founding a psychiatric hospital at The Catholic University of America. He was, however, able to expand the range of instruction in the psychology department to include psychiatry.[54] Furthermore, in 1936, with the assistance of a Rockefeller Foundation grant for $85,000, Moore was able to establish the Child Center at The Catholic University of America, which sought to train Catholics to serve as professionals in psychological medicine as well as to help children with educational and emotional problems.[55] Although it was still operating at Catholic University at the time of Moore's death, the Child Center closed its doors the following year, in June of 1970.[56]

Moore became the prior of his small Benedictine community of St. Anselm in 1939.[57] When St. Anselm had been founded Moore had envisioned all of the monks conducting scientific research similar to his own at the University. This had not been a realistic dream, however, due to the level of training that good scientific work requires, and for several years the community had been trying to discern "a proper work that would occupy most of the monks and provide a sufficient and reliable source of income for the community."[58] Moore's solution was to found a boy's preparatory school at St. Anselm that finally opened in the fall of 1942.[59]

Ever since his retreat at the Carthusian charterhouse in 1913, Moore had contemplated becoming a Carthusian monk.[60] Moore privately inquired about entrance into the Carthusians nearly a dozen times between 1933 and 1946.[61] Moore was allowed to make a summer retreat

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[52] Ibid., 174.
[53] Ibid., 188.
[54] Ibid., 194.
[55] Ibid., 191.
[56] Ibid. 200.
[57] Ibid., 208.
[58] Ibid., 204.
[59] Ibid., 209.
[60] Ibid., 214.
[61] Ibid., 215.

with Carthusians at Parkminster and yet his request for admission was ultimately denied; one of the reasons given was that he had too many other obligations.[62] Then, in February of 1946, Moore's community finally approved his request to be removed as prior of St. Anselm. Shortly afterward, Moore was informed that "he would be required to resign from his posts at the university upon turning seventy in October 1947." A few months later, Moore wrote to the Carthusian charterhouse of St. Mary of Miraflores in Burgos, Spain. In August of 1946, Thomas Verner Moore, O.S.B., "received word that he would be permitted to test his vocation." [63] Moore joined the Carthusian community of Miraflores in Burgos, Spain on October 17, 1947, and took the name "Dom Pablo Maria."[64]

In October of 1950, Moore returned to the United States to investigate the possibility of establishing a new Carthusian community. He accepted a donation of property at Sky Farm, near Whitingham, Vermont, and started a newsletter, *Carthusian Chronicle*, to publicize the project. Although community life began at the location in December, when Moore celebrated a Midnight Mass, official approval from the general chapter only came the following April.[65] Moore wrote his last few published books while living at the Carthusian Foundation at Sky Farm. In 1960, however, Moore left the growing community in order to return to Spain. He died as a Carthusian of Miraflores on June 5, 1969.[66]

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[62] Ibid., 216-217.
[63] Ibid., 217-218.
[64] Neenan, *Thomas Verner Moore: Psychiatrist, Educator, Monk*, 222.
[65] Ibid., 232-233.
[66] Ibid., 250.

The Writings of Thomas Verner Moore

In addition to being a priest, monk, medical doctor, practicing psychiatrist, experimental psychiatrist, professor of psychology, and department chair, Thomas Verner Moore was also a prolific author, with more than a hundred published articles and nearly a dozen books. While many of these works were directly concerned with modern psychology, some of them were only tangentially related to the subject. As Moore's corpus of works demonstrates, the spiritual life was always his primary object of focus; in Moore's view, every other subject, even the science of modern psychology, only mattered insofar as it served an ultimately spiritual aim.

Although Moore wrote spiritual books intended for lay people at different points in his life, most of them were at least tangentially related to modern psychology. The exceptions is *Prayer* (1931), a series of instructions on different forms of prayer that was written for the members of his Benedictine community, but which Moore decided to publish due to his belief that lay people "as well as religious, have as their ultimate end union with God by a life of prayer."[67] In *The Life of Man with God* (1956), Moore provided written responses from a survey of ordinary people, considered topics such as temptation, suffering, and mental prayer, and suggested practices from spiritual masters, like St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), St. Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582), and St. John of the Cross (1542-1591).[68] Much of Moore's final published writing, *Heroic Sanctity and Insanity: An Introduction to the Spiritual Life and Mental Hygiene* (1959), focused upon refuting claims that St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897) suffered from scrupulosity, although it also expressed very clearly Moore's personal conviction that "all the faithful are called by God to the summit of Christian perfection."[69]

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[67] Thomas Verner Moore, *Prayer* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1931), iii.

[68] Thomas Verner Moore, *Life of Man with God* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1956). The questionnaire that Moore used for the survey is found in the back of the book in Appendix II.

[69] Thomas Verner Moore, *Heroic Sanctity and Insanity* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1959), 1.

In contrast, Moore's first published book, *A Historical Introduction to Ethics* (1915), kept

religious faith out of the discussion until the very end. Moore based the text for this book on

lectures that he had given in 1908 while assigned to the Newman Club in at the University of

California at Berkeley. As Moore explained in the introduction, the book was neither a textbook

of ethics, nor a history, but was simply a sketch of various moral theories with an explanation of

the historical context of the person who first developed them.[70] For Moore, the moral system of

St. Thomas Aquinas, including his explanations of natural law, virtue, the gifts of the Holy Spirit,

and beatitude, was the ideal moral system. In the book's conclusion, moreover, Moore argued that

the scientific laws that govern motion "fail to explain all things because the universe itself is not a

mere machine." According to Moore, "if man himself transcends the mechanism of the universe,

then the source and origin of all must be sought outside of nature in a Moral Being from whom

morality itself has been derived."[71]

In *Principles of Ethics* (1935), written twenty years later, Moore returned to the subject of

ethics after he discovered that many nurses "were unable to formulate the principle" that applied

to an ethical situation even when they knew the right course of action.[72] The book is primarily a

discussion of general ethical cases, which are then followed by an explanation of the relevant

principles and theories that should be considered. For example, Moore used several principles

that are usually applied in Catholic just war theory to explain that indirect abortion may actually

be a moral duty to save the life of the mother.[73] Moore also included a short chapter on the duty

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[70] Thomas Verner Moore, *A Historical Introduction to Ethics* (New York: American Book Company, 1915), v.

[71] Ibid., 153.

[72] Thomas Verner Moore, *Principles of Ethics* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1935), v.

[73] Ibid., 164. Moore quoted a passage regarding "two effects, one of which alone is intended and the other not intended*"* from the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas in support of this position (2. 2. Q. LXIV). He then outlined the following principle: "(1) When two results follow from one and the same act, the goodness or badness of the act is determined from the good or bad character of that which was really intended. (2) If the act is good then that which is ultimately intended must be good. (3) The secondary evil consequence may be foreseen but it must not be desired for its own sake. (4) There must

that all people have to seek God in community with others as part of his wider presentation on the ethical cases, principles, duties, and systems about which he wanted the nurses to learn.[74]

Almost a decade later, Moore wrote another book that utilized specific cases for the purposes of education. In *The Nature and Treatment of Mental Disorders* (1943), he examined a range of psychological problems, often using anecdotal evidence from his clinical psychiatric work. In one instance, Moore explained the case of a Catholic woman patient in her mid-thirties who drank too much, smoked too much, had no appetite, had no affection for her husband, and claimed that she was in love with her husband's friend. Moore suggested that there were many psychologists who would have determined "that the blocking of the libido was the root of the patient's anxieties, and they would have attempted to cure the condition by persuading the patient to divorce her husband and marry the man she loved."[75] Instead, Moore decided to try to help her to grow spiritually within her current marriage and began by reminding her "about the meaning of the Mass, the life of Christ, and various spiritual ideals." He even "suggested that she read St. Francis de Sales' *Introduction to a Devout Life*, and if she was not too tired and sleepy in the morning, that she go to an early Mass on weekdays as well as Sundays."[76] He also prescribed her a pill to increase her hunger and suggested that she take an afternoon nap. He noted that this treatment had helped her and yet had not completely solved her difficulties; she still claimed to love her husband's friend and not her husband, she had subsequently gained weight, stopped

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be a due proportion between the good that is intended and the evil that follows without being intended." (ibid, 164-165)

[74] Ibid., 279. In an interesting footnote at the end of the chapter on religious duty, Moore discussed the case of baptizing infants who are near death and explained how to properly perform the baptismal ritual. According to Moore, while Catholic nurses have an obligation to see to the baptisms of all dying infants within their care, non-Catholic nurses have a basic duty to at least baptize the dying infants of Catholic parents.Moore explained that anyone who intends to do what the Church does at baptism is capable of performing them according to Catholic sacramental theology. He also advised that it was preferable to call a priest to perform the necessary sacraments when possible, insisting that there is "no greater unkindness than to neglect or even refuse to get a priest for a dying Catholic." (ibid.)

[75] Thomas Verner Moore, *The Nature and Treatment of Mental Disorders* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1943), 166.

[76] Ibid., 167,

drinking, reduced her smoking, and that she only occasionally attended weekday Mass. While she

had suffered from a few minor relapses, Moore opined that she was relatively happy and

"resigned to a situation which is far from the ideal of married life."[77]

In his preface to *Personal Mental Hygiene* (1944), a text that Moore published the

following year and whose basic purpose can be compared to Sheen's self-test in normality and

abnormality, Moore explained that

> psychiatry too often neglects ideals and principles and attempts to attain its ends
> by adjusting the mechanisms to be found on the emotional plane without rising to
> anything of an ethical or spiritual character. I was once asked by an educated
> layman why it is that one can never turn to a psychiatrist to point the way to the
> higher things in life and I had to admit that this is too often true, but tried to
> argue that there is no reason in the nature of the science of psychiatry itself why
> it should be so. Unfortunately it is so and that too at a time when psychiatrists are
> stepping forward to act as the guides of human beings in the conflict and
> perplexities of the present crisis in modern life.[78]

Moore wrote *Personal Mental Hygiene* to help people reflect on their own mental states

and recognize the potential problems that they faced before they became too severe. In its basic

structure, *Personal Mental Hygiene* is an examination of some of the factors that Moore believed

often lead to mental illness, as well as his own suggestions on how to fix the underlying issues. In

the early chapter on depression, for example, Moore explained some of the problems with

depression, looked at a psychological survey on emotional tone that had been given to workers on

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[77] Ibid., 168. This is one of Moore's least convincing presentations of his practices in our own context. The deeply unhappy relationship that the woman and her husband seem to have had suggests that there may never have been a valid marriage between them and that some other solution may have been preferable. Moore clearly recognizes that they are fundamentally unhappy and yet also seems to think that they have a duty to remain together. It is worth noting that he does not even mention possibilities like marriage counselling, a spiritual retreat for the couple, or any of the remedies that people would generally think of trying today.

[78] Thomas Verner Moore, *Personal Mental Hygiene* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1944), v.

the Pennsylvania Railroad, and offered four important principles for preventing depression.[79]

Throughout the book, Moore stressed the importance of a good family life, self-control, and the

value of religious ideals.[80]

Although Moore's spiritual writings, ethical works, and manuals on mental hygiene all

provide elements of his synthetic approach to modern psychology, his theories are more clearly

articulated in his textbooks in modern psychology. His largest and most comprehensive textbook,

Cognitive Psychology (1939), begins with a study of consciousness, traces the various theories of

perception throughout history, offers Moore's own views of perception, and closes with

treatments of the intellect, memory, and the relationship between the human mind and the human

body.[81] Moore's faculty psychology, and in particular his understanding of the synthetic sense, is

the core concept around which the rest of the material is organized.

Moore's concept of the synthetic sense was a scientific account of the Aristotelian and

Thomistic concept of the *sensus communis*, or "common sense." According to Moore, the

synthetic sense is the mental function that constructs "a sensory presentation of the object of

perception by which the object of perception appears to us as an external individual thing, related

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[79] Ibid., 21-26. In this instance, the four principles that Moore offered were: "1. The normal prophylaxis against all forms of truly [sic] mental disorders is the establishment of a happy family with a number of children." "2. It is a matter of mental hygiene importance [sic] to have multiple interests in life." "3. It is very important to avoid unwholesome attitudes of mind such as 'What's the use of trying, I'm going to give up' or a tendency to feel sorry for oneself and badly treated, to shirk effort and personal responsibility, and after a deep slump, brought on by some one or more of such attitudes, to say to oneself: 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry today for tomorrow we die,' and then to give in one way or another to unwholesome excesses." "4. It well to remember that idealism is the formal directing cause of many sources of pleasure and modes of activity." (Ibid., 24, 25, 26)
[80] Moore provided a more detailed account of his views regarding the value that a good domestic life provides in one of his last books, *The Home and Its Inner Spiritual Life: A Treatise on the Mental Hygiene of the Home* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1952). Like some of his other writings during this period, the book was published as the work of "A Carthusian of Miraflores" rather than under his religious or given names.
[81] Thomas Verner Moore, *Cognitive Psychology* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1939). It is interesting to note that Fulton J. Sheen provided the *nihil obstat*.

to, but different from surrounding objects."[82] Moore saw the synthetic sense as the intellectual

power that brings "many sensory elements of a spatial extent and a temporal sequence… together

simultaneously in consciousness" so that perception and understanding can occur.[83] In other

words, Moore saw it as the source of the unity for all of the individual's conscious experience.

As important as the synthetic sense was to Moore's theory of perception, his other two

textbooks on modern psychology, *Dynamic Psychology: An Introduction to Modern*

Psychological Theory and Practice (1924) and *The Driving Forces of Human Nature and Their*

Adjustment: An Introduction to the Psychology and Psychopathology of Emotional Behavior and

Volitional Control (1950), focused on other aspects of his psychology. Although he wrote both

textbooks as introductions to psychology at opposite ends of his time with the Benedictine

community at St. Anselm Priory, they are in many ways the same book.[84] In other words, as was

the case with Brennan's two editions of *General Psychology*, Moore repeated entire chapters

verbatim, or with only occasional edits and modifications, and usually only to reflect minor

changes in psychological theory. Moore also dropped a few chapters in the later book that were

no longer as relevant to the current state of modern psychology and added a few new chapters

that focused on his more recent concerns. For example, *The Driving Forces* contains a new

chapter on the development of American psychology and omits an old section on psychoanalysis

and psychotherapy. Finally, although Moore explained his basic metaphysical concerns with

modern psychology at the beginning of both books, he provided a far more detailed explanation

of the value of neo-Thomist metaphysics to modern psychology within the book that he wrote at

the end of his psychological career.

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[82] Ibid., 241.

[83] Ibid., 242.

[84] As Moore explained in the introduction to *The Driving Forces of Human Nature and Its Development*, he was originally offered the opportunity to simply write an updated edition of Dynamic Psychology. Moore was convinced, however, that psychology had changed too much and that an entirely new book was in order. There is, however, so much material in common between the two books that the more recent work really is, essentially, a revised edition of the earlier one.

The Definition of Moore's Modern Psychology

> There is no definition of psychology at the present day that meets with the approval of all students of the science. This lack of unity in the modern concept of psychology is due to several factors. 1. The close relation of psychology to philosophy, from which it has budded off as an independent study. Metaphysical concepts, one might even say prejudices, are more potent factors in the minds of all men, even scientists, than many would be willing to admit. Different metaphysical attitudes really influence the ideas of the psychologist as to the nature of psychology. 2. Modern psychology is a relatively young science and only in its maturity does a science really crystallize its definition. 3. Psychology is a rapidly growing science, splitting up into various subforms, begetting a numerous progeny so that it is hard to decide among its various heirs which is the rightful successor to the name.[85]

Thomas Verner Moore practiced a form of modern psychology that he defined as "the science of human personality." Moore argued that conscious behavior is that element of human life that "characterizes the human personality most specifically" and so focused on conscious activity in his psychological works. He credited Franz Brentano, a former Dominican priest who had left the Catholic Church after the First Vatican Council, with coining the definition of psychology as "the science of psychic phenomena, that is, of conscious processes."[86] Moore claimed that Brentano had constructed this definition of psychology in the belief that "it implied no metaphysical theory" and so would, by implication, be free of metaphysical presuppositions. According to Moore, however, Brentano's work had been designed "to show that this definition meant neither more nor less than psychology is the science of the soul."[87]

Moore's entire life was focused upon the human soul, and he even used the conclusion of *Dynamic Psychology* to argue for its philosophical existence. Yet Moore always defined his form of psychology as the study of the human personality rather than of the human soul. There are at

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[85] Thomas Verner Moore, Dynamic Psychology, 3. Both of these books open with this quotation but the spacing between different paragraphs has been modified in this citation in order to make this into a single block quote.

[86] Misiak and Staudt, *Catholics in Psychology*, 24.

[87] Moore, *Dynamic Psychology*, 6.

least two possible reasons for Moore's rejection of a soul-based definition. First, since the soul is understood to be the source of life, and since life is a property of an entire organism, Moore may have seen the soul as being shared with all of the biological sciences rather than the exclusive territory of his science.[88] Second, Moore may not have wanted his metaphysical premises to be too obvious, or to risk having his research ignored, just because he insisted on using the term.[89]

It was Moore's contention, however, that all modern psychologists have metaphysical beliefs that "really influence the ideas of psychologists as to the nature of psychology."[90] While Moore's own metaphysical positions led him to imagine that there was a "rightful successor" to the name of psychology, he always explained the science of modern psychology in a way that utilized both Thomist and modern accounts of science. Moore defined a science as "a branch of knowledge which seeks an explanation of a correlated group of phenomena or events" instead of simply identifying science with knowledge of a nature.[91] In other words, Moore accepted the modern view of science as concerned with relatively observable and empirical facts, or "a correlated group of phenomena or events," rather than the traditional Thomist definition of a science as knowledge of the form of a thing.

Unlike most modern scientists, however, Moore's definition of a science concentrated upon the material object of knowledge, or what the subject of the knowledge is, more than the scientific method by which that knowledge is obtained. This slight difference in emphasis allowed Thomas Verner Moore to explain to neo-Thomists that modern psychology should be recognized as a modern empirical science because it had an empirical material object. According

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[88] This possibility is suggested by Moore's explanation that two of Aristotle's most important works in psychology, *De Anima* and *Parva Naturalia*, are better classified as works of biology "for the discipline that they treat of is said to be the science of life in all of its manifestations." Moore, *Dynamic Psychology*, 4. To Moore, it may genuinely have seemed like biology had at least an equal claim to be regarded as the study the soul.

[89] This possibility seems the more likely one because of Moore's reference to Brentano's desire not to suggest metaphysical premises as well as his mention that Brentano's definition focused on conscious processes.

[90] Ibid, 3.

[91] Moore, Dynamic Psychology, 10.

to Moore, the material object of modern psychology is "the facts of our mental life," meaning that the material object of the science consists of facts that can be studied empirically.

Although Moore saw modern psychology as an empirical science, he distinguished it from the natural sciences because he believed that human beings always defy purely natural explanations. In essence, Moore insisted that "human behavior is not completely explained or understood by an appeal to principles which are strictly those of natural science."[92] Moore recognized the great importance of biological research for modern psychology, and yet he also distinguished psychology from physiology because he believed that biological explanations of the human being were not sufficient to "help us understand purely mental facts." For Moore, modern psychology had a unique value among the sciences that studied the brain precisely because modern psychology examined these mental facts as data and was able "not merely to describe these phenomena but to explain them."[93] In other words, Moore credited modern psychology with possessing an interpretive power concerning the workings of the human mind that the purely biological science of physiology necessarily lacked.

Moore's decision to use the term "explain" for a science such as modern psychology differs sharply from the practice of many other neo-Thomists, most notably Fulton J. Sheen, who were more reticent to use the word "explain" in a scientific context. In his writings on the relationship between science and philosophy, Fulton Sheen consistently declared that the modern sciences can only offer descriptions of the nature of reality rather than genuine explanations of reality. In his more careful moments, Sheen maintained that the modern empirical sciences frequently offered accurate descriptions of those areas of reality that they studied and even acknowledged that these descriptions often grew even more accurate with additional refinement. Nevertheless, Sheen argued that the modern empirical sciences could never hope to offer true

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[92] Ibid., 11.
[93] Ibid.

explanations of reality "in terms of the intelligible" as long as they continued to both ignore primary causality and reject traditional metaphysics.[94]

While Sheen and Moore differed in their use of the term "explain," their actual positions were far closer in other respects than they may at first appear. Like most neo-Thomists, Sheen and Moore both subscribed to the Thomist principle that every science has both a formal object, or angle of study, and a material object, or particular subject of study. Sheen repeatedly made this distinction in his evaluations of modern science and recognized the right of the modern scientist to use a particular direction of approach in the study of their subject matter. Moore, when explaining the concept of "natural science," made this same neo-Thomist distinction between the formal and material objects of a science, albeit without explicitly using the neo-Thomist terminology. Moore claimed that a "natural science" as a science that studies the world "in terms of nature, that is to say, physical motion" and also insisted that the explanations of a natural science be provided "in terms of matter and energy."[95] Like Sheen, Moore saw motion as the formal object, or direction of study, of the natural science of modern psychics, the science whose material object is "matter." By invoking this distinction, Moore was able to make the claim that the natural sciences could offer valid "explanations" of the material world "in terms of matter and energy" without also implying that the modern sciences provided explanations of reality "in terms of the intelligible." Moore was willing to use the word "explain" somewhat more broadly than Sheen was, and yet he did not intend to imply that any of the explanations that modern forms of science provided of the material objects that they studied were directly concerned with the ultimate nature of reality. For Moore, the modern sciences merely provided explanations in terms of the angle of approach that they used and not "in terms of the intelligible." In essence, Moore agreed with Sheen that the modern sciences were not able to do what metaphysics could do, and

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[94] See the discussion of Sheen's view on causality, metaphysics, and intelligibility in chapter 2.
[95] Ibid.

yet Moore was willing to use a more flexible vocabulary to better communicate his ideas to his non-Thomist readers.

Moore's interpretation of modern psychology as "the science of human personality" was another example of his intellectual flexibility. Moore saw conscious behavior as that which "characterizes the human personality most specifically," with the result that Moore's research was devoted to the study of conscious thought. Yet Moore was a Thomist and was convinced that questions about "the ultimate nature of consciousness" could only be answered by an appeal to metaphysics. As a result, Moore proposed a pragmatic solution for those who might seek to reject modern psychology because it could not immediately answer metaphysical questions about consciousness: Moore asserted that modern psychology need not "answer the question of the nature of consciousness before it investigates the operations of the mind."[96] In other words, although Moore had disagreements with many of the metaphysical premises of other modern psychologists, he accepted that modern psychology could function effectively at a basic level without adequate metaphysics or the ability to offer an intelligible explanation of consciousness in terms of primary causality. Yet Moore did not intend to imply that primary causality was an unimportant matter or ought to be completely ignored. Instead, Moore himself utilized metaphysical concepts such as causality within his own psychological writings and suggested that other psychologists use them as well. In essence, Moore hoped to help mainstream modern psychology to mature philosophically and eventually to accept Thomist metaphysics.

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[96] Moore, *Dynamic Psychology*, 15.

The Application of Thomist Metaphysics to Modern Psychology

Thomas Verner Moore recognized that all people have metaphysical presuppositions and that the metaphysical presuppositions of modern psychologists have a profound influence upon their research. For Moore, in other words, it was not the case that some people had metaphysical propositions and that others did not. Yet Moore was convinced that some people had correct metaphysical beliefs and that many other people had incorrect metaphysical assumptions. And so, in order to combat the faulty metaphysical beliefs of his fellow scientists, Moore frequently tried to provide metaphysical explanations within his psychological writings in order to subtly demonstrate the value that Thomist metaphysics could hold for modern thought in general and for modern psychologists in particular.

Moore believed that Thomist metaphysics could prove of great benefit to modern psychology in three important areas. First, Moore believed that the Thomist concept of causation could clarify much of the confusion within modern thought. Second, Moore believed that the philosophical concept of the human soul, which was based in the concept of the formal cause, would solve some of the confusion at the heart of modern psychology. Third, Moore believed that a correct understanding of the human soul would help modern psychologists to recognize the existence of the human will and allow them to properly study human freedom.

Moore's Explanation of the Four Causes

The first important area of metaphysical disagreement between Thomas Verner Moore and most modern thinkers concerned the concept of causality. Moore asserted that many modern thinkers misunderstood the traditional view of causality and that this mistake had led them to make several subsequent philosophical errors. In his writings Moore tried to convince these modern thinkers to accept the conception of cause that was found in Scholastic thought. From Moore's perspective, if modern thinkers were to utilize the traditional concept of "cause"

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according to the Thomist tradition then they would find themselves better able to think through

many of the philosophical problems that currently caused them intellectual difficulties.

Moore saw the philosophical writings of David Hume (1711-1776) as the source for

much of the modern confusion regarding the concept of causality. He asserted that Hume's

arguments against causality "had a profound influence on modern philosophy" as well as the rest

of modern thought.[97] Hume had misconstrued the concept of causality as a product of sensation,

and Moore argued that this simple mistake had led Hume to seek after an explanation for "the

concept of causation in some relation that can be perceived by the senses."[98] Moore noted that

Hume had assumed pure sensationalism from the outset of his work and so had failed to

recognize that causality is properly understood as an intellectual concept instead of as a mere

sensation. From Moore's perspective Hume had essentially defined all knowledge as "the

perception of sensory qualities or the revival of these perceptions as images." For this reason,

Moore explained, Hume's subsequent search for some kind of a necessary connection between

cause and effect was logically doomed to end in failure because "no sensory quality can ever be a

'necessary connection.'"[99]

Moore viewed Hume's apparent inability to discover a necessary connection between

cause and effect as the source of the popular philosophical belief that cause and effect are unreal.

Instead of appealing to philosophy or theology, however, Moore simply dismissed Hume's claim

that there is only succession (and the mental habit of assuming the relationship between cause and

effect because of past experience) on the grounds that Hume's position was based upon an

inadequate understanding of science. Moore cited a passage in which Hume had used the

collision of billiard balls to make the case that there was no necessary connection between cause

and effect as proof for that there is only succession.[100] Hume's example was flawed, Moore

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[97] Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 336.
[98] Ibid., 337.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid., 337.

argued, because of Hume's ignorance of physics. Using the billiard ball example himself, Moore explained that people trained in modern physics recognize the necessary connection between cause and effect in billiard balls when they have the proper understanding of the objects in question, including their elasticity, their applied force, and their trajectory.[101] He asserted that this proves that cause can be intellectually known in this case by its effect even while the force that is actually applied remains entirely unseen. For Moore, as for other Thomists, Hume's great philosophical mistake was declaring that causation must be able to be seen when it is actually something that has to be intellectually recognized and understood.

It is worth noting that Moore also critiqued Hume's philosophical account of causality through appeal to his own area of study, noting simply that for all his brilliance in other matters "Hume was not a genetic psychologist."[102] According to Moore, Hume had argued that people come to believe in cause because of their memories of repeated associations, such as consistently experiencing the feeling of heat after seeing flames. Moore cited instead recent psychological studies that indicated instead that "the origin of the concept of causality in the child's mind shows that it is the new and the strange that first calls for the question of 'why' and a seeking for the cause."[103] In other words, Moore believed that the scientific evidence that modern psychology had provided to him concerning the way that human beings come to know about causation disproved Hume's uneducated speculation on the topic.[104]

Moore contrasted Hume's influential explanation of causality with a definition of causality that St. Thomas Aquinas had proposed centuries earlier. According to Moore, Aquinas had defined a cause as that without which something "cannot be; for every effect depends upon its cause.'"[105] Moore followed St. Thomas in recognizing the four causes attributed to Aristotle

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[101] Ibid., 338.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Moore was, in effect, using Hume's own example, as well as the authority of modern science, against him.
[105] Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 335.

and subsequently divided them into two basic categories. Moore explained that formal and material causes are both always "*intrinsic*" to an object because they are concerned with its basic composition whereas efficient and final causes are both always "*extrinsic*" to an object because they always deal with the means and purpose by which an object operates.[106]

Moore first addressed what he considered to be the intrinsic causes of an object and asserted that the concept of change actually requires "two different intrinsic causes in material things." Moore defined the material cause of any object as that aspect that "is changed into something else" and interpreted the formal cause of the same object as the enduring "organizing principle" that operates from within the object. Moore gave an acorn that grows into an oak tree as an example of formal and material cause.[107] He explained that the material cause of the oak tree consists in the physical acorn as well as all the additional materials that are joined to it over time, such as the nutrients from the soil and the light from the sun, so that the acorn can gradually turn it into the tree. Moore interpreted these new materials as having been "changed into the substance of the tree" over time and as therefore having been absorbed into its material cause.[108] For Moore, the formal cause of the oak tree was identical with the very life of the tree throughout this entire process of its development. In other words, Moore saw the formal cause of the oak tree as essentially identical to the plan that unfolded and which gradually organized the materials of which the tree was composed at each stage of its development into what it was from the beginning of its existence until its eventual death.

Moore emphasized the importance of intrinsic causes, and yet he also argued that it is very important to understand extrinsic causes. Moore's basic explanation of an efficient, or instrumental, cause was "something extrinsic to the effect produced."[109] He noted that for Aristotle the means by which a lump of bronze is molded into a particular shape served as the

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[106] Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 335.
[107] Moore, Cognitive Psychology, 551.
[108] Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 335.
[109] Ibid., 336

basic example of an efficient cause.[110] In an attempt to use a more modern example, Moore

explained that the efficient cause of tuberculosis is "the tubercular bacillus with its active

constituent elements."[111] For Moore, this simple example worked because while any set of lungs

are "capable of developing tubercles… no lung ever does so unless it is infected by tubercular

bacilli."[112] As a result, Moore could declare with certainty that tubercular bacilli must always be

the efficient cause of tuberculosis in the lungs for the bacterium was necessarily "that without

which" it (the case of tuberculosis) could not be.

Moore's somewhat general definition of a final cause was of "an end perceived by an

individual which appeals to him as worthy of attainment."[113] From Moore's perspective it was

especially important for modern psychologists to recognize the reality of final causation because

Moore believed that final causation is the basis for voluntary action. Moore argued that human

volition "is brought about by the perception of an object worthy of attainment" and that the good

that was sought was therefore the final cause of the activity.[114]

According to Moore, the concept of causality was as relevant to modern science as the

rest of modern thought because it could provide alternative means of explaining many scientific

phenomena. For example, Moore offered an explanation for the sweetness that flavor crystals

provide using the concept of formal causality, as well as the notions of act and potency. Moore

noted that according to the standard account of modern science human beings recognize that the

taste of sugar is sweet because of the way that sugar molecules affect the sense organ of the

tongue. He argued that another way to explain this same observation is that the "active principle

in the sugar molecule, which makes it a unit thing with a definite type of activity" acts upon the

passive capacity of the tongue in such a way that the tongue is able to receive the formal cause or

form (sweetness) of the sugar. From Moore's perspective, "the sense organ is passive, relative to

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110 Moore, Cognitive Psychology, 550.
111 Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 336.
112 Ibid., 335.
113 Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 336.
114 Ibid.

the activity of the object…so the form of the object is impressed upon the sense organ." To the degree that the sensation (effect) is like the object (cause) through which it came to be received, "so the sensation is like the object perceived."[115] The human tongue that perceives the sweetness of the sugar molecule is therefore activating a potential that is always present when it receives the form of the sugar through the contact that it makes with the object. This makes the form of the object (sugar) essentially identical to the information about the object (sweet taste) that is received in the sensation.

The concept of causality was, in Moore's view, also useful in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. For example, when discussing one of his patients who had suffered from an anxiety disorder, Moore concluded that the patient had "reaped some kind of value" from having the disorder. In Thomist language, Moore went on to explain that in addition to "an *efficient* and a *formal* cause, our patient's condition had a *final* cause, if we express ourselves in the language of philosophy."[116] With regard to this patient, Moore argued that "the formal cause of his anxieties was the type of fears that he was subjected to in childhood" and that the efficient cause was "worry and discontent proceeding from a present unhappy situation."[117] Yet Moore noted also that he had found some difficulty in curing the patient because of the final cause of the illness, which consisted of the perceived benefits that the illness had caused to the patient's own personal life, such as getting his father to do work that he had found unpleasant, having a woman that had rejected him come to visit him while he was ill, and keeping his wife completely occupied with his care instead of having her focus on the step-children that he resented.[118]

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[115] Ibid.
[116] Moore, *The Nature and Treatment of Mental Disorders,* 142.
[117] Ibid., 141.
[118] Ibid., 142.

Moore's Explanation of the Human Soul as Formal Cause

Although Moore fought for the concept of causality in a variety of forms, there was one important example of cause that was particularly important to his psychological work. Moore's Thomist philosophical training had taught him to understand the human soul as the formal cause of the human person. In essence, Moore saw that the claim "the soul is the formal cause of the human person" as a philosophical truth that could be rationally demonstrated regardless of the faith tradition of the person hearing the demonstration. Furthermore, he believed that the concept of the soul as formal cause provided the basic solution to many of the philosophical issues of modern psychology. Moore suspected that most modern thinkers who rejected the philosophical concept of the soul did so because they lacked an adequate understanding of formal causality and the related concept of substantial form.[119]

Moore's account of the modern world's rejection of the soul began with the philosophy of Rene Descartes.[120] Although Moore did not attach significant blame to Descartes for this mistake, he argued that Descartes had "rejected the scholastic concept of 'substantial form' because he misunderstood it."[121] Moore noted that "Descartes from time to time in his works refers to the unsatisfactory character of scholastic philosophy," and so Moore claimed that Descartes had wrongly identified all of scholastic philosophy with the approach of "the seventeenth-century interpretation of Aristotle proceeding from the University of Coimbra."[122]

According to Moore, the scholastics of Coimbra had tried "to treat the problems of nature by metaphysical speculation with occasional descriptions of such matters as anatomical structure by way of illustration." Moore criticized the Coimbra philosophy for having "neglected the new experimental approach that was to develop into the sciences of the modern era" that Descartes

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[119] Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 427.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Moore, *Cognitive Psychology*, 136.
[122] Ibid., 137.

had embraced.[123]   The Coimbra scholastics' explanation of visual perception had, in Moore's view, led to Descartes' rejection of Scholastic philosophy because they had "taught that a body sends forth from itself an image…in such a way that every part of the extended object sends forth an image of the whole." Moore explained that the Coimbra philosophy had insisted that such "images (simulacra) enter the eye and flow through the optic nerves to the *sensus communis*."[124]

Moore believed that Descartes had been dissatisfied with the explanations of the Coimbra scholastics with regard to perception and had decided "to study the problem of vision from the point of view of anatomy."[125] He noted that Descartes had utilized the insights provided by "the optical instruments just being developed for the correction of defects of vision" as well as those "for the study of the heavens and which had caused so much speculation and excitement by the discovery of the moons of Jupiter and the phases of Venus."[126] According to Moore, Descartes had recognized "that every point of a body reflects rays of light in all directions" and "that these are focused by the cornea and lens and an image is thus formed upon the retina." Moore explained that Descartes had "pointed out that it was impossible for any images to meander through the optic nerves" and had argued instead that "each nerve filament, being affected by a spot on the image corresponding to a spot of the object, would make a little tug on a spot in the brain." Moore rejected Descartes' own claim that this discovery was a result of the application of the Cartesian philosophical method, and yet he did acknowledge that Descartes "had discovered the essential facts in the process of vision and he had done so by an appeal to objective methods, a study of the structure of the eye and of the laws of reflection and refraction of light, rather than by metaphysical speculation on how vision might be conceived of as taking place."[127]

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123 Ibid. A few pages earlier Moore had related an anecdote intended to show that Descartes had believed that personally dissecting a calf provided greater understanding than reading a book about natural science. Ibid, 133.
124 Ibid., 137.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid., 137-138,
127 Ibid.

As his explanation of the reason that Descartes had rejected the Coimbra philosophy

makes apparent, Moore disagreed with Coimbra scholasticism and did not consider it an adequate

representative of scholastic philosophy. [128] Moore believed that Descartes had also obtained his

inadequate understanding of substantial form from these same scholastic thinkers. In *The Driving

Forces of Human Nature*, Moore cited the works of Etienne Gilson in order to argue that

"Descartes in some way conceived of the Aristotelian-scholastic substantial form as an

immaterial substance, complete in itself, which resided in matter in some obscure way and

directed the movements of its particles, and by this union of the material and the immaterial there

resulted a purely corporeal substance."[129] Moore provided Gilson's description of Descartes'

understanding of the scholastic account of substantial form, in which Gilson had explained that

> 'A scholastic substantial form translated into Cartesian thought is (in place of
> being a principle complementary to another principle in the constitution of a
> single substance) an immaterial substance: the form which is added to a corporal
> substance: the matter, to compose with it a purely corporeal substance. It is not
> surprising that he conceived for such a monster more than indifference, horror.
> But one can well say that it was he himself who brought it into being.'[130]

Moore believed that Descartes' rejection of Scholastic thought had induced him to

jettison the concept of form and construct "a natural science of particles in motion" that had led

many subsequent thinkers to abandon the traditional concept of formal causality. [131] According

to Moore, Descartes had maintained that "[a]ll the qualities of material things and 'even all the

forms of inanimate bodies can be explained without the necessity of supposing for this purpose

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[128] Ibid. For example, in a footnote Moore pointed out that the Coimbra school's account of vision "seems traceable to St. Bonaventure, not to St. Thomas" and insisted that "St. Thomas expressly rejects the emanation of images, and speaks of the activity of cause and effect."

[129] Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 427.

[130] Moore, *Cognitive Psychology*, 136.

[131] Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 427.

anything else in their matter than movement, size, figure and arrangement of their parts.'"[132]

Moore argued that this statement had been "one of revolutionary character" when Descartes had

originally made it yet had subsequently become "the basic assumption of the natural sciences."[133]

In Moore's view, however, Descartes had "no mathematical reason nor any ground whatever to

state that a swarm of particles moving at random will assemble themselves into a structure or

system of any kind."[134]

Moore maintained that the "natural science of particles in motion" that developed after

Descartes had sought "purely mechanical explanations in terms of mass and velocity" and shown

"a marked unwillingness to revive and consider the ancient concept of formal causes."[135] Yet

Moore argued that some of the greatest of these natural scientists had been forced to unwittingly

smuggle formal causality back into their accounts of the universe in order to make their own

theories work out properly. Moore provided two important examples in which he believed formal

causality had been required to make the science function correctly.

First, Moore argued that gravity plays the role of formal causation within Newton's

account of the universe. Moore explained that Newton had assumed the Cartesian concept of

particles in motion and had found it necessary to add "the principle that every particle of matter

attracts every other particle inversely as the square of the distance between them." This meant

that Newton's particles "are not merely passive entities; they are endowed with a specific activity

which belongs to them by their very nature" and, according to Moore, the scholastic term for such

an endowment is a "*forma substantialis*."[136] In other words, Moore argued that Newtonian

physics was only able to function adequately because the concept of the formal cause had been

integrated back into the scientific theory with a different name.

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[132] Ibid. Moore's citation: *Le monde, Traité de la lumière*. Chap. 5, Adam and Tannery, Vol. XI, p. 26.
[133] Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 427.
[134] Ibid., 430.
[135] Ibid., 428.
[136] Ibid., 428.

Second, Moore noted that theories of electromagnetism recognize that bodies charged with positive or negative electricity "behave in a peculiar manner," such that those bodies with the same kind of charge "repel each other" and where "unlike charged bodies attract each other with a force directed along a line between them which varies inversely as the square of the distance when the distance is large in relation to the dimensions of the bodies."[137] For Moore, electric charge was a second example of "a new property is added to matter" that also fulfilled the basic definition of a formal principle. From Moore's perspective, in other words, it is possible to think about an electric charge as the formal cause of a charged body because the electric charge is the internal principle that directs the object.

For Moore, of course, the formal cause of the entire human person was the human soul, for it is the source of "the profound difference that exists between life and death." Since the formal cause of an object supplies the principle of its existence Moore interpreted the soul of each living being as the principle of coordination that makes the entire organism one entity. For Moore it was obvious that the physical human body undergoes various chemical and biological changes after death because the "principle of coordination has ceased to act."[138] To buttress his own argument about the soul as formal cause of the organism, Moore explained how Hans Driesch (1867-1941) had provided an earlier account of the soul as the principle of coordination in his *Science and Philosophy of the Organism* (1908).

According to Moore, Driesch's argument for a principle of coordination was based upon "the growth of the organism which cannot be explained without the assumption of a vital principle." Moore explained that Driesch had recognized that each fertilized ovum "grows up and becomes a representative that bears all the many characteristics of its species." Driesch had considered both internal factors and external factors that could influence this principle of coordination. As an example of an internal factor, Moore noted that Driesch recognized "that

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[137] Ibid.

[138] Moore, *Dynamic Psychology*, 405.

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living matter is forced to assume a cellular structure by the same laws of surface tension that we see in activity in the formation of soap bubbles or the production of lather."[139] Moore also acknowledged "that cellular structure is due to the phenomenon of surface tensions," that "when the size of the cell is such in relation to the surface tension of the fluid of which it is composed that it can no longer exist as a unit," and so it "mechanically divides in two."[140] Yet, following Driesch, Moore suggested "that what accounts for cellular structure in general does not explain the architecture of the species." In other words, surface tension does not explain "why the ovum of a starfish does not produce a mushroom, a toad, a lion, or a man" even if it does explain "why all living organisms are composed of cells."[141] Moore also recounted that Driesch had acknowledged that there are "external factors that are necessary for growth," including proper temperature, oxygen, and other necessary environmental conditions."[142]

According to Moore, Driesch had demonstrated the origin of growth in an embryo was not a mechanical activity because machines cannot restore themselves when broken apart in the way that embryos that are broken apart frequently can. Moore believed that Driesch had shown that "one is led by exclusion to conclude that there exists a non-mechanical vital principle."[143] For Moore, as for Driesch, this principle is an entelechy, a reality that "was translated in scholastic philosophy as *forma substantialis*, the equivalent of the modern word 'soul.'"[144]

Moore supplemented Drisech's account of the entelechy with "J.V. Uexkull's" division of "the factors in the growth of the organism into archetectonic [sic] and mechanical."[145]

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[139] Ibid., 406.
[140] Ibid., 406.
[141] Ibid. It is worth noting that Moore presented this account of Driesch in 1924 and that this was almost forty years before the discovery of the double helix structure of DNA.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid, 408.
[144] Ibid. In a footnote, Moore notes that "Morgan's view of the localization of Mendelian determinants in the germ plasm" might refute this position if the Mendelian determinants are shown to be chemical substances. Yet Moore still insisted that whatever might be the explanation of individual characteristics, the assembling of all the parts of an organism and the characteristics which modify these parts into one structural unit is itself a phenomenon of coordination that demands an explanation."
[145] Ibid., 409.

According to Moore, Uexkull intended "archetectonic" to mean "the manifestation of the activity of the non-mechanical principle" of an organism. Moore argued that Uexkull had believed in "the existence of a number of architectonic impulses leading to growth and development of the different bodily tissues and organs" that also "make use of mechanical forces." Moore explained that Uexkull had compared an embryo's development "to a melody progressing by the laws of harmony." According to Moore, Uexkull had noted that the "piano is a mechanism, but it does not compose" and that "progression of the living melody of the organism is a non-mechanical phenomenon."[146] In other words, for both Moore and Uexkull, the soul can be understood as a kind of harmony that provides continuity to the organism.

Having established that other modern thinkers offered accounts of the human soul that coincided with the Thomist notion of the formal cause, Moore offered his own explanation of the human soul based upon his psychological research and grounded in individual experience. Moore began by noting that our own conscious experiences are the foundation of our individual understandings of mental life. He explained when a person recognizes that "mental states are phenomena that come and go, actions or activities of some kind or another" that the person must also acknowledge that this is true in the case of their own consciousness. Moore mused that each and every person is left with the practical choice of regarding their own consciousness as purely material, as non-material, or as non-existent.

Moore began by arguing that it is philosophically incoherent for any person to decide to regard their own consciousness as non-existent. He asserted that the notion that there is no subject of consciousness was a result of the Kantian claim that the "thing in itself" cannot be known and yet "underlies the phenomena of experience." Moore asserted that Fichte had extended this philosophy to deny the existence of the thing-in-itself so that "there was motion without anything moving; action without anything acting." Moore mentioned that Fichte had also eventually rejected this view but that Fichte's ideas had influenced Wilhem Wundt, who maintained "that

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146 Ibid.

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conscious processes themselves constituted the reality of the mind, so that it was neither the brain

that thought nor the soul that thought; neither materialism nor spiritualism is right." Yet Moore

insisted that this was impossible because it is impossible to "conceive of action without anything

acting, or motion without anything moving, thought without anything or anybody thinking,

sensations without anything or anybody sensing, etc."[147]

Moore followed his dismissal of the claim that the subject of consciousness cannot be

nonexistent with the assertion that the subject of human consciousness also cannot be a material

object, such as the brain and nervous system, because materialism alone is unable to provide an

adequate explanation of the human person. Moore believed that "if explanations are to explain,

we cannot identify our mental life with chemical reactions or explain consciousness in terms of

energy, which is merely that which moves a mass with a given velocity."[148] He was convinced

that an entirely mechanical account of human existence means that life "is nothing but a series of

chemical reactions in which molecules, made of atoms, disintegrate one by one and new

molecules are formed." Moore maintained that chemicals cannot be conscious and that atoms

cannot "explain even sensation, let alone the higher thought processes and activity of the will."[149]

For Moore, in other words, the explanations of the material world in terms of motion alone that

the physical and biological sciences could offer could not attain to the same kind of true

knowledge of the human person that metaphysics or theology could achieve.

Moore concluded his remarks with the assertion that the subject of human consciousness

must be a spiritual object, the human soul, and used the law of the conservation of energy to show

that the human soul must logically be immortal, insisting that "nothing whatsoever is either added

to or taken away from the sum total of that which goes to make up the universe that we know."[150]

Moore argued that even when the physical body dies that since the human soul was "the principle

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147 Ibid. 410.
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid., 411.
150 Ibid.

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of coordination, and the stream of conscious life" that it would continue to exist. Yet Moore believed that a human soul that lacks both an "organism for it to coordinate" and "sense organs by means of which it can receive new impressions" is incapable of utilizing "all its powers."[151] From Moore's perspective, therefore, philosophy could not prove to human beings that "a continuation of existence would, in any sense of the word, be desirable" for the human soul and that "Divine revelation alone can guarantee the happiness of eternal life."[152]

Moore's explanation of the Human Will and Human Freedom

Thomas Verner Moore's philosophical account of the human soul provides the context for understanding his claims about the human will, which in turn provides the basis for his understanding of human freedom. Moore believed that any mental phenomenon, including any genuine action of the human will, is essentially "an activity of the substrate of our mental life, of the ego, the psyche, the soul."[153] In essence, Moore saw the human soul as the foundation of that "conscious unity of the personality that underlies all forms of voluntary action."[154] In a similar way, Moore regarded human intelligence, which he understood as "the perception of relations," as "the foundation and guarantee of freedom."[155] For Moore, in other words, the basic source of both the human will and human freedom was the immaterial human soul.

Just as he had in his arguments for the existence of the human soul, Moore sought to use Thomist philosophical principles to challenge the philosophical assumptions of other modern psychologists in their answers to the question of the existence of the human will and the related question of possibility of human freedom. In his writings on the will and freedom Moore made a distinction between "complex" voluntary actions and the underlying unit experience of will that

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[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid., 412.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., 319.
[155] Ibid., 392.

supported those voluntary actions. Moore argued that there were a variety of factors that went

into every voluntary action and produced complicated decisions that were based upon particular

circumstances. For example, Moore noted that choosing to participate in a single reaction time

experiment is a different kind of decision than choosing to embark upon a complete change in

one's life plan following a terrible mistake.[156] He recognized that different voluntary actions

might share many common elements and yet also contain many radically different aspects. Yet

Moore also believed that what all voluntary actions necessarily had to have in common with each

other in order to be voluntary actions was a simple intellectual element known as an "act of will."

He argued that those activities that most people view as exercises of their freedom and

responsibility in their own lives were precisely those actions that all human beings recognize as

having proceeded from their wills.[157]

Although he used the term freedom to describe voluntary actions, Moore did not intend

for his concept of freedom to "exclude all necessity in voluntary choice." [158] Moore understood

freedom as "the ability to conceive of an end of action, and will the means by which it may be

attained."[159] As a Thomist, Moore believed that human beings necessarily seek happiness even

when they do not accurately understand which decisions will produce true happiness. From

Moore's perspective, one of the ways of describing the ultimate goal of human life on earth was

"the development of the will and intellect so that truth and goodness are so interwoven that the

good is voluntarily chosen by necessity."[160] In other words, Moore imagined that people become

better able to immediately choose the true good as they become holier and he saw this kind of

change as a good thing even if it presented people with fewer options from which to choose.

Moore's conviction that intellectual understanding should guide the will is visible in his

explanation of the will as "a mental force by means of which we control and regulate the

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[156] Ibid., 318.
[157] Ibid., 319, 398.
[158] Ibid., 392.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid., 393.

impulsive drives of our nature."[161] Moore considered the will to be a spiritual power that derived

from the soul. Moore recognized that his understanding of the human will was different from "the

more common opinion in modern psychology" that insisted "that there is no such thing as will in

our mental life as something distinct from the commonly recognized elements: Sensations,

images, and feelings." [162] He acknowledged that on a certain biological level "the human

organism is a complicated machine" even while he also insisted that human beings are not merely

machines. He noted that "when we look at our own inner life [sic] there seems to be something in

our management of our own affairs that is not entirely the mechanical response to the forces of

nature that are constantly playing upon our sense organs."[163] In his psychological textbooks,

Moore sought to establish the existence of the human will because he believed that the reality of

the human will has to be acknowledged before questions about whether or not the human will is

free can even be considered.[164]

Moore's most basic argument for the human will began with an analogy about how

studying the mechanisms of a complicated ocean liner does not explain "just why it is this

enormous boat goes to one harbor rather than another." [165] In using this first analogy, Moore

sought to draw a distinction between the operations that combine to form basic mechanical

functions of the ocean liner and those activities that make up purpose or intention for which the

ocean liner performs those functions. Moore extended this analogy with a follow-up question

about whether or not there is "a pilot-house and a pilot in the human machine?"[166] In this second

analogy, Moore used the idea of a pilot-house of the human person to mean all of the mechanical

operations of the body that control the body's physical movements, whereas Moore's speculation

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[161] Ibid., 377.

[162] Moore, *Dynamic Psychology*, 312.

[163] Moore, *Dynamic Psychology*, 311.

[164] Ibid., 312. This claim is clearly related to his concerns with Wundt's philosophical presuppositions, ie. Moore's repeated accusation that Wundt denied the existence of that which he claimed acted.

[165] Moore, *Dynamic Psychology*, 311.

[166] Ibid. This line or argument is similar to Sheen's analogy of the mind as "captain of the boat" in his own writings.

about the existence of a pilot was his way of suggesting the role that human will played in guiding each human person to perform particular activities. In both of these analogies, Moore was gesturing toward the difference between efficient causality, or the means by which these movements were made, and final causality, or the guiding purpose behind the movements.[167]

Moore followed up his explanations of the human will with a series of smaller arguments, anecdotes, and experiments that were intended to provide the reader with sufficient evidence that they had had direct experience of their own will. In his first such argument, Moore explained that all human beings engage in both involuntary and voluntary forms of attention. Moore noted that there are certain kinds of experiences, such as the nearby firing of a very loud gun, that instantly manage to obtain the attention of everyone present regardless of whether or not a person intends to focus upon them.[168] In contrast, Moore noted that uninteresting tasks often fail to naturally hold the attention of the people who are required to perform them, and such people must frequently exert serious mental effort in order to concentrate upon these kinds of tasks. Moore's basic argument was that even though there are experiences that universally capture attention, human mental attention "is not wholly determined by stimuli from without," with the conclusion "that we do turn our attention from one thing to another at will."[169] In other words, Moore sought to get his readers to recognize from their own personal experiences that human beings are frequently motivated to perform actions because of abstract ideas that they already hold and not merely from interactions with immediate physical objects.

Moore's second experiential argument for the will was based in his contention that human beings are able to make firm resolutions about their lives and follow through with them. Moore noted that whenever someone "asks us to do something for him, we may accept the task or

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[167] This is my interpretation of what Moore is doing here, but I believe it was Moore's intention as well. This example is taken from a chapter on "Voluntary Action and the Act of Will" in *Dynamic Psychology* that was not retained in *The Driving Forces of Human Nature and Their Adjustment*. I think that Moore's discussion of causality within the later textbook is meant to serve a similar purpose to this explanation in the earlier textbook.
[168] Ibid., 313.
[169] Ibid., 314.

not." Moore explained that "we may consider a course of action and we may resolve to follow it or reject it." According to Moore's argument, when a person makes a truly firm decision it can determine that person upon a particular path of activity that may take a very long period of time to complete and so "is one way in which voluntary control manifests itself."[170]

Moore's argument about the human will also contained an interesting experiment that any person can perform to show that human beings can exert some degree of indirect voluntary control over their own emotions. Moore explained human emotions as "reactions to intellectual insights into a situation." He noted that human beings can intensify some emotional reactions by reflecting on the meaning behind the current reaction, such as "the meaning of an insult and all that it implies." Yet Moore argued that the same kind of direct reflection upon an emotional state itself has the opposite effect from that of reflecting on the cause or meaning of the emotion. In other words, Moore maintained that when people direct their own conscious intellectual focus on the emotions that they are currently feeling, such as on the fact that they are angry instead of on what they are angry about, that it "makes them [the emotions] dwindle away at once."[171]

For Moore, will was the mental force behind proper voluntary action. He believed that most people were able to direct their wills toward the proper aims, but he also recognized that there were people whose mental abnormalities resulted in what he termed "abnormalities of voluntary action." In other words, Moore claimed that people who suffer from mental conditions such as *dementia praecox* sometimes misinterpret ordinary events and then choose to engage in strange activities based upon those interpretations. He argued that these faulty interpretations are located "not in the will but in their thought processes" and that "their actions are perfectly logical, and frequently calculated, rather than the blind drives to unspeakable crimes."[172]

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[170] Ibid., 314.
[171] Ibid., 316
[172] Moore, The Driving Forces of Human Nature, 381. He insisted, however, that they were not responsible for the crimes that they committed even thought they had willed them, because of their underlying mental abnormalities.

For Moore, of course, the right interpretation of reality lay within Thomist metaphysics, which he believed had the potential to be of great benefit to modern psychology and the entire scientific world. Moore was convinced that many modern psychologists had been led to make wrong assumptions about human beings because they operated with bad metaphysical principles. Moore offered what he believed to be the true principles of causality to modern psychologists, as well as the Thomist teachings of the nature of the soul and human will, in order to help them practice a better form of experimental psychology. Yet, even though Moore used these Thomist philosophical principles in all of his psychological work, he emphasized the extraordinarily benefits of the spiritual and theological principles of the Catholic faith when he turned his attention to psychological therapy.

Spirituality and Religious Adjustment

Thomas Verner Moore always practiced modern psychology differently than most other psychologists of his era. As has already been shown, Moore made arguments for the existence of the human soul philosophically, even as he claimed that reality of the human will and human freedom could be demonstrated through ordinary experience. Unsurprisingly, considering that he was a priest and a monk as well as a psychologist, Moore also placed a great deal of emphasis on the relationship between spiritual dimension of human existence and modern psychology. Moore's focus on the spiritual dimension of human life can be most clearly seen in his writings on personal spiritual practices. Yet, in terms of his psychological practice, Moore's focus on the spiritual dimension is most apparent in the role that he assigned to religious faith in his counseling through his emphasis on "religious sublimation and "ethical ideals."

Religious Sublimation, Religious Adjustment and the Ethical Ideal

Although he was not a Freudian, Moore was sympathetic to the notion of sublimation usually identified with Freudian thought. Moore explained that sublimation was a term imported to psychology from chemistry and that modern chemists used sublimation to indicate "one of the processes by which a salt may be purified." Moore recognized that modern psychoanalysts had borrowed the term "to indicate a change in the mode of satisfaction of desires in which an outlet is no longer sought at their previous lower levels but on what sociologically is a much higher plane."[173] In other words, "one disappointed in love is said to sublimate when, in his later life, he seeks an outlet along lines of religious activity or general social betterment." Moore maintained that modern psychologists who subscribe to the standard account of sublimation interpret this kind of change in focus as a kind of "symbol of the satisfaction of the former craving."[174]

According to Moore, Sigmund Freud had believed that all human drives were simply undifferentiated impulses in which "no matter what man seeks or on however high a level his impulsive activity may apparently manifest itself, it is nevertheless one and the same craving for sexual satisfaction."[175] Moore explained that most Freudians viewed the apparent elevation that resulted from this kind of sublimation as "not real but merely a masked indulgence of the same old craving" and so tried to use psychoanalysis "to seek out the fundamental craving of human nature which is ever manifesting itself in one and the same way."[176]

Moore also noted that Freud's student, Carl Jung, had initially acknowledged only a single *libido* of the organism, but that Jung had eventually come to the conclusion that the *libido* had expanded from a constant drive for "the propagation of the species." According to Moore, Jung claimed that the libido could also learn to focus upon "the acquisition of food, the protection

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[173] Moore, *The Driving Forces of Human Nature*, 314.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid., 314

of the young, and various other functions."[177] Moore implied that Jung had made a distinction

between successful attempts at transference of the *libido* from sexual desires to another subject,

for which Jung kept the name sublimation, and unsuccessful attempts at transfer to another

subject, which Jung termed repression.[178]

      Although Moore's insistence upon the unity of the human person necessarily required

him to acknowledge "a kind of unity in the modes of satisfaction which comes from reference of

all drives ultimately to the satisfaction of the one personality," he nevertheless insisted that "there

are just as many impulses and desires as there are abilities in a human being."[179] Based upon his

own experimental research on human impulses Moore argued that the claims of Freud and Jung

about the singular nature of human desire had not been experimentally verified, that they had

naively reduced fundamentally different kinds of experience to the same thing, and they had

advanced idle speculations rather than proven their theories about human desire.[180]

      Despite his criticisms of Freud and Jung, Moore himself asserted that there are essentially

two types of individuals, compensators and sublimators, and that they are differentiated by the

way that they deal with the desire to satisfy their impulsive drives.[181] Although Moore did

acknowledge that it was an unfair oversimplification, that it was unfair to classify people in terms

of two fairly rigid categories, he nevertheless maintained that most people really could be placed

into one category or the other. According to Moore, there is one kind of person whose "impulses

all have a tendency to center themselves in the ego, so that if a person is disappointed in one way

of satisfying himself, he seeks another mode of attaining his satisfaction." Moore viewed a person

with the tendency to constantly strive to achieve the satisfaction of their desires and to cope with

the failure to achieve such satisfaction as a compensator. In contrast, Moore argued that there is

another kind of person, the sublimator,

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[177] Ibid., 315.
[178] Ibid., 315.
[179] Ibid., 316.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.

whose impulsive drives have a tendency to lead the individual outside of himself, so that if he has suffered a disappointment in some personal satisfaction, he seeks an outlet in doing something which is not merely a compensation that satisfies himself but is a mode of activity that brings him into relation to other beings so that he is of service to them.

Moore argued that there were two basic kinds of sublimation, the social and the religious, that the practitioners of each form of sublimation could be distinguished from each other by whether or not "the form of activity has to do with other human beings or with God."[182] From Moore's perspective, both kinds of sublimations "approach rational readjustments" and yet frequently lead to decisions to pursue ends that are "counter to the dictates of reason."[183] From Moore's perspective, therefore, although sublimations were superior to compensations, they were inferior to "rational readjustments that are rooted in intellectual understanding."[184]

The Role of Religion in Moore's Psychological Counseling

Moore's belief in the transcendent dimension of human existence played an interesting role in his psychological counseling sessions. Moore frequently provided short summaries of past cases in his writings, usually in order to provide an evidence for a particular psychological claim. Many of these cases included some kind of reference to religious faith or practice. The somewhat anecdotal style of these encounters, combined with the wide variety of circumstances in which they appear in Moore's works, make their use as psychological data of minimal value. Nevertheless, these stories serve as evidence for Moore's own views about the beneficial role that religion could play within psychological therapy.

In *Personal Mental Hygiene* (1944), for example, Moore recounted the history of his therapy sessions with "Gertrude," a girl of fifteen from an orphan asylum who had been brought

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[182] Ibid., 317.
[183] Ibid., 320.
[184] Ibid., 388.

to see him by a social worker. Moore was told that the child "was sulky, sullen, always contradicting," that she "could not be satisfied and could not get along with anyone," that she "turned on one in anger," that she "was failing in her school work and, though 15, still suffered from nocturnal enuresis."[185] Moore also discovered that Gertrude's father had died of tuberculosis, that he had constantly argued with the mother, and that he had "destroyed discipline in the home by telling the children that they did not have to obey their mother."[186] Finally, Moore learned that the mother, who also had tuberculosis, "was said to be unstable and inadequate," had "become ashamed of Gertrude," and that Gertrude's aunts, who "were willing to take Gertrude's sister into their home," had "refused to have anything to do with Gertrude." According to Moore, Gertrude was "rejected at home and looked upon as dull and incorrigible in the orphan asylum where she had to go because the home that rejected her disintegrated."[187]

Upon receiving Gertrude in his office, Moore was "much surprised" to discover that she was "a quiet, refined girl with nice, lady-like manners" because her reputation had caused him to imagine her as "a nervous, irritable type of youngster." Moore recounted that Gertrude explained to him that she had once hoped to become a nurse, "but had given up the idea because they told her that she could not because of her bad disposition."[188] According to Moore, Gertrude also complained that she was unable to learn algebra, attend high school, or even leave the orphan asylum because of this same bad attitude.[189] Moore remarked that Gertrude had been told that she would be the death of her mother and that she had killed her father. Moore noted with some residual sadness that as their first counseling session continued Gertrude began to cry and eventually asked him "Do you really think so? Did I really kill my daddy?"[190]

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[185] Moore, *Personal Mental Hygiene*, 217. Moore used nocturnal enuresis as the technical term for bed wetting.
[186] Ibid., 217.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid., 218.
[190] Ibid.

After reassuring Gertrude that she had done no such thing, Moore began to treat her and continued to do so for the next nine weeks. Moore explained that it took about six weeks to cure her nocturnal enuresis through "injections of follutein, suggestion, and persuasion."[191] He also began privately tutoring her in algebra since this appeared to be the major impediment to her going to high school. Finally, Moore explained that instead of trying "to treat directly the faults charged to her: 'Sulky, sullen, always contradicting, can't get along with anyone,'" he simply "loaned her *A Wagon to the Star,* by Mildred Foulke Mees" and began discussing it with her.[192]

Moore used *A Wagon to the Star* in his treatment of Gertrude because he believed that "bibliotherapy" could often provide a successful means of teaching children "true ideals and sound principles of conduct."[193] Moore argued that many young people often identify with "the hero or heroine of the story," that children frequently take on their ideals at least temporarily, and that children sometimes absorb those ideals so completely that they "become a permanent acquisition of the mind."[194] Moore believed that this kind of therapy often worked much better than attempts to lecture or preach to children about the logic of following such principles.[195]

In Moore's opinion the technique of bibliotherapy had proved itself effective in the case of Gertrude. In their subsequent discussions Moore determined that his patient had recognized that Mary, the heroine of *A Wagon to the Star*, had possessed several good qualities. According to Moore, Gertrude explained that Mary "was considerate and thoughtful of others," "was ambitious," "tried to make up with others when she did wrong or offended anyone and to forgive and be friendly," and had consistently "tried to make friends" even though "some girls did not like her."[196] Moore talked with Gertrude about the benefit of attempting "to absorb into our own

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[191] Ibid., 219.
[192] Ibid., 222.
[193] Ibid., 221.
[194] Ibid., 222-223.
[195] Ibid., 223.
[196] Ibid., 222.

personalities the good points of those we read about in books."[197] Moore eventually provided

Gertrude with two more books and ascertained that as a result of those books she "crystallized the

very valuable principle: If you keep on working you can get used to anything."[198] Moore noted

that at the conclusion of her therapy Gertrude was permitted to go to high school, that she

obtained a B+ in algebra, that her "enuresis did not reappear," and that she thereafter "made

friends, gave no trouble to teachers or those in authority regained confidence in herself, and

manifested a great deal of the exuberant happiness of a normal adolescent."[199]

 Moore determined that Gertrude's case indicated two important truths, one of which he

labeled as psychological and the other of which he labeled as having elements that are

"psychological, ethical, and religious." According to Moore, the purely psychological truth was

that it is of "fundamental importance" that there exists "a mutual understanding between teacher

and pupil in which the teacher has confidence in the essential value of the pupil and tries to be

personally helpful as a true friend." In other words, Moore determined that the attitude of

Gertrude's teachers toward her had reinforced her low self-opinion and had actually contributed

to her worsening behavior problems.[200] With regard to the second truth, Moore argued that "the

realization of the importance of ideals and principles in the direction of conduct" is primarily

psychological whereas the actual "formulation and choice of the true ideals and principles" is an

ethical and religious activity.[201]

 As the case of Gertrude suggests, Moore believed that mental health therapy required

guidance from ethical and religious sources. Moore hoped that modern psychologists would

gradually come to recognize the value of both Thomist philosophical principles and Catholic

theological principles. Yet Moore was somewhat less optimistic about the trajectory of modern

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[197] Ibid., 222.

[198] Ibid., 223.

[199] Ibid., 223.

[200] Ibid. This is, in fact, that context in which this account appears; Moore was making a psychological point about how educational environments should be neither absolutely strict nor absolutely without discipline.

[201] Ibid., 223.

psychiatry. In *Personal Mental Hygiene*, for example, Moore complained that "all religion is banished from modern psychiatry and social work; and we are sometimes told that it must be so or we shall cease to be scientific." Moore acknowledged that "modern psychiatry has evolved many valuable therapeutic procedures" and insisted that these should not be left unused. Nevertheless, Moore maintained that "without ideals and with no moral and religious principles, modern psychiatry has many most unfortunate limitations." From Moore's perspective, modern society desperately needed "Catholic psychiatry and Catholic clinics."[202]

Evaluation of Moore's Synthetic Approach

The work of Thomas Verner Moore occupies an important place in the history of Catholic approaches to modern psychology. Moore was an active participant in the American psychological community as well as of the American Catholic community. He had credibility with modern psychologists because he had conducted psychological experiments, had studied with Wilhelm Wundt, had advanced medical training, had published psychological writings, and had engaged in various forms of psychological research and therapy. Moore was also a priest, a religious, and a Thomist in philosophy, making him an important member of the American Catholic community. Moore was a figure who straddled two worlds even as his commitments were always firmly planted on the side of the Church.

As a loyal son of the Church, and a Thomist of the mid-twentieth century, Moore was concerned about the metaphysical beliefs of other modern psychologists. His concerns were not, however, developed in reaction to Modernism, and his Thomism was not, in fact, the strict observance neo-Thomism of so many of his contemporaries. Moore's concerns were more

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[202] Moore, *Personal Mental Hygiene*, 231.

visceral, for he was always focused on improving things that were already good, such as the Church, modern psychology, and his own soul. Moore's method of improvement, moreover, was always that of integration. He sought to integrate psychology into the Church, to integrate Thomism into psychology, and to integrate greater spiritual practices into his own life. Moore was never content with the good; he always sought to obtain the better.

Moore believed that Thomist metaphysics could improve modern thought and his modern arguments about causality are both interesting and profound. For example, if one understands the concept of efficient cause then it seems unarguable that some bacteria certainly can be understood as the "efficient causes" of the diseases that they produce. Furthermore, the concept that the form of sweetness is received when a sugar molecule touches the tongue seems, at the very least, to be a coherent way of describing a process that can also be described in another way. At the most basic level, therefore, Moore's claim that the traditional Aristotelian and Thomist concepts of causation could be useful to modern science seem to be true at least in the sense that they can clearly provide another language to use in certain circumstances that is nevertheless valid. At the very least, Moore's work suggests that some future integration between aspects of Aristotelian thought and modern science may yet be possible. Whether or not this kind of integration is either advisable or necessary is, of course, another question.

Moore was, however, less convincing in his attempts to prove the reality of the human soul precisely because such arguments are really attempts to the reader to accept a Thomist form of metaphysics. Practically speaking, Moore's claim that the soul is the formal cause of a living being could potentially have been converted into the claim that the concept of the soul is essentially identical to the life of the organism. In that sense, anyone who acknowledges that there is any kind of distinction between being alive and being dead already acknowledges that there is a soul. Yet this kind of restatement of the issue would have changed the nature of the question, so that what would have resulted would have been a scientific discussion of what

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constitutes the life processes of a living being. Moore tried to show that life processes inherently possess order, however, because a source of order is identical with a formal cause.

From Moore's perspective, it was almost self-evident that the human soul is the formal cause of the human person, or the life of the person, or the principle of continuity and coordination of the human person. Moore understood what the human soul does and thought that everyone ought to have an adequate understanding of this principle. Yet, although Moore often argued for the existence of the soul, he was not really interested in arguing about the soul. In other words, the human soul was not a subject that Moore seems to have really doubted, or questioned, or considered open to revision. The existence of the soul was, pardon the pun, too vital to Moore's entire life to be open to any kind of uncertainty. Moore's arguments for the existence of the human soul always concluded his textbooks on psychology and yet they were, fundamentally, the premise upon which all of his work was built. Moore believed in the soul, in the transcendent aspect of human existence, and considered it unfortunate that anyone could believe otherwise because, for Moore, the soul was never in doubt.

Yet it is probably wrong to fault Moore for this belief precisely because spirituality was such a central part of his own existence. Although Moore consistently dabbled in philosophical arguments about the soul, his eventual conclusions were always ultimately based in claims about personal experience. He wanted people to reflect on themselves, on their own acts of willing and their own chances to grow spiritually. He believed in both the human soul and human will because he had direct experience of his own spiritual development and of his own acts of will. Moore accomplished a great many things in his long life, and so much activity suggests that he had the ability to give great attention and purpose to many activities at once; in his language, he had an extraordinary will. For Moore, therefore, the existence of the soul and of the will was ultimately not a metaphysical conclusion, whatever he may have believed, but an existential one. Moore was always focused upon his the state of his own soul and upon his firmness of his own

will and believed that everyone should do the same. From his perspective, it would have seemed obvious that anyone who truly thought about their own life experience carefully would come to the same conclusions that he had about both the soul and the will.

Moore's journey among religious communities, which could be interpreted as a kind of perpetual restlessness of spirit, also indicates that personal spiritual growth was always a central concept in his life. Furthermore, he used both psychological insights and theological doctrines to improve the lives of those whom he counseled. Moore saw psychological health as an important good for human beings and yet, as a Catholic priest, he always saw it as a secondary good behind that of spiritual health. In other words, even in the midst of his psychological work, Thomas Verner Moore always regarded the spiritual dimension of the human person, or the individual person's relationship with God, as the most important aspect of human existence.

Conclusion

Thomas Verner Moore was an early advocate for the use of modern psychology within the Catholic Church. He was convinced that neo-Thomist philosophy and Catholic theology had valuable insights that could improve the theory and practice of modern psychology. Moore had decided to study modern psychology because of his concern that its practitioners often failed to recognize important philosophical and theological truths about the human person. From Moore's perspective, modern psychology could be improved if it were able to accept certain Thomist philosophical doctrines, including the Thomist accounts of causality, of the human soul, and of the human will. Moore also maintained that religious principles were beneficial in helping people to make rational religious adjustments for the sake of their mental health.

Moore sought to train Catholic priests and religious in the practice of both modern psychology and psychiatry for much of his life. He insisted that modern psychology could be

beneficial to the Catholic Church and that the Catholic Church had wisdom to offer to modern psychology. Unlike Fulton Sheen, Moore did not claim that neo-Thomist philosophers were the only competent interpreters of modern psychology, nor did Moore view the therapies of modern psychology as harmful to ordinary people. Unlike Robert Brennan, Moore did not try to develop a strictly neo-Thomist version of modern psychology that did not need anything substantive from the experimental method. In Moore's view, modern psychology was already a valuable scientific discipline and medical practice that would nevertheless be improved if it were able to embrace certain aspects of Thomist philosophy and Catholic theology.

In his various writings Thomas Verner Moore argued that Thomist philosophy and Catholic theology could be useful in helping both ordinary people and modern psychologists to better understand human life. Moore integrated basic philosophical principles from Thomism into his psychological work, which included writing, laboratory research, clinical work, and counseling, and advocated that other psychologists utilize these same philosophical principles.

Like many other neo-Thomists of the early and mid-twentieth century, Thomas Verner Moore fundamentally disagreed with many of the philosophical positions that the majority of modern psychologists of that period assumed. Yet Moore was also convinced that modern psychology had many positive benefits to offer to the spiritual lives of ordinary people and that the Catholic Church ought to utilize modern psychology for the good of all its members. Although Moore was a Thomist, his Thomism was flexible in both its vocabulary and willingness to learn from other sources. Yet Moore also consistently sought to challenge the dominant metaphysical presuppositions of modern psychologists in order to permit modern psychology to more adequately address the transcendent dimension of human existence.

The eclectic nature of Moore's personality meant that Moore addressed every aspect of modern psychology while never focusing his full attention on any individual school or tradition. In contrast, there were other neo-Thomists during the same period that specialized in a particular tradition or form of psychology. It is to one of those, Victor White, O.P., whom we now turn.

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CHAPTER V

THE JUNGIAN APPROACH TO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

OF VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

Thomas Verner Moore tried to convince modern psychologists in the mid-twentieth century United States of the value of neo-Thomist thought and to awaken American Catholics to the benefits of modern psychology. Moore had concerns with the metaphysical premises of many modern psychologists and yet ultimately believed that modern psychology had many significant spiritual benefits to offer to those who would accept them. During that same period in the United Kingdom, Victor White, O.P. (1902-1960) sought to spread the good news about a particular form of modern psychology to the entire world. White focused his efforts on engagement with the analytic psychology of Dr. Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) rather than with other versions of clinical or experimental psychology. In White's opinion, other schools of modern psychological therapy had materialistic metaphysical principles that kept them from properly acknowledging the transcendent dimension of human existence.

Victor White's interest in Jung's writings eventually led to a friendship between the two men. White seems to have at times been in awe of Carl Jung and at other times to have harbored dreams of converting him to the Catholic faith.[1] Jung, for his part, regarded Victor White as a unique blessing of comfort and a "White Raven."[2] Near the beginning of their friendship, Jung

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[1] This is based on my own interpretation of some of the dreams and vision that White had concerning Jung, such as his dream of December 12, 1945 [as found in Ann Conrad Lammers and Adrian Cunningham, ed. *The Jung-White Letters* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 109] and his vision of March 31, 1947 [Ibid, 88-89.]

[2] In her book, *Fr. Victor White, O.P. : The Story of Jung's "White Raven"* (Scranton and London: University of Scranton Press, 2007), Clodagh Weldon argues that Jung's nickname of a "White Raven" for White was

proclaimed that White was one of the few Catholic theologians who understood his work and even suggested that White could help him with "the transformation of the Western God image." Later commentators have sometimes described Jung's relationship with White as analogous to the relationship between Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, explaining that in both cases the older man expressed the hope that the younger man would ultimately take over his movement as his "successor." Although Jung's dream for Victor White were dashed by eventual disagreements, subsequent estrangement, and White's sudden illness and death, both men seem to have hoped for some kind of reconciliation right up until the end.[3]

White embraced many elements of Jungian thought even while he remained a Thomist theologian. Like other neo-Thomists in the mid-twentieth century, White was distrustful of the metaphysical premises of modern psychology, such as the tendency toward materialism and determinism. White was willing to accept Jungian psychology in large part because he believed that the metaphysical difficulties that he saw in other forms of modern psychology were not present in Jungian thought. Nevertheless, White's later arguments with Jung demonstrate that he was overly optimistic in his assessment of the degree to which reconciliation was possible between Thomist principles and Jungian thought on a metaphysical level.

Victor White serves as a contrast with the other figures considered in this study. White was a neo-Thomist Catholic theologian who spent a significant amount of time in the United States and yet he was not an American Catholic. In addition, although White was a Thomist who engaged with modern psychology, he focused most of his attention upon a particular school that was somewhat outside the mainstream of the scientific discipline. Furthermore, although he was a Dominican like Robert Edward Brennan, White's unique interpretation of Thomism affected his engagement with modern psychology and influenced his efforts to lay the groundwork for subsequent collaborations between Catholic theologians and modern psychologists. Finally,

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an alchemical reference to Jung's hope that White would play a critical role in "the transformation of the Western God image." Weldon, *Fr. Victor White, O.P.*, 46-50.

[3] Cunningham and Lammers, *The Jung-White Letters*, 289-291.

despite his genuinely positive attitude toward Jungian thought, Victor White eventually entered into a personal conflict with Carl Gustav Jung that was based upon their different interpretations of metaphysics and, one might even say, of theology.

The first section of this chapter is an overview of Victor White's life that focuses on his friendship with Carl Gustav Jung. The second section of the chapter offers a sketch of White's theological style, including his interpretations of Modernism, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Thomism. The third section of this chapter provides an overview of White's position on modern psychology generally and Jungian psychology in particular. The fourth section of the chapter examines how White's belief that the human soul and the human psyche are essentially identical led him to encourage a greater level of cooperation between Catholic theologians and Jungian psychologists in the treatment of the human person. The fifth section of the chapter looks at the issues within White's metaphysical conflicts with Carl Gustav Jung. The sixth and final section of the chapter gives an assessment of White's Thomist and yet Jungian approach to the subject of modern psychology. The chapter's conclusion summarizes the work of White toward engagement with Jungian analytic psychology.

The Life of Victor White, OP

On October 21, 1902, Gordon Henry White was born in South Croydon, Surrey, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain. His father, John Henry White (1865-1950), was an Anglican vicar at St. Augustine's in South Croydon and was known for promoting high church practices.[4] White's grandfather and uncle were also Anglican ministers. His mother, Beatrice Mary (Phillips) White, was a merchant's daughter.[5] The eldest of three brothers, Gordon Henry White attended

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[4] Clodagh Weldon, *Fr. Victor White, O.P.: The Story of Jung's "White Raven,"* 7.

[5] Adrian Cunningham, "Victor White, A Memoir," (307-334), Appendix 2 of Ann Conrad Lammers and Adrian Cunningham, ed. *The Jung-White Letters*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 308.

the Limes School in Croydon and later All Saints' School in Bloxham. Despite the fact that his father was an Anglican vicar, Gordon White converted to Catholicism at nineteen years of age.[6]

Gordon Henry White became a novice of the Dominican Order at Woodchester Priory in Gloucestershire in September of 1923.[7] By the end of the following September, White had taken the religious name Victor and had made a profession of simple vows. His religious superiors subsequently sent him to the Priory at Hawkesyard in Staffordshire where he was provided with an education "in logic, metaphysics, natural theology, and moral philosophy."[8] Victor White, O.P., was ordained to the Catholic priesthood at St. Mary's Oscott on June 2, 1928.

White soon began pursuing the Licentiate of Sacred Theology at the Dominican House of Studies at Louvain in Belgium. He later expressed his dissatisfaction with the curriculum as primarily based upon "a systematic reading of Aquinas and the commentaries that elucidated it."[9] In May of 1929, White's entire Dominican community relocated to the new Dominican Priory at Blackfriars, Oxford and he was appointed to be one of the community's lectors.[10] He was also made professor of dogmatic theology after receiving his licentiate in sacred theology in 1930.[11]

White had a variety of theological interests during this period of his life, including the history of Scholasticism, the tasks of the theologian, interreligious dialogue, ecumenism, and the relationship between religion and politics.[12] He published numerous articles and book reviews in *Blackfriars* as well as a few short essays in other publications. White also wrote a short tract on "*Scholasticism*" for the Catholic Truth Society.[13] During this period, he participated in several ecumenical events, such as "the 'Laxton Conversations'- discussions between the Dominicans

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[6] Weldon, *Fr. Victor White,* 8.

[7] Cunningham, "Victor White, A Memoir," in *The Jung-White Letters*, 309.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 11. Weldon notes that White's Provincial, Bede Jarrett, OP, "had founded the Dominican House of Studies at Oxford on August 15, 1921." It became a priory on May 4, 1929 and the community moved in on May 29, 1929.

[11] Ibid., 11.

[12] These interests are seen in the articles that White wrote in *Blackfriars* during this period as well as in the extracurricular activities in which he engaged.

[13] Victor White, OP, *Scholasticism. (*The Catholic Truth Society, 1932)

who ran a school at Laxton, and the Anglican Fathers of the Society of the Sacred Mission."[14]

Near the end of the decade White "wrote several letters to *The Catholic Herald*" on the subject of

"the socio-political responsibility of Catholics."[15]

According to Victor White's own words, "theology ceased to have any meaning" for him

around 1940.[16] Biographers have speculated that White's difficulties began after he became

aggravated over the political meddling of ecclesial authorities. White started to have "wider and

deeper doubts about the authoritative basis of Catholic doctrines."[17] He initially sought guidance

for dealing with his theological boredom from traditional spiritual and theological advisors but he

soon determined their efforts had proven inadequate. Since White's own private reading of

Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung suggested to him that the solution to his difficulty could be

found in the psychology of Jung, he decided to engage someone trained in Jungian thought.[18]

White wrote to John Layard (1891-1974), an English anthropologist and Jungian analyst,

about his spiritual malaise in late 1940.[19] White subsequently turned to him for psychological

analysis.[20] During this same period, White briefly left the community at Blackfriars and

considered returning to the Anglican Church of his youth.[21] In the end, however, White began a

serious study of Jung's writings and subsequently returned to the Priory.[22] He gave his first

lecture about Jungian thought on "The Frontiers of Theology and Psychology" to the Oxford

branch of the Guild of Pastoral Psychology in 1942.[23] He gave another lecture on Jungian

thought a couple of years later, this time to the Oxford branch of the Newman Association. In

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[14] Weldon, *Victor White*, 14.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 16. The actual quotation was originally taken from an introduction that White gave for a series of lectures in 1954 that were delivered at St. Albert's, the Dominican House of Studies in Oakland, California.

[17] Cunningham, "Victor White, A Memoir" in *The Jung-White Letter*s, 314.

[18] Weldon, *Victor White*, 16.

[19] Layard was recommended to White by "his friend, the philosopher and theologian Donald MacKinnon (1913-1994)." Cunningham, "Victor White, a Memoir" in *The Jung-White Letters*, 313.

[20] Weldon, *Victor White*, 15.

[21] Ibid., 17.

[22] Ibid., 19.

[23] Ibid., 22. This article later appeared as chapter 5 of *God and the Unconscious*.

this second lecture, "Psychotherapy and Ethics," White praised the unique ethical and metaphysical value of Jungian psychology.[24]

Victor White began his correspondence with Carl Gustav Jung in August of 1945. In his first letter, dated the 3rd of August, White announced that there was "growing interest among Catholics (as well as many others)" in Jung's psychology and acknowledged his own personal debt to it. Since White did not actually expect to receive a reply from Jung, he was "immensely honored and gratified" when Jung sent him a short note in response. This exchange began a personal correspondence that would continue for over a decade and more than eighty letters.[25]

White had included the text of his earlier lectures on Jungian thought, as well as some of his reviews related to Jung's works, with his initial letter. In his first letter to White after reading these inclusions, Jung proclaimed that White was "the only theologian" of whom he knew whose writings indicated that he "really understood something of what the problem of psychology in our present world means." Jung declared that he was pleased to "know a man, a theologian who is conscientious enough to weigh my opinion on the basis of a careful study of my writings!"[26] Furthermore, Jung explained that he himself was "not a theologian" and had "nothing to say about the nature of God."[27] Jung also clarified that when he wrote about God as a complex, he only meant that God, "whatever He is," should be understood as "*at least* a very tangible complex" and that he did not mean to assert that God was "*nothing else* but a complex."[28]

This correspondence between Victor White and Carl Gustav Jung gradually developed into personal meetings and soon became one of the more important friendships in Victor White's life.[29] Over the next several years White and Jung met at least annually, often at Jung's country

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[24] Ibid., 38. This article was later revised into the first part of chapter 8 of *God and the Unconscious.*

[25] Lammers and Cunningham, ed., *The Jung-White Letters*, 3, 43.

[26] Ibid., 6.

[27] Ibid., 9.

[28] Ibid., 7.

[29] The life of Victor White, as well as his points of disagreement with Carl Gustav Jung, are treated at much greater length in Ann Conrad Lammer's *In God's Shadow: The Collaboration of Victor White and C.G. Jung* and in Clodagh Weldon's *Fr. Victor White, OP: The Story of Jung's "White Raven."* The reader is also

house on Lake Zurich.[30] White received both dream analysis and spiritual guidance from Jung himself.[31] Near the apex of their friendship Jung asked White to deliver a paper on Aristotle at the Eranos Tagung in Ascona and to be a "founding member of an 'Institute of Analytical Psychology' in Zurich (now the C.G. Jung Institute)."[32]

Despite their mutual respect, the personal relationship between Fr. Victor White, O.P. and Dr. Carl Gustav Jung gradually became strained over their intellectual differences. In early April 1952, Carl Jung sent Victor White a copy of his new work, *Answer to Job* (1954), which White initially found very illuminating but eventually came to disagree with strongly.[33] White had begun re-reading Jung's *Aion* "with greater care" around the same time and began reflecting on some of his continuing theological disagreements with him.[34] In his subsequent letters White gradually began to challenge Carl Gustav Jung's private metaphysical positions, such as Jung's refusal to accept the claim that evil is fundamentally a *privatio boni* or "privation of the good." Jung's insistence that his own metaphysical positions were not really metaphysical but were in fact empirical conclusions can be interpreted as the formal cause of their conflict.[35]

Even as White entered into a period of disagreement with Carl Gustav Jung, his religious superiors began to associate him more and more with Jungian thought. In 1954, White received the STM and it was expected that he would be named Regent of Studies at Blackfriars as a result.[36] A few months later, possibly as a result of the sudden death of the Dominican Master General, Emmanuel Suarez, White was passed over for the position.[37] Shortly afterward White

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referred to a short article, "Victor White: A Memoir," by Adrian Cunningham that appears as Appendix 2 in *The Jung-White Letters*.

[30] Weldon, *Fr. Victor White*, 60.

[31] Ibid., 61, 176.

[32] Ibid, 68, 73.

[33] Lammers and Cunningham, *The Jung-White Letters*, 180.

[34] Ibid., 182.

[35] This is my interpretation. White never explicitly does this.

[36] For more on the STM, see the chapter on Robert Edward Brennan, O.P., who also received one.

[37] Cunningham, "Victor White, a Memoir" in *The Jung-White Letters,* 322. The STM seems to be the equivalent of an STD as it was conferred years after the STL that White had already received.

was sent to the Dominican House of Studies in Oakland for five months and was "never again entrusted with the task of teaching theology at Blackfriars Oxford."[38]

While in California White wrote a very negative review of Jung's book *Answer to Job* (1954) in the March 1955 issue of *Blackfriars*. Although White had been aware of the book for some time Jung had only recently published it in English. White had believed that he had Jung's private assurance that the book would never enter general circulation and felt betrayed. Jung grew very upset with White after reading the review and yet White was seemingly oblivious to the pain that he had caused to Jung. White modified some of his inflammatory language in subsequent publications of the review but he always maintained the same basic criticisms.

The disagreement between White and Jung over *Answer to Job* meant that the last few times that the two men saw each other were uncomfortable. The correspondence between them stopped completely for more than a year.[39] White spent some of this time writing what would turn out to be his final book, *Soul and Psyche* (1960), much of which is a refutation of those metaphysical elements of Jungian thought that appear to be opposed to traditional Catholicism.

In April of 1959, White was badly injured in a motor scooter accident that "left him with permanently impaired sight and hearing."[40] White began experiencing "acute abdominal pains" the following September that were soon revealed to be stomach cancer. In the final few months of his life, White exchanged a few brief letters with Carl Gustav Jung. White's letters to Jung indicate that he was genuinely surprised that Jung's replies to him were so cold. Jung finally came to realize the seriousness of White's condition, however, with the result that their final written exchange was significantly more amicable than those exchanges that had immediately preceded it. Victor White, OP died on 22 May 1960 with the final words "God, take me."[41]

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[38] Weldon, *Fr. Victor White*, 180.
[39] Cunningham, "Victor White, a Memoir" in *The Jung-White Letters,* 322.
[40] Cunningham, "Victor White, a Memoir" in *The Jung-White Letters,* 332.
[41] Cunningham, "Victor White, a Memoir" in *The Jung-White Letters,* 334.

The Thomist Theology of Victor White, O.P.

Victor White, O.P., was a Thomist theologian who primarily wrote short pieces, such as book reviews and magazine articles, rather than long theological treatises. White's only books were three relatively short collections of theological essays, many of which had been published earlier. One of those books, *God the Unknown* (1956) consisted of neo-Thomist theological articles that he had released during his "pre-psychology days" and suggest no influence from Jungian psychology.[42] In contrast, White's other two books were almost entirely devoted to the relationship of Catholic theology to Jungian thought. His first book, *God and the Unconscious* (1952), contained slightly revised versions of his lectures and articles on Jung's psychology, including "The Frontiers of Psychology and Theology," "Psychotherapy and Ethics," and "The Analyst and the Confessor." In essence, *God and the Unconscious* was White's most sustained attempt at an apology for Jungian thought to a Catholic audience. In contrast, White's final book, *Soul and Psyche: An Enquiry into the Relationship of Psychotherapy and Religion* (1960), which was based on his 1959 Edward Cadbury lectures at the University of Birmingham, is filled with criticisms of Jungian claims. Although White still praised Jung's basic insights about the human person, he devoted much of his final book to a critical examination of the metaphysical and theological difficulties that Jung's speculations raised for Catholic thinkers.

With the possible exception of his writings on Jungian thought, Victor White's greatest intellectual legacy is found in the influence that he had on his students at Blackfriars, Oxford. Victor White had, according to Herbert McCabe, O.P., been invaluable in providing to his students "(and indeed the whole English Dominican province) the reality of Aquinas stripped of the scholastic obfuscation of so much modern 'Thomism.'"[43] Yet the amount of serious scholarship that has focused on White in the decades since his death has been far from

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[42] Lammers and Cunningham, *The Jung-White Letters*, 274. According to a letter that White wrote to Jung, he had published *God the Unknown* "under pressure and with little revision" and did not consider it to be interesting or worthwhile.

[43] Herbert McCabe, O.P. God Matters (London, Geoffrey Chapman: 1987), Preface.

substantial.[44] Furthermore, since two of White's three books were concerned with Jungian thought, the two published dissertations written exclusively about him are at least as much about his personal relationship with Carl Gustav Jung as they are his actual theological positions.

Despite his relative obscurity in the decades since his death, during his own lifetime White was an important figure both for both those within the Catholic Church and those outside the visible Church who sought to understand the Catholic faith. As a cradle Anglican who converted to Catholicism, White always hoped to bridge the gap between the Catholic Church and other Christian (and even non-Christian) communities. As a result, White became a pioneer in Catholic participation in ecumenical dialogue.

White was an expert in Thomism in the mid-twentieth century, and yet he was less of a neo-Thomist. The reason is that White was a unique kind of Thomist in his time, for he was one who understood the weaknesses of the version of the Thomist tradition that reigned for most of his life, and who sought to provide a more faithful form of Neo-Thomism. Finally, White was a staunch proponent of cooperation between Catholic theology and modern psychology. This, too, was a function of White's form of Thomism, which led him to seek engagement with the modern forms of thought such as Jungian psychology. White's approach to Jungian psychology, as to all of life, was one of open interest and stands in stark contrast to the attitude of many of the neo-Thomists of his period who relied more heavily on of the commentaries and manuals of the post-*Pascendi* period.

The Modernist Context

In *Fr. Victor White, O.P.: The Story of Jung's "White Raven"* Clodagh Weldon explains that Victor White's life must be understood in the context of the Dominican Order's reaction to

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[44] Clodagh Weldon, *Victor White*, 1-3. Weldon provides a short list of the works that have focused on White.

the condemnation of Modernism and the "defensive measures" that followed it.[45] Weldon notes that even as a student White was unhappy with the intellectual atmosphere of both Hawkesyard and Louvain.[46] Weldon explains that one of White's most severe objections to the Dominican theology of this time was that the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas "was abstracted from a historical context," such that Aquinas' own "concepts were not related to the modern world."[47]

Ann Conrad Lammers makes a similar observation about White and his contemporaries in *In God's Shadow: The Collaboration of Victor White and C.G. Jung*. Lammers explains that it was common for "scholars and administrators in White's order, conscious of the heritage of St. Thomas and the Dominican teaching tradition" to have the sense that their Order had been "especially delegated to maintain conservative neo-Thomistic standards." According to Lammers "Victor White should be numbered among modern theologians who have worked to create a more open, less intellectualist Thomism, avoiding an excessive abstraction and rationalism by attending also to the more subjective aspects of faith and knowledge."[48]

Although much of the stagnation that mid-twentieth century Thomism experienced during that period was a reaction against the condemnation of Modernism, as a young priest Victor White, OP was at once personally sympathetic to the Modernists themselves on the one hand and absolutely opposed to the doctrine of Modernism on the other. In 1937, nearly a decade before his first meeting with Carl Jung, White published a short book review in *Blackfriars* about M.D. Petre's *Von Hugel and Tyrrell: The Story of a Friendship*.[49] Although Petre's book consisted mostly of the previous unpublished correspondence of two of the more noteworthy members of the Modernist movement, White believed that it also subtly made the case that Fr.

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[45] Ibid., 9-10.

[46] Weldon quotes Columba Ryan, OP to the effect that Hawkesyard was place of "intellectual dust." (10) Furthermore, Weldon recounts that, at Louvain, Victor White "was deeply frustrated that Thomas was abstracted from a historical context, and that his concepts were not related to the modern world." (10-11).

[47] Ibid., 10-11.

[48] Lammers, *In God's Shadow*, 41. It is worth remembering that Robert Brennan was also a Dominican and clearly felt this kind of responsibility to be a gatekeeper for authentic neo-Thomism.

[49] Maude Dominica Petre*, Von Hugel and Tyrell: The Story of a Friendship*. (New York: Dutton, 1937).

George Tyrrell (1861-1909) was led into Modernist position through his friendship with fellow Modernist Baron Friedrich von Hügel (1852-1925). In his review, entitled "An Orthodox Heresiarch?," White interpreted Petre as having selected these particular letters in order to imply that if George Tyrrell had deserved condemnation for his Modernism then Baron von Hügel should have been condemned for his Modernism as well.[50]

In the course of the review, White noted that Petre's definition of Modernism was that of "a movement, at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century…in favor of fuller recognition on the part of the Church, of the social, historical, and scientific demands of the modern mind." White argued that under Petre's definition the Baron was indeed a Modernist "and most of us would be proud to be called such." Yet White insisted that Pope Pius X had not condemned "a movement but a doctrine, or rather a system of doctrines which stuck at the very foundations of Christianity and all revealed religion." According to White, those who had suffered condemnation had "reached and held tenaciously to doctrines which falsified the inmost meaning of the Christian Scriptures and Creeds." From White's perspective, the Pope had not condemned Modernism as a movement but had merely condemned the doctrines associated with it. White believed that Modernism should be regarded as "a movement that led some of its participants into error from which others escaped."[51]

White's analysis of Modernism indicates that he made a distinction between holding to an unorthodox position in defiance and being willing to surrender such a position in obedience to one's religious superiors. Since White was later obedient when he was held in some suspicion because of his friendship with Jung, this assessment serves as a foreshadowing of his own future. In the closing paragraph of the review, White exonerated Baron von Hügel of any personal suspicion because "however preoccupied he was with the peculiar problems of his epoch, nevertheless he transcended them." From White's perspective, von Hügel remained free of

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[50] Victor White, "An Orthodox Heresiarch?," in *Blackfriars* (Volume XVII, No. 213, 910-916).
[51] Ibid., 915.

condemnation because he refused "to put his own judgment before the definitive judgment of the Church."[52]

Despite expressing admiration for some of the principles of Modernism, White was neither a Catholic, nor an adult during the Modernist crisis. His writings indicate that he felt compelled as a faithful Catholic to condemn the obstinate adherents of Modernism, like George Tyrrell, even as he could exonerate those within the Modernist movement who had not been condemned, like Baron von Hügel. Since White's intellectual formation had occurred in Europe in the aftermath of *Pascendi*, he was personally acquainted with the kind of theological stagnation that the specter of Modernism had caused within the Church. Perhaps in reaction to this kind of theology, White was interested in an engagement with modern thought that acknowledged that modern thought offered something worth learning. Interestingly, however, the intellectual basis of both Victor White's openness to Modernist principles as well as his embrace of Jung's thought is found in his unique interpretation of the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Interpretation of the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas

Victor White's writings demonstrate that he was consistently dissatisfied with the reigning neo-Thomism of his day. For example, on an occasion when White was ostensibly writing in defense of neo-Thomism, he noted in passing that the major sources that many of his contemporaries used to supplement the writings of Aquinas "had the effect of obscuring, and sometimes distorting, the original."[53] Furthermore, although White acknowledged the claim of these same contemporaries that "an 'independent 'thomistic philosophy'" can be "fully justified on the principles of St. Thomas himself," he insisted that the separation of Thomist philosophy from Thomist theology usually resulted in "the impression of a sphere of reality (as distinct from

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[52] Ibid., 916.
[53] Victor White "Tasks for Thomists: Some Reflections on "Thomism and Modern Needs" by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury." *Blackfriars* 25, no 288 (March 1944, 93-117), 105-106.

a sphere of knowability) which is independent of grace and the divine economy of salvation."[54]

Five years later, in a review of Henri de Lubac's *Surnatural* (1946), a book that lambasted much

of the reigning Thomism of the era, White praised de Lubac's similar claim regarding the "pure

nature hypothesis" that many neo-Thomists used to protect the gratuity of grace.[55]

    White's own interpretation of St. Thomas Aquinas had already consistently rejected the

separation of nature from grace. White proclaimed that although the work of St. Thomas Aquinas

had been founded upon two distinct convictions, one primarily philosophical and one primarily

theological, they were nevertheless intimately related. According to White, the philosophical

conviction was simply "that the object of our thought is Being: the metaphysical world of

essences, causes, purposes, and laws, which lies beyond the world of appearances; that it can

attain the inmost structure of finite reality and that it can argue to the existence and attributes of

infinite God, transcendent and immanent." White insisted that this philosophical conviction was

perfected by a theological conviction of St. Thomas Aquinas, which according to White was that

> over and above, but interpenetrating, this metaphysical realm there is a boundless
> Supernature, the Triune God revealed to man in Christ, to the sharing of whose
> life, though Grace here, in Glory hereafter, man is called and destined. Over and
> above this is the conviction that these two orders of nature and supernature— the
> first the object of reason, the other of Faith— are in reality one, owning their
> unity and cohesion to the one God from whom all proceeds and to whom all
> tends. Hence, still further, followed the conviction of the possibility and the
> necessity of an ultimate synthesis of the whole body of truths, whether
> discoverable by reason or revealed by Revelation, which St. Thomas, with a
> daring undreamed of by his predecessors, made it his life-work to construct and
> express. Hence all St. Thomas's thought centres in God and all science, however
> 'secular,' receives a religious significance.[56]

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[54] Ibid., 106.

[55] Victor White, "The Supernatural," in *Dominican Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 1949, 62-73), 68.
According to White, "For him [Aquinas] the states of nature were precisely states of nature, and in no
way of the presence or absence of grace, however much, as a matter of historic fact, these might be
the cause of the integration or disintegration. Similarly, a jug may be whole or broken, fallen or unfallen,
and as such it is in one state or another; it cannot be in a *state* of 'pure jug'." (Ibid., 68; Emphasis in
original). Yet White was not in total agreement with de Lubac's thesis, faulting him for implying that
Aquinas had rejected "the very possibility that God could have created man without grace and a
supernatural destiny, a possibility that St. Thomas expressly, although quite casually, affirms." (ibid.,
69)

[56] Ibid., 24. Spelling of original maintained.

If there were perhaps hints of rebellion in White's unorthodox interpretation of Thomism, his presentation of St. Thomas made the Angelic Doctor seem almost a member of Baron von Hügel's Movement. White did not explicitly declare St. Thomas to be a pre-modern Modernist, and yet he did declare him to be "the father of the scientific spirit in the most modern sense of the word." For White, St. Thomas was "an innovator who broke loose from the limitations of his medieval Scholasticism as it had previously been understood" and who developed new methods of proof, of teaching, and of investigation.[57] White interpreted St. Thomas as frustrated by the practices of his era, in a manner analogous to the ways that the Modernists had found their period confining, and explicitly interpreted Aquinas as having been aggravated by "the almost complete lack of historical and literary criticism in use of sources."[58] Much like the never condemned Baron von Hügel, White insisted that St. Thomas had recognized "a live historical sense of doctrinal evolution" and had seen "that modes of speech differ in different times and places, and that patristic pronouncements sometimes demanded considerable re-statement and even to be explained away."[59] In White's view, although St. Thomas Aquinas had "reverenced authority," he had "declined to be intimidated by it, and ever preserved his independence of mind."[60]

White's approach to St. Thomas Aquinas was further outside of the mainstream in his assertion that Aquinas had always given primacy to "the *kergymatic*, *evangelistic* or *pastoral*- as distinct from the *academic*, *speculative*, or *scholarly*- conception of theology."[61] White declared that St. Thomas Aquinas had always intended the *Summa* to help teachers of sacred doctrine "to encounter all men, beginners no less than the proficient, leading them from what they know and accept to what they do not of universal truth." White argued that the work's "whole orientation is

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[57] White, *Scholasticism*, 22.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 23
[61] Victor White, O.P., *Holy Teaching: The Idea of Theology According to St Thomas Aquinas* (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1958), 4.

evangelistic, [or] 'pedagogical,'' and that "it is 'scientific' only to the extent that scientific and logical methods may serve this evangelistic concern."[62]

The evangelistic orientation of the *Summa Theologica* was perhaps the central component of White's Thomism. In his view, most modern Thomist theologians were either lost in irrelevant arguments or were engaged in little more than "'higher-grade catechism.'"" He also feared that his contemporaries emphasized the statements of commentators without engaging in sufficient personal reflection, careful historical research, and those practices that would lead them to genuine "knowledge about God" that they could then convey to others.[63] Furthermore, White strongly implied that most neo-Thomists were unaware that the underlying theme of the *Summa Theologica*, "so closely knit a unity that it is at our peril that we isolate any part of it from the whole," was the Atonement.[64] According to White, Aquinas had written the *Summa* to show that the primary purpose of the Incarnation, and all of Divine Revelation, was God's love for human beings.[65] White worried that his fellow Thomists were so consumed with their own internal squabbles that they were consistently failing to offer the proper spiritual nourishment to those who needed it. He suggested that they had ceased to recognize the purpose "of the teaching [was to be found] in the needs of the learner," and so were failing to provide a theology that would lead their flocks toward that *telos* (ultimate purpose) for which all human beings were created, which White identified as *salus* (salvation).[66]

White's understanding of the *Summa Theologiae* as evangelistic and pedagogical was also the interpretative foundation of his somewhat unique interpretation of St. Thomas's view on the non-scientific nature of theology, or "sacred doctrine." The textual basis of White's argument was his admittedly novel reading of the Second Article of the First Question of the *Summa*

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[62] Ibid., 7.
[63] God the Unknown, 3.
[64] White, *God the Unknown*, 99.
[65] Ibid., 108.
[66] White, "Holy Teaching," 10.

concerning "Whether Sacred doctrine is a science?"[67] In that article of the Summa that is perhaps most famous to theologians, St. Thomas Aquinas had drawn an analogy between arithmetic and music on one hand and the science of God, or sacred doctrine, on the other. According to Aquinas, just as music is based upon the principles of mathematics, sacred doctrine is based upon principles that are known to God. White argued that what St. Thomas had really meant was that the musician does not know the principles of mathematics but merely believes them, meaning that mathematics is not a true science for the musician but only for the mathematician. Using that view of what St. Thomas Aquinas had meant by "to know," White interpreted this passage as the claim that sacred doctrine is true knowledge for God and yet that for human beings sacred doctrine is merely believed through faith. According to White, in other words, sacred doctrine would be a true science, or form of knowledge, from God's perspective, for it is God's own knowledge, and yet sacred doctrine could not be a true science for human beings because humans do not truly know it, but simply believe it; sacred doctrine consists of truths that God has revealed and that humans ought to believe for their own good. For White, the truths of sacred doctrine were not merely facts to be memorized but were transformative realities. In other words, White argued that Catholic doctrines helped the people who believed them to become more fully what they should be. For White, "being accepted in faith it [sacred doctrine] is, as the next article finely put it, a certain imprint on us of God's own knowledge."[68]

For Victor White, sacred doctrine can transform people because believing it allows people to have a "humble participation in God's own knowledge of himself as revealed to us by his grace."[69] White argued that teaching sacred doctrine also helped the human person to learn "about his end and his *salus*, and how he is to direct his intentions and his actions." As such, sacred doctrine "transcends the distinction of human sciences into the theocentric, which are concerned with objective truth for its own sake, and the practical, which are immediately

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[67] In a footnote White explains that he is aware that no one else interprets this article this way. Ibid., 14f.
[68] Ibid., 13.
[69] White, *God the Unknown*, 9.

directive of action" because as "as an imprint of this [God's] knowledge, [it] must likewise transcend and comprehend both."[70]

White's Interpretation of Modern Psychology

Despite his cherished belief that the proper reception of sacred doctrine was the key to obtaining the saving power of Christ, Victor White first became interested in modern psychology after experiencing a kind of theological ennui. His decision to enter into dialogue with Jungian analytic psychology was the direct result of his discovery of its healing power in his own life. Furthermore, White would later explain that one of the great benefits that he saw in Jungian thought was that it helped him to articulate the practical value that the sacred doctrines of the Church held for Christian believers. White's subsequent engagement with Jungian thought, therefore, was predicated on the intertwined beliefs that Jung's work could benefit other people in the same way that it had benefited him and that Jungian thought had the potential to enrich the Catholic tradition in new and exciting ways.

White's decision to dialogue almost exclusively with analytic psychology was also partly due to his negative evaluation of other forms of psychology. Like other neo-Thomists of his period, White was deeply concerned with the metaphysical presuppositions of most other forms of modern psychology could be spiritually dangerous to the participant. Although he recognized that the same possibility existed with Jungian thought, he believed that Jung's own respect for the spiritual aspect of the human person, as well as his willingness to let each patient discover their own path, significantly mitigated this possibility. In other words, White's decision to concentrate his efforts upon Jungian thought was, at least in part, an attempt to save the soul from the metaphysical presuppositions of other forms of modern psychology. White sought to instead lead Catholics and other religious people to participate in a form of psychological therapy that he believed could help to heal them without also imperiling their religious faith.

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[70] White, "Holy Teaching," 14-15.

White's Analysis of Modern Psychology

> THE PEWS were empty, the creeds were outworn; the gods, it was supposed, were dead. Dead; not just, as had often happened before, transformed or displaced by newer gods: as Zeus had unmanned and displaced Kronos and cast him into the underworld, as Teutonic and Celtic deities had become gnomes and fairies in Christianised Europe. "The God is dead, Long live the God" was no new cry in human history; it was, as Frazer showed, the very secret of the Golden Bough of Nemi and its countless parallels all over the globe.[71]

In this opening stanza of an elegy on religious faith in the modern era, which serves as the first paragraph of *God and the Unconscious* (1952), Victor White set up the apparent contrast between the loss of religious faith in the modern world and the transformation of religious symbols in previous eras that occupy the rest of the first chapter, "Twilight of the Gods." White believed that "gods must die that men may live and grow," at least in the sense that the gods in question were the imperfect mental images whose fixed appearance "may blind man's vision to the claims of further and wider loyalties, and so paralyse the human spirit and crush its inherent will to advance and to venture."[72]

White maintained that each "succeeding human *imago* of God must dissolve and elude man's grasp if man himself is not to be (as the Jewish psalmist foretold) petrified into the likeness of his own idols, and if the image itself is not to come between man and whatever the image would represent." As a Thomist, Victor White rejected the identification of God with any particular image, just as he rejected the "evolving, elusive Deity" of much of modern philosophy. White simultaneously affirmed God as the Transcendent and Absolute of classical metaphysics and the pursuing God of Love of Catholic theology. Yet, despite White's apparent comfort with the shattering of imperfect images of God as well as his firm confidence in the view of God of St. Thomas Aquinas, White suspected that something new was happening with regard to the modern rejection of God. From White's perspective, although it was historically true that "the mutation

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[71] White, *God the Unconscious*, 27.
[72] Ibid.

of forms is one thing, and a very ancient and indispensable thing, the passing away of *all* forms, and of the very Formless itself, is quite new." [73]

White interpreted the destruction of previous images of God as always before having been a mere preparation for the next set of God images. Yet White sensed that the most recent army of iconoclasts intended their work to be a definitive destruction of divinity itself. White saw that those who have judged that God is "dead and done with-or very soon would be" imagined that God would be replaced "not by other and more powerful divinities, but by the triumphant march of science, by man's own all conquering brain."[74] He noted that in the modern world practically everyone believes "that Kant or somebody had disproved the alleged proof of God's existence" and erected in his old place "a 'practical' Categorical Imperative." In White's view many ordinary modern people have come to believe both that philosophy has shown that there is no need for God to exist and that "anthropology, comparative religion, Biblical criticism and the physical sciences" have in turn "shattered all grounds for *faith* in him."[75]

For White, those modern people who already reject the existence of God hope that the discoveries of "psychology and, ironically enough, psychotherapy" will be able "to drive the last nails in the coffin of Divinity."[76] He suggested that they were waiting in vain for psychologists to definitively show "that it is of the more or less latent insanity in humankind that God and gods, saviors and devils, creeds and cults, are begotten and nourished."[77] Yet White noted that many ordinary modern people believe that Freudian psychoanalysts "have demonstrated that gods and demons are but 'projections of the unconscious,' which in their turn are understood to be delusional personifications of unconscious complexes, illusory by-products of the conflict between our inward instinctual drives and the demands of our environment." White even

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[73] Ibid., 28. Emphasis in original.
[74] Ibid., 29.
[75] Ibid. Emphasis in original.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 31.

observed that Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is commonly understood to have personally

"proclaimed that religion is the universal neurosis of humanity."[78]

Despite his many disagreements with Freudian thought, White acknowledged that

Freud's claim that religious belief is a neurosis had to be taken seriously because Freud "was a

pioneer discoverer of causes and cures of neurosis."[79] White explained that Freud had declared

that all religions are based in illusion, noting that Freud maintained that he was not using

"illusion" as necessarily untrue but merely to mean a belief without firm evidence. Yet White

remarked that it was clear from his other writings that "Freud himself believed religious belief to

be not only an illusion in his peculiar sense, but also untrue."[80]

Although White's assessment of Freud's view of religion was largely negative, many of

his criticisms of it were more about Freud's claims and assumptions than about his arguments

against religion. White noted, for example, that Freud's writings on religious matters "seldom rise

above the level of the popular tracts of Victorian rationalism" and that they assume that religion is

false without adequate proof.[81] Furthermore, although he conceded to Freud's claim that an

individual's view of God is often based upon parental relationships, White responded that the

strange thing was actually "the conclusion that it is therefore all abnormal and neurotic."[82] From

White's perspective, religious people often recognized that their images of God had come from

their early relationships and did not believe that it disproved the reality of God.

White was critical of Freud and yet acknowledged some potential value in Freud's

writings on religion. White explained that for Freud "not only religion, but dreams, unbidden

phantasies, slips of the tongue and pen- everything short of an urealisable ideal of complete

consciousness is somehow abnormal and pathological." White compared this view with the

Christian doctrine of the original sin, explaining that "creeds and external cults… arise from

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[78] Ibid., 30.
[79] White, God the Unconscious, 64.
[80] White, *God and the Unconscious*, 66.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., 67.

man's relative unconsciousness, from his incomprehension of- and disharmony with- the creative mind behind the universe, and from his own inner conflict and divisions." White saw this separation of religion from every aspect of human life to be a result of the Fall of Adam rather than an essential quality of human beings. According to White, in other words, Freud was not entirely wrong in his claim that that "religion as we know it was somehow a sign of some racial irregularity and incompleteness in man." Yet White maintained that Freud was mistaken in his interpretation of the origin of this disharmony and in wrongly imagining "that it could be psycho-analyzed away."[83] From White's perspective, since the true origin of the problem was the loss of supernatural grace as a result of the fall, the only proper solution to the same problem must either involve or at least be open to supernatural intervention.

In White's estimation, atheistic psychologists were not the only ones who believed that modern psychology was a threat to religious belief. White claimed that there were many ordinary religious people who looked at all forms of modern psychology with great suspicion and argued that such people frequently worried about undergoing psychological treatment because they were afraid that in doing so they were endangering their eternal souls.[84] He noted that there were often stories "of alleged psychotherapists who, after long and costly weeks of treatment, prescribe some such homely old palliatives as a dose of fornication, divorce, cutting loose from the hearth and home, or some other form of uncleanness, injustice, or impiety."[85] He even mentioned tales "of conditioning to certain patterns of behavior under compulsions induced by hypnosis or drugs; of confessions of dark secrets and immoral abreactions compelled by drugs or shock; of analysts who conceive it to be their first task to induce their patients to fall in love with them and whose whole treatment consists in holding morbid and pornographic conversations."[86]

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[83] Ibid., 68.

[84] White, "Psychotherapy and Ethics," 287. White asks, rhetorically, about those who are contemplating psychological treatment: "Do we not, in doing so, risk the undermining of our moral principles, perhaps our religion and our faith?"

[85] White, "Psychotherapy and Ethics," 287.

[86] Ibid., 287-288.

Despite recognizing that such stories were mere rumors, White was concerned that there was at least a grain of truth in some of these claims. For example, he believed that modern psychologists frequently applied the label of science to their discipline as a kind of talisman to "spirit away our misgivings" about their ethical practices and atheistic premises. White was also concerned with the metaphysical presuppositions of modern psychologists and insisted that "psychotherapy is, or should strive to be, rigorously scientific," at least in the sense that "it should be based solely upon observation and experience of psychological phenomena and on no a-priori theory; and that it should not, as such, invoke postulates, hypotheses and theories beyond such as are demanded and verified by the factual evidence."[87] Yet he also viewed the claims that psychotherapy "has nothing whatsoever to do with religion or with morality" and that it is simply "the employment of purely scientific methods for the curing of purely mental disorder" as deeply troubling.[88] White noted, for example, that many Catholic psychologists made claims for the religious neutrality of psychology and argued that they, at least, should "know better."[89]

Despite his concerns White acknowledged that there were facts that could be marshaled as evidence for the neutrality of modern psychology. For example, White did concede "that psychotherapy is a branch of medicine in the historical sense that all forms of contemporary psychotherapeutic practice, even depth analysis, have their origin, directly or indirectly, in the medical clinic."[90] Yet White also suggested that the claim that psychological therapy was simply a particular form of modern medicine wrongly assumed

> a purely materialistic conception of the function of medicine itself which is now
> very much less self-evident than it was for our fathers, and which seems to be
> being abandoned largely owing to the impetus of psychology itself: it is with
> dubious propriety that psychotherapy can hide behind medicine from the
> challenge of moral and spiritual factors when these are being increasingly

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87 White, "Psychotherapy and Ethics," 289.
88 White, "Psychotherapy and Ethics." 288.
89 Ibid. 289.
90 Ibid., 289-290.

recognised by hard bitten surgeons and neurologists in the aetiology of functional and even organic health and disease.[91]

White considered it self-evident there is an important difference "between the cure of cancer and the cure of psychoneurosis" because it should be obvious to anyone "that the latter is directly concerned with the patient's mental outlook on life, and with patterns and principles of behaviour, with the whole order of values, motives, and duties, in a sense in which the former is not."[92] In essence, White argued that all psychological therapies seek to transform the patient's "mentality, his outlook, his manner of conduct, his attitude to the world and his own place in the world" and that religion and ethics "are both concerned with precisely these very things."[93]

For White, the basis for many of his concerns with psychological therapy was less about "the risk that the psychological therapist will make us bad," than it was that the psychologist therapist "will *make* us anything."[94] White rejected the vision of the human person as mere machine that could or should be controlled in this way. While White acknowledged that the school of Behaviorism is theoretically the only form of psychology that is "explicitly committed to absolute determinism," he also maintained that "any psychology that claims to be scientific, in the sense of being bound by the principles of mechanistic causality or sequence" was also logically deterministic and that it is also logically necessary that "any psychotherapy which claims to be rigidly scientific must be likewise committed to rigid determinism." White argued that if 'scientific' is identical with "that which can be dealt with in terms of categories of historical and mechanical causation," then "the more he [the psychotherapist] claims to be in this sense a detached and rigid scientist, the more he is in fact a magician who employs an esoteric and superior knowledge whereby he gains power over other people's minds and hearts and fashions them in accord with his own preconceived idea of 'normality.'" And, for White, if this

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[91] Ibid., 290.
[92] Ibid, 290. The British spelling of the original text is maintained.
[93] Ibid.
[94] White, "Psychotherapy and Ethics," 293.

was true then "whether he be a black magician or a white magician is of considerably less importance from the religious and ethical standpoint than the fact that he is a magician at all."[95] White went on to explain that in his opinion

> by far the greater bulk of it [contemporary psychology] seems to presuppose, openly or covertly, these exclusively mechanistic assumptions and to be conditioned by their limitations. The more it claims to be respectable and scientific and to eschew all quackery, and the more it aspires to the condition of exact science in the traditional sense, the more will a psychotherapy based exclusively upon it be unacceptable to the primary claims of human freedom and responsibility.[96]

As far as Victor White could ascertain, the work of Carl Gustav Jung had produced the only "school of psychotherapy which openly, consistently and methodically repudiates the sufficiency and primacy of the principles of mechanistic and historical causality in psychotherapeutic practice."[97] For Victor White, in other words, the only form of psychology that he knew about whose metaphysical assumptions left open the possibility of genuine human freedom and spiritual growth was the analytical psychology of Carl Gustav Jung.

White's Analysis of Jungian Psychology

Victor White's embrace of Jungian psychology was his attempt to "save the soul" from the mechanistic metaphysical assumptions of much of modern psychological therapy. White believed that Jungian psychology recognized the reality of the transcendent dimension of human existence and that most other forms of modern psychology were closed to the very possibilities of a supernatural religion and divine revelation. Furthermore, White's work consistently focused on the apparent correlations between Jungian thought and Catholic theology, such as the similarities

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[95] Ibid., 293-294
[96] Ibid., 294.
[97] White, "Psychotherapy and Ethics," 294.

between Jung's work and the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. Finally, White believed that Thomists should be open to the benefits that Jungian thought could provide.

White routinely quoted a particular passage from Jung's *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933) in order to show Jung's openness toward religious faith. According to White, Jung had asserted that for his patients over thirty-five years of age "there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life."[98] White explained that, in Jung's view, these patients had fallen ill because they lacked "that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has really healed who did not regain his religious outlook." White consistently omitted the final sentence of the original paragraph, however, in which Jung states unequivocally that it "of course, has nothing whatever to do with a particular creed of membership in a church."[99] Nevertheless, White did acknowledge that it would be wrong to construe Jung as a proponent for the current state of religion in Europe and noted that "it is rather as a challenge than as an apology that his work should be viewed."[100]

White's belief that Jungian thought could be beneficial to the Catholic Church is already apparent in one of earliest published writing about Jung, a 1944 book review for *Blackfriars* entitled "St. Thomas Aquinas and Jung's Psychology." White's review concerned *Catholic Thought and Modern Psychology* (1943), a short book that Catholic convert William Purcell Witcutt (1908-1972) had written that compared modern psychology to ancient philosophy.[101] In his review White explained that Jungian analytic psychology "is not primarily a *theoria* but a *praxis*; the theory is only incidental to the therapeutic art- the *Heilsweg*, the method of liberation and healing."[102]   White argued that Jung was a healer rather than as a philosopher, "a theorist

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[98] White, *God and the Unconscious*, 69.

[99] C. G. Jung, *Modern Main in Search of a Soul*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1933), 229.

[100] White, *God and the Unconscious*, 80.

[101] Witcutt would later revert to the Anglicanism of his youth.

[102] Victor White "St. Thomas Aquinas and Jung's Psychology," in *Blackfriars* 25, no. 291 (June 1944, 209-219), 211. Emphasis in original.

only in so far as he generalises from his therapeutic experience."[103] In White's view, Jung "offers a therapeutic technique, which is not only free from external 'conditioning,' which has made much modern psychology rightly suspect in Catholic eyes, but which follows the Christian pattern of life, death and resurrection, not as an a-priori theory imposed from without, but as called for by the demands of the *vis mediacatrix naturae* within."[104]

For Victor White, there were a few important similarities and differences between the psychological approaches that St. Thomas Aquinas and Carl Gustav Jung. White claimed that both thinkers had begun their work by focusing their attention upon "the same data—the only available data— the actual workings of the human psyche."[105] Furthermore, White explained that both Aquinas and Jung were each "undoubtedly (however much the fact may be obscured by the conventional manuals of 'Thomist Psychology')… keen and fearless observers of brute psychological fact." Yet White argued that St. Thomas Aquinas had had a metaphysical perspective on the facts that the modern psychologist Carl Gustav Jung lacked. In White's view,

> perceiving facts he [Aquinas] argues to their causes, observing facts he infers potencies- he *infers* the psyche, the soul itself. As a philosopher, his concern is with *explanation* of the phenomena. Such is not Jung's role; he has repeatedly and rightly disclaimed it. For him, quite rightly within the limits of his empirical methodology, the psyche itself is not an established conclusion but a postulate. Observing the same phenomena, his primary concern is not with rational explanation, but with the practical problems of sickness and health; with co-ordination and balance of the parts with a view to the health of the whole. We shall misread him [Jung] entirely if we read into his writings a philosophical answer to such problems as that of the origin of ideas— or even of the origin of the 'archetypes' (concerning which, indeed, he has expressly confessed his ignorance).[106]

In White's view, Jung's lack of metaphysical perspective paralleled his refusal to force each patients upon a particular path and instead to guide the patient "by humbly following and

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[103] Ibid. British spelling of original retained.
[104] Ibid, 211- 212. *Vis mediacatrix naturae* is the idea that creatures often heal themselves if simply left alone.
[105] Ibid., 213.
[106] Ibid., 213.

interpreting the material provided by the patient, thereby enabling the patient himself to

reconstruct his own life and to transform the unconscious sources of frustration and disintegration

into conscious sources of life, power and integrity."[107] White claimed that "the aim and effect [of

Jungian therapy] is in no way to restrict the patient's freedom and responsibility." According to

White, Jung's psychology actually utilizes the freedom and responsibility of the human person in

order to allow its patients to discover how best to heal themselves and thereby fulfill their own

individual destinies.[108]

White accepted Jung's interpretation of his analytic psychology as primarily therapeutic

and empirical. Since White recognized that Jung's empirical standpoint made him poorly

equipped to engage in metaphysics, however, White offered the philosophical and theological

principles of St. Thomas Aquinas as the complement to Jung's analytic psychology. In White's

view, Thomistic metaphysics could provide Jungian thought with a firmer foundation. White

proposed, for example, that the basic Jungian functions of judgment, perception, reason and

irrationality could be shown to be "intrinsically necessary and irreducible" by a combination of

Aristotelian and Thomist thought.[109] White also suggested that there were numerous parallels

between Aristotelian philosophy and Jungian thought, such as their mutual emphases on

teleological striving, wholeness, self-control, and even the power of the symbol to aid in personal

transformation.[110] Finally, as had been the case with Aristotelian philosophy, White hinted that

Jungian thought could only find its true completion in Catholic theology, for the therapist can

only acknowledge that "belief in immortality and resurrection is necessary for psychic health"

whereas the Christian theologian is completely free to argue that the archetypes of Jung's

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[107] Ibid, 212.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 215.
[110] Ibid., 217. "If we seek an Aristotelian parallel to Jung's conception of the symbol as the instrument of this transformation, we shall perhaps find more than a hint of it in the *Poetics* with their insistence on the emotional catharsis wrought by drama."

psychology "are really symbols of Christian hope, or that the libido itself is man's 'natural desire' for God."[111]

Despite White's suggestion that Catholic thought could ultimately complete Jungian psychology, his great praise of Jungian thought could easily be mistaken for a disavowal of the need for any theology. According to White, Jung's analytic psychology "brings modern science to the frontiers of the realm traditionally held by theology" and also "brings the methods of empirical science into the heartlands of… the territory of the human soul."[112] He noted that the psychological therapist "increasingly takes over many of the functions formerly performed by the practical pastor."[113] Yet, even though White acknowledged the possibility of competition between the theologian and the analyst, he always insisted that "a Thomist theologian should have no objection to the scientific examination of the workings of the human soul from standpoints other than his own" and should instead "not unreasonably expect that it will enrich his understanding of his own field of inquiry."[114]

Despite his optimism, White was aware that many theologians were unwilling to embrace Jungian thought. White observed with regret that "a theoretical dichotomy between religion and practical psychology, even at the cost of fostering conflict and schizophrenia, seems to the more timid preferable to the risks of admitting the psychotherapist into the holy precincts of religion itself, or to the still more painful risks of luring the pastor of souls away from the security of his textbook lore to face the realities of the human psyche in the raw-beginning (as he must) with his own."[115] Furthermore, White noted "that the very 'religiousness' of Jung is apt to scare off the religious-minded."[116] Although he was convinced that Jungian thought could enrich the Church, he acknowledged that "in theory and in practice, Jung's realm of the psychological merges into

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[111] Ibid., 218.
[112] Ibid., 81.
[113] Ibid,, 81.
[114] Ibid., 89.
[115] Ibid., 83.
[116] Ibid., 70.

the purely 'spiritual;' it becomes quite impossible to draw a hard and fast line between them; and in the last analysis- if not long before- the psychological must so merge if real 'cure' – let alone 'integration' –is to be effected."

White's Dream of Cooperation Between Psychology and Theology

Although Victor White's immersion in Jungian thought had a profound influence on his psychological interpretation of Catholic dogma, it also caused him to develop a unique approach to the subject of modern psychology. Where other Catholic thinkers sought to erect boundaries between modern psychology and theology, Victor White tried to enable greater cooperation between Catholic theology and Jungian thought. Even after his disagreements with Carl Jung had resulted in personal estrangement, White continued to pursue this plan of integration.

On the Relationship of the Soul to both Psychology and Theology

Victor White began his final book, *Soul and Psyche* (1960), with the acknowledgement that some of his readers would find the book's opening chapter somewhat unnecessary. In White's estimation, many people would consider the fact that psychology and religion share common ground, "or at least an overlapping subject-matter," to be too self-evident to require any kind of argument.[117] White explained that the Greek word *psyche* is the equivalent of the Latin *anima* and that both words are translated as "soul" in English and argued that St. Thomas had understood this contested word to mean "the principle of life which differentiates living matter from dead matter: it is the source of everything in the individual which is alive." In other words, "any manifestation of life, voluntary or involuntary, conscious or unconscious… is a manifestation of soul."[118] According to White, when early Christian thinkers began to use the Greek word *psyche* for their own purposes, they did not significantly alter the meaning of "life-

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[117]Victor White, *Soul and Psyche*, 11.
[118] Ibid., 15.

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principle or life-force" already common in the Greco-Roman world but had simply provided it with a new theological context.[119]

White noted that at least since the publication of William James' classic *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) "such phenomena as conversion, faith, mystical experiences-regularly ascribed by religion to 'the soul,'-have in fact, if not also by right, been subjects for psychological investigation."[120] White remarked that to the degree that "what the theologian attributes to the soul is also, directly or indirectly, an observable phenomenon of mental and emotional life, the empirical psychologist cannot exclude it from his own legitimate field of investigation." And White suggested that even though the practice of psycho-analysis had frequently been hostile to religion in its early years, "it could not exclude from its purview the functions which religion had ascribed to the soul, or ignore their vital role in mental health and sickness."[121] Finally, White insisted that all those who view the Hebrew Bible as canonical and use it for prayer are committed to an understanding of the soul that make it impossible to seriously "think of the soul as excluding the sphere covered also by contemporary psychology." As an example of this last point, White explained that "the soul appears in the Psalter as the subject of every manner of love and hate, of elation and depression, of fear and resentment, of phantasy, dream and nightmare: of emotions and experiences which could not be denied to psychology without denying it any subject-matter at all."[122]

From White's perspective, the basic identity between the human soul and the human psyche required that modern psychologists and Christian theologians learn to work together in order to fully tend to the needs of those under their care. As evidence for this assertion, White declared that there were many Jungian psychologists who insist that the conceptual separation of the soul from the psyche "in Western civilization today is at the root not only of the decay of

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[119] Ibid., 23.
[120] Ibid., 12.
[121] Ibid.
[122] White, Soul and Psyche, 13.

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religion as an effective social and psychological force, but also of much of our mental distress."[123]

White argued that if the practitioners of both disciplines wanted to successfully help the people

who sought their help then "religion can no more exclude from the soul what, by general consent,

belongs to the psyche than psychology can exclude from the psyche what traditionally is ascribed

to the soul."[124]

White suspected that one of the reasons that many psychologists were hesitant to accept

the identification of soul with psyche was that it is easier to treat "the psyche as a closed system"

than to allow spiritual realities to exist within their scheme. White noted that if the psychologist

could maintain that the psyche is not related to the soul then the psychologist could argue that

there is no need to compare the discoveries of psychology "with those of other disciplines," such

as theology.[125] Against those psychologists who claimed that the difference between the psyche

and the soul is that psyche is real whereas the soul is only a "theological concept," White simply

responded acknowledged that the human soul is indeed a theological concept- as are "Body,

Blood, Person, Nature, Bread, Wine, Water" but that this does not mean that "the realities to

which they refer lie outside ordinary human experience and reflection, and are known only

through faith in some supernatural revelation, or are 'only understandable in theological and

ontological terms.'"[126]

White believed that Christian thinkers were to blame for much of the confusion regarding

the subject of the soul. He feared that the term soul has increasingly come to mean "some

peculiarly religious entity in man's composition" rather than the principle of intellectual activity

and form of the body that it meant for St. Thomas Aquinas.[127] Yet White insisted that the claim

that "Grace perfects nature… means human nature in its entirety, in its bodily, even visceral,

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[123] Ibid.
[124] White, *Soul and Psyche,* 13.
[125] Ibid., 17.
[126] Ibid., 18.
[127] Ibid., 19.

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depths, as well as in its spiritual and intellectual heights."[128] For White, in other words, "the

theologian cannot allow that any sector of human life, conscious or unconscious, lies outside the

'soul' or *psyche* with which he is concerned."[129] White therefore rejected any easy separation of

the activity of the theologian and the psychiatrist in which religion would be concerned with the

conscious person and analytic psychology with the unconscious.[130] Although White did

acknowledge that religion was often more directly concerned with certain conscious activities,

such as the voluntary choice to commit a sin or to repent of a sin, he rejected a simple division of

territory between religion and psychology.[131]

     White's approach was not entirely one sided, however, for he also dismissed the claim

that those "events which arise from supernatural causes are no business of the psychologist or the

psychiatrist, but are the exclusive preserve of the priest and the theologian, while events which

arise from 'natural causes' are no concern of the latter."[132] White maintained instead that

"'supernatural' and 'natural' causes are not mutually exclusive but supplementary, 'natural' being

subordinated to 'supernatural.'" White insisted on the ultimate subordination of the natural to the

supernatural, since he maintained that God as First Cause is the supernatural cause of all events

and, in the full sense of the term, the only supernatural cause. Furthermore, White maintained that

God frequently acts "in and through 'natural' causes which are, very often, subject to human

observation." Yet White also noted that there can be "mystical experiences and graces, spiritual

and physical phenomena, which may indeed be, in this sense, 'supernatural' but are not on that

account to be on a shelf beyond the psychologist's reach."[133] In other words, although God was

the source of all things and theology was ultimately greater than psychology, there was still an

important role for psychology in every aspect of human life, even the spiritual.

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[128] Ibid., 23.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid., 27.
[131] Ibid., 28
[132] Ibid., 29.
[133] Ibid., 30.

For Victor White, the human *psyche* and the soul were, in essence, the same reality approached from two different vantage points. White was convinced that both the psychologist and the theologian had every right to be involved in every aspect of the human person because both were concerned with the full human being. Yet White did recognize that there were very real differences between the theologian and the psychologist and that this meant that their mutual approaches to the subject were often radically different. Instead of viewing these approaches as inherently antagonistic, however, White saw them as challenges that required cooperation.

Comparison of Psychological Analysis and the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Victor White rejected the attempts of both Catholic theologians and modern psychologists to view the soul and the psyche as two completely different realities. Although he was a Catholic priest, White was not a proponent of either theologians or psychologists gaining absolute hegemony in the treatment of the human person. White hoped for cooperation and synthesis between psychology and theology, and especially between Jungian theory and Thomist thought, rather than the eradication of either practice in favor of the other. As a result, White was especially concerned with attempts by both sides to identify the practices of each tradition too closely, lest it appear that either field was able to entirely fulfill the tasks of the other field with regard to *salus* of the human person.

White was aware that individual promoters of both modern psychology and Catholicism often drew parallels between the sacrament of reconciliation and psychological analysis. He had observed that the spokespeople of each practice highlighted the apparent similarities between the two forms of spiritual healing, disagreeing primarily only on "the assertion of the superiority of their own respective wares."[134] In White's estimation, however, the comparison of psychological analysis with reconciliation was based upon superficial resemblances, not critical examination.

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[134] White, *God and the Unconscious*, 179.

Although both practices treated the whole human person White claimed that they treated different problems of the human soul and utilized very different methods when doing so.

When White considered the practices of psychological analysis and the sacrament of reconciliation, he noticed many important differences between them. For example, White pointed out that the two practices were very different in their basic structure and goals. White claimed that the most important elements of a psychological analysis are necessarily based upon the life and experience of the patient and so cannot "be determined in advance." Furthermore, White insisted that there could never be a strict formula for analysis because the basic issues addressed can only "be determined by the material which emerges in the analysis itself, by the patient's response and the analyst's skill."[135] White also argued that the "therapeutic success" of a particular instance of psychological analysis "will depend on nothing so much as on the ability of both analyst and analysant to rid themselves of predetermined plans and prejudices."[136] Finally, White argued that the psychological analyst "knows nothing of contrition or satisfaction" and lacks the "authority to pronounce moral judgments and for therapeutic reasons will usually refuse resolutely to do so."[137]

White contrasted the somewhat unpredictable procedure and outcome of psychological analysis with the "neatly and definitely sorted out, formulated and tabulated" practices that comprise the sacrament of reconciliation.[138] From White's perspective, although the sins would be different from person to person, the basic ritual and efficacy of the sacrament remained constant. White also noted that the priest would, in effect, act as the judge of the penitent and so would grant forgiveness to the sinner.[139] White even suggested that regular confession could act as a preventive in some psychological illness and therefore benefit mental hygiene.[140] Yet White

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[135] Ibid., 180.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid., 183-184.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid., 184.
[140] Ibid., 186.

also argued that it was psychological analysis that was properly ordered to cure the person of "those compulsions which make both sin and repentance from sin—and even any clear-eyed self-examination—difficult and impossible."[141] In other words, for all the good that the sacrament of reconciliation could do for the spiritual life of a person, there were important elements of spiritual healing that it could not directly accomplish.

White claimed that one of the most significant differences between the two practices was the kind of problem that each practice sought to solve. He explained that the sacrament of reconciliation was directed against the voluntary choice to commit evil because "a sin is sinful in the precise measure in which it is willed."[142] White contrasted the traditional Catholic conception of sin with the concept of a psychoneurosis as an evil that the patient has suffered rather than a wrong action that the penitent has committed. This evil of a psychoneurosis, White argued, was not conscious and yet necessarily led to many of the conscious problems that a person had.

Although Victor White hoped that psychological-analysts and Catholic confessors would be able to work together to help Catholics experience psychological wholeness, there were also areas where the two practices seemed to be at odds with each other. White recognized, for example, the one of the intellectual concepts that both confessors and analysts thought of as within their own proper territory of competence was the concept of guilt. White argued that this problem was representative of larger issues of communication between the two traditions. In White's view, although confessors and analysts used a similar vocabulary they frequently had difficulty communicating with each other because they each used the same term in a fundamentally different and ultimately incompatible ways.

According to White, lawyers, moralists, and theologians had traditionally used the word guilt in much the same way as the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defined it, as "a specified or

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141 Ibid, 187.
142 Ibid., 181.

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implied offence; criminality, culpability."[143] White noted that the practitioners of each of these

systems were taught to think of guilt as the result of the failure to live up to a standard, such as

positive law, ethical principles, or the expectations of God, rather than as an emotion. In other

words, White argued that lawyers, ethicists, and theologians were all in basic agreement that guilt

is "an objective condition, arising from departure from some standard, norm, or value which they

account to be 'good,' and or which the subject is responsible and blameworthy."[144]

White suggested that the usage of the word guilt among modern psychologists was much

closer to that found in Drever's *Dictionary of Psychology* (1952), in which guilt is explained as a

"Sense of wrong-doing, as an emotional attitude, generally involving emotional conflict, arising

out of real or imagined contravention of moral or social standards, in act or thought."[145]

According to White, this use of the term guilt as a subjective emotion is very different than the

concept of guilt as an objective failure and argued that "they are, in certain important respects, not

only different but also opposite." White maintained the theological concept of guilt is "a *malum*

culpae- an evil which man does, willingly, or a resultant state of culpability in which he persists,

no less willingly." In contrast, White noted that in its modern psychological usage guilt is

actually "a *malum poenae*- a suffering, an evil which man undergoes, even contrary to his will

and desires." Although White acknowledged that there was an intimate relationship between

these two concepts, and that one was often the result of the other, he insisted that they were also

very different things "and from the point of view of voluntariness, precisely opposed."[146]

According to White, modern psychologists and Catholic theologians also had different

"fields of association" surrounding their notions of guilt which, even though there was often a

significant amount of overlap between them, were ultimately quite distinct. For example, White

noted that most psychologists were unlikely to be too concerned with "a realistic consciousness of

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[143] Ibid., 156.
[144] White, Guilt, 157.
[145] White, Guilt, 157.
[146] White, Guilt, 158.

having committed an undoubted wrong, even when this consciousness is more or less heavily accompanied by regret or any other fitting emotion." The exception to this, White claimed, was when such a sense of guilt "is in some way obsessive, inhibiting, or otherwise morbid."[147] In contrast, White argued that "this is just the sort of guilt-sense which principally occupies the attention of the theologian and the pastor, and especially the confessor, when he talks (for instance) of repentance or contrition."[148]

In White's view, one of the few places where the fields of association of the psychologist and the theologian blur together and almost converge is with forms of guilt that are not based upon individual choice. White proposed that the most obvious theological example is that "'original sin' whose guilt the individual inherits, but which he did not personally commit." To this traditional theological concept White also added the observation that "the pastor of today is increasingly confronted" with more recent notions of 'collective guilt,' including the feelings of shame that people have for the crimes that have been committed by members of their "family, group, nation," and "of the human race generally." White compared this to the awareness of the psychologist of unconscious guilt that cannot "necessarily be traced back to some real, or even supposed, misdemeanor on the part of the subject."[149] Furthermore, White explained that Freudian theory, in particular, recognizes "'a sense of guilt or consciousness of guilt' which is so called 'in disregard of the fact that the patient does not feel it and is not aware of it.'"[150]

Although White used Freudian theory for this example, he disliked it when psychologist assumed "a priori categories into which particular cases must willy-nilly be forced." With regard to the guilt-sense, White preferred the "non-technical platitude" that it was the result of "the subject's sense of the irreconcilable disparity of what he supposes he *ought* to be (or do) with

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147 White, Guilt, 159.
148 White, Guilt, 158.
149 White, Guilt, 159.
150 Ibid., 159. Cf. Sigmund Freud, Outline of Psycho-Analysis (Hogarth Press), 55

what he supposes he really is (or does)."[151] White observed that the personal reflections of St. Paul in the seventh chapter of his *Epistle to the Romans*, where he speaks of his inability both to do the good that he wishes and not commit the evil, to express the same insight. White argued that *Roman*s was valuable reading because it displays "the manner in which the very light and perfection, as well as the severity, of a moral law engenders its opposite in an acute sense of failure and sin, in a vivid realization of the disparity between the reality and the ideal."[152]

Just as the priest could offer the psychologist the explanatory power of *Romans*, White claimed, "the theologian and the confessor need to learn from the psychologist that it is not always conscious misdemeanours against recognized moral standards that engender the morbid sense of guilt."[153] White believed that "grave matter, full knowledge, and full consent," while useful "criterion in assessing 'mortal sin'" were rarely the cause of psychological symptoms. Instead, White argued that the guilt sense was far more likely to be caused by factors such as "a lack of clear-eyed moral decision, weak, shady compromises, self-deception or self-justification in pursuing dubious projects, [and] evasions of moral issues."[154] Although White recognized that moral theologians "brought up in the traditions of post-Reformation Catholicism" were inclined to assume that all serious sins must be voluntary, he maintained that "the psyche has its own pattern and laws of origin and growth, of functional compensation and order, which cannot long be flouted without producing psychopathological symptoms," such as the guilt sense.[155]

For Victor White, Catholic confessors and Jungian psychologists had a great deal to learn from each other if they wanted to help those in their charge to attain spiritual health. White saw these two professions as ultimately complementary rather than competitive, as different methods of treating different aspects of the same soul. It is likely that White's friendship with Carl Gustav Jung helped him to envision that some kind of genuine collaboration could be possible for other

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[151] Ibid., 162. Emphasis in original.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid., 164.
[154] Ibid., 164.
[155] Ibid., 165.

priests and analysts in the future. Unfortunately, despite their great respect for each other, the

friendship between Victor White and Carl Gustav Jung ultimately deteriorated over their different

understandings of metaphysics, which began as a disagreement over the concept of evil and

ultimately devolved into a disagreement over the nature of God.

<center>White's Rejection of Jungian Metaphysics</center>

One of the first hints about the seriousness of the metaphysical disagreements between

Victor White and Carl Gustav Jung came in the form of White's review in *Dominican Studies* of

the *Eranos Jahrbuch,* the annual proceedings of the Eranos Tagung at Ascona, for the years 1947

and 1948.[156] White devoted the second half of the review to Jung's contribution to the 1948

proceedings, "'Über das Selbst,'" both because "the archetypal symbol of human wholeness and

unity, which Jung's psychology calls the Self… dominates the other contributions, and [because]

Jung's thesis is particularly challenging to the theologian and the philosopher."[157]

White summarized Jung's claim that even for non-believing Westerners "the archetypal

image of the Self is inevitably embodied in the figure of Christ" which creates "unprecedented

psychological problems and tensions in the mind and emotions of modern men" because Christ is

understood as "a man who is wholly sinless and faultless."[158] According to White, Jung regarded

the Christ archetype as lacking "the dark and unacceptable side of the human totality," which is

not destroyed when neglected but merely "becomes unconscious and manifests itself, both in the

individual and society, in negative and destructive" ways.[159] White noted that Jung saw that the

foundation of this problem as the traditional Christian doctrine that God is the *Summum Bonum*

(totality of goodness) and that evil is a *privatio boni* (privation of the good). White believed that a

careful reading of St. Thomas Aquinas "should suffice to dispel Dr Jung's misunderstandings and

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[156] Victor White, O.P. "ERANOS: 1947, 1948" in *Dominican Studies* 2 (October 1949), 395-400.
[157] Ibid., 397.
[158] Ibid., 398.
[159] Ibid.

misgivings, and to supply a metaphysic which would account for the phenomena which concern him at least as satisfactorily as the quasi-manichaean dualism which he propounds."[160]

As White's review suggests, the first indication of the metaphysical disagreements of Victor White and Carl Gustav Jung were centered upon the different ways that each thinker understood evil. For Victor White, evil was a *privatio boni*, a privation of the good, rather than a substance that exists in reality. In holding this position White was merely affirming an important doctrine of the Christian tradition, for if God is all good, and if God created everything to be good, then evil cannot be a thing that is created by God and must instead be in some way parasitic upon the fundamentally good things that God has created. For White, therefore, it was axiomatic that evil was a privation of the good rather than a substance in its own right. While the concept of evil as a privation of the good was not a dogma of the Catholic faith in the same way that the Trinity or the Incarnation are, as Jung himself pointed out to White, it was nevertheless an important intellectual belief of White's that he was unwilling to surrender to Jung.

For Carl Gustav Jung, on the other hand, it only made sense to conceive of evil as something substantial rather than as a privation. Jung maintained his patients always experienced evil as existing and that this was the basis of his view that evil should be understood as a thing rather than a kind of absence. For Jung, to treat evil as anything less than a substance would denigrate his patient's experience of evil and would thereby relegate it to something irrelevant for them. Furthermore, Jung argued that those patients who had thought of evil as a *privatio boni* had been harmed by this belief precisely because it led them to not take evil sufficiently seriously. In other words, Jung believed that to conceive of evil as in some way illusory was "morally dangerous."[161] Jung's argument, in essence, was that his substantial view of evil was based upon empirical evidence rather than mere philosophical speculation.

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[160] Ibid., 399.
[161] Ibid., 192.

From Victor White's perspective, although Carl Gustav Jung was a brilliant psychologist, he was not a philosopher or theologian. For White, whatever Jung believed that he was doing when he was addressing the question of evil, what he was actually doing was engaging in philosophy, or theology, or metaphysics.[162] White determined that although there was a certain practical value in interpreting evil as a substantial entity, and even a certain basis for this position in the writings of Aquinas, this interpretation did not hold up against logical scrutiny and serious metaphysical argument. As a result White, could not follow Jung on this point and his failure to agree with Jung on this matter paralleled all of their other disagreements over the nature of God, Christ, and even the meaning of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

From a Thomist perspective, however, it is evident that although the material cause of this first disagreement between Victor White and Carl Gustav Jung was question of the nature of evil, the formal cause of this disagreement (and all of their subsequent intellectual disagreements) was that they actually had very different conceptions of metaphysics that were fundamentally incompatible. Although Victor White had initially accepted Carl Jung's psychology because he believed that Jung's teachings did not assert an unambiguously mechanistic metaphysics and then apply it to the human person, White had failed to recognize that Jung nevertheless did have metaphysical presuppositions about the world that were incompatible with his Thomism.[163]

In fairness to White, Carl Gustav Jung always claimed that he did not personally engage in metaphysics and Victor White's first mistake was in believing Jung on this point.[164] According to Jung, his empirical method completely prevented him from speculating about metaphysical matters. Jung was able to make this claim about his method because he followed a Kantian

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[162] Jung always insisted he was not engaging in metaphysics. Cunningham and Lammers, *The Jung-White Letters*, 142

[163] Jung also failed to realize this for some time and sometimes acts like White agrees with him. Cunningham and Lammers, ed. *The Jung White Letters*, 187,

[164] This is something that Jung claimed in his first letter to White when he insisted that White understood him. At that point, Jung also claimed that he privately believed that "Man's vital energy or libido is the divine pneuma alright and it was this conviction which it was my secret purpose to ring to the vicinity of my colleagues understanding." Lammers and Cunningham, *The Jung-White Letters*, 7.

distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal orders. Jung's method identified what Kant had called the phenomenal world with that aspect of reality subject to empirical knowledge. For Jung, empirical knowledge was identical with that which could be verified, through direct experiment or even through psychological analysis. Furthermore, Jung identified philosophy, theology, and metaphysics with claims about the noumenal world, which he saw as entirely unverifiable and so completely open to speculation. Yet, as the issue of evil makes clear, Jung also saw himself as the final arbiter of the border between these two worlds. If Jung believed that he had direct evidence about any subject from these analyses that he gave to his patients, then that subject became an empirical reality in the sense that was real to his patients and therefore to all human beings. Since Jung was an analytic psychologist, moreover, he saw his own interpretations of such empirical data as the empirical conclusions of his science rather than as speculations.[165]

For White, of course, Jung's way of framing this issue was always going to be a problem. White was a Thomist theologian and, moreover, he was a Thomist theologian who was well aware of the intimate relationship between nature and grace. White's form of Thomism was inherently resistant to a two-tiered universe, whether it be one of supernature and nature or noumena and phenomena. Although White had naively accepted the fact that Jung would not speculate on the reality of God but only upon the God Image, White always believed that they were connected and accepted no such limitation himself. White clearly believed that the Jungian God Image, for example, could serve the theologian as a kind of evidence by which to bring someone to recognize God as reality. And, regardless of whether or not Jung himself ever admitted it, his claims about God and evil in books such as *Aion* (1951) and *Answer to Job* were at least partly metaphysical and theological as well as "empirical."

White's later letters to Jung make it apparent that he took the issue of evil personally because his religious experience of Jungian thought had helped him to experience evil as a privation of the good. In essence, Victor White believed that Jung's psychology had allowed him

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[165] Lammers and Cunningham, *The Jung-White Letters*, 191.

to know psychologically that evil is not a substantial entity but is rather a corruption or absence of genuine goodness.[166] As a result, Jung's eventual disavowal of that original interpretation and his assertion of evil as a substance, a position that White could not intellectually accept, provided evidence that Jung's work did indeed have metaphysical presuppositions that stood in the way of the cooperation between Catholic theologians and Jungian analysts for which White had hoped.

<p align="center">Evaluation of White's Approach to Jungian Psychology</p>

Victor White's approach to modern psychology was dramatically different than those Thomists who have preceded him in this work. White did not assert that the science of modern psychology had only a very limited area of authority, nor did he try to construct a Neo-Thomist psychology founded upon the relationship of the human soul to the human body, nor did he try to interject Thomist concepts into modern science in the hopes that their presence would transform the entire field of study. Instead, Victor White simply focused his attention on one particular form of modern psychology, the school of analytic psychology of Carl Gustav Jung, and tried to discover areas of common ground where Thomist theology could both complement Jungian thought and be enriched by it. And, for a time, White was quite successful in this undertaking and became himself an ardent supporter of Jungian psychology.

Despite White's best efforts, however, Jungian thought and Catholic theology proved to be incompatible because of their different metaphysical perspectives. Although the major areas of conflict between Jung and White, such as the nature of evil, the need to integrate evil back into the God Image, and the need to integrate evil into the Christ Image, may all seem at first to be primarily about evil, the truth is that they were ultimately issues of metaphysics in the sense that evil is a theological term for the absence of goodness. For White, true wholeness required the overcoming of evil with good, as well as the acceptance of one's own imperfections, but could not entail any kind of embrace of evil itself.

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[166] Lammers and Cunningham, *The Jung-White Letters*, 148.

The irony, of course, is that White had always believed that Jung refused to engage in metaphysics and that this made his metaphysical positions compatible with Catholic theology where other positions were not. White recognized that Jung did not assert determinism and materialism in the same way that those forms of modern psychology that White rejected did. Nevertheless, Jung was convinced of a distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal orders that essentially made the noumenal irrelevant in practice. Furthermore, because Jung's method allowed him to interpret anything that he discovered through psychological analysis as an empirical fact, Jung was able to regard his own speculative claims about realties such as God and evil as they are found within the human psyche as scientific and irrefutable.

White's disagreement with Jung over metaphysics indicates that the there are some elements of Jungian thought that simply cannot be integrated into the Catholic faith. Yet White's efforts at integration also suggest interesting avenues of theological exploration. The fact that Jungian psychology proposes universal symbols of the unconscious parallels the idea of Catholic itself, as a creed that all human beings can come to embrace. Even if Jungian metaphysics is incompatible with both Thomist metaphysics and Catholic doctrine, it does not necessarily mean that all aspects of Jungian thought are without merit in the Catholic tradition. Indeed, although Victor White never fully resolved his arguments with Jung, he also never repudiated his interest in Jungian thought or his belief that it could be beneficial to both individuals and the Church.

Conclusion

Victor White believed that Catholic theology could be brought into conversation with Jungian thought and that the two traditions could serve to strengthen each other. His engagement with Jungian thought was predicated on the belief that Jung's psychology did not have the same kind of metaphysical presuppositions as other forms of modern psychology. White also believed that Jung's analytic psychology was open to the spiritual dimension of human existence in the way that other forms of modern psychology were not. As a result, White consistently proposed cooperation between Jungian analysts and Catholic pastors. He believed that pastors and analysts could learn to work together for the spiritual healing of those within their care and that this cooperation would benefit both traditions.

Victor White was not the only Catholic from this period to see modern psychology as fundamentally beneficial to the human community. Sister Annette Walters, for example, was a professor of modern psychology who believed that it had much to offer the Catholic faith. Yet Walters was less interested in theoretical constructions that she was the treatment of individual persons who were in need of psychological care. Her story forms the basis of the final chapter in this study of Thomist engagement with modern psychology in the mid-twentieth century.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERSONALIST APPROACH TO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

OF SISTER ANNETTE WALTERS, C.S.J.

Victor White's proposal for mutual cooperation between practitioners of theology and

psychology in the treatment of individuals was an admirable goal. Although it was not the

partnership with Jungian thought that White himself envisioned, the psychological work of Sister

Annette Walters, C.S.J., (1910-1978) and most notably her co-authorship of a psychology

textbook, *Persons and Personality: An Introduction to Psychology* (1953), with Sister Kevin L.

(hereafter Mary) O'Hara (1923-2013), can be seen as a realization of his Thomist dream of

integration between the two fields. [1] These two Sisters of St. Joseph Carondelet decided to write

their psychology textbook in order to show that an explicitly Thomist metaphysical foundation

could support a truly modern version of psychology. The uniquely personalist approach of Sister

Annette Walters to modern psychology, while clearly illustrated in this textbook, is also

demonstrated through her lifelong engagement with both theology and psychology as a religious

sister and a professor of psychology.

Although her religious vocation was always a central part of the life of Sister Annette

Walters, C.S.J., she was also the chair of her department of psychology, the host of two

educational television programs, and one of the founding members of the American Catholic

Psychological Association. Within American Catholicism, she is most notable for having served

as the second executive director of the Sister Formation Conference from 1960 until 1964. In

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[1] Sister Annette Walters and Sister Kevin O'Hara, *Persons and Personality: An Introduction to Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953).

many of her writings and speeches, Walters emphasized the importance of the human person both

theologically and psychologically. Although she does not appear to have had much formal

training in neo-Thomism and may not even have considered herself to be a true Thomist, Walters

attempted to provide her form of modern psychology with a Thomist foundation. In addition,

while her approach to modern psychology was uniquely her own, there are sufficient similarities

between her approach and the other neo-Thomist approaches that have been considered that her

work can stand comfortably within a broad construal of the neo-Thomist tradition.[2]

Even were Annette Walters's place within the broader neo-Thomist tradition to be

denied, she would remain a Catholic religious sister and modern psychologist whose work

brought scientific psychology and Catholic theology together. In her efforts to secure the

metaphysical foundations of her form of modern psychology and to keep modern psychology

from dismissing the transcendent dimension of human existence, Walters made many of the same

Thomist distinctions, addressed several of the same religious concerns, and held the same basic

theological convictions as her male counterparts. Yet, unlike her fellow doctors of psychology,

Robert Brennan and Thomas Verner Moore, Walters did not direct her effort at either a

systematic or theoretical synthesis of modern psychology and neo-Thomist thought. Instead,

Walters sought to help individual human persons to recognize the value of both neo-Thomist

metaphysical principles and the insights of modern psychology. Furthermore, she worked to both

bring people to consciousness of their own personhood, which included developing a personal

spirituality, and to approach the subject of modern psychology through the study of persons.

Walters was able to avoid many of the theoretical problems found in other neo-Thomist

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[2] Walters does not appear to have had the same level of training in Thomist philosophy as the other figures studied and her desire to collaborate with her friend Sister Mary O'Hara, who received Ph.D. in philosophy from The Catholic University of America in 1956, indicates that Walters recognized her own limits in this matter. Furthermore, even women religious during that period in Catholic history were not usually permitted to study Catholic theology. Yet neo-Thomism still supplied was the standard language for Catholic thought during this period and so Walters was necessarily familiar with it.

approaches to modern psychology precisely because she focused on the individual person both theologically and psychologically instead of focusing on theoretical integration.

For the first part of her academic career, Sister Annette Walters taught undergraduate courses in psychology at her *alma mater*, the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota. Many of her psychological works focused on the education of young people, especially college students, and she frequently considered topics such as academic motivation, educational interest, moral formation, and personality development. Walters was also concerned about ways that modern psychology could be of use to modern women, and in particular to women religious. Finally, although she did not publish much on the topic of mental health, Walters wanted Catholics to become aware of the therapeutic value that modern psychology could have for them and not to worry so much about the negative potential of some psychological therapies. Although Walters did acknowledge that some forms of modern psychology could negatively affect the spiritual aspect of the human person, she was far more concerned that American Catholics would fail to recognize the benefits that modern psychology could provide to them. In essence, Walters saw the adequate mental health of each individual person as an important prerequisite in their personal quest to develop a genuinely spiritual life.

This chapter demonstrates that Sister Annette Walters, C.S.J., engaged in what is best described as a personalist approach to the science of modern psychology. The first section of this chapter provides a brief narrative of her life, ministry, and psychological work from her youth in Minnesota in the early twentieth century, through her days with the Sister Formation Conference, until her untimely death. The chapter's second section examines two of Walters' works on the human person, the first of which is a short article Walter's published in 1947 entitled "The First Course in Psychology," and the second of which is an address that Walters delivered to the National Catholic Educational Association on "The Importance of the Person" in 1966. The third section is an analysis of *Persons and Personality* (1953), the textbook on modern psychology that she co-authored with Sister Mary O'Hara. The chapter's fourth section considers Walters' views

on the way that modern psychology can be of benefit to women in general and to women religious in particular. The fifth and final section of this chapter offers an account of Walters' understanding of the relationship between spirituality and mental health. This chapter ends with a conclusion that suggests that Sister Annette Walters' approach to modern psychology holds a preeminent place on the spectrum of neo-Thomist engagement with modern psychology as a result of her focus upon the individual human being as a person as well as because of her recognition that the reconciliation between psychology and theology must be accomplished in concrete circumstances rather than through theoretical abstraction.

The Life of Sister Annette Walters, C.S.J.

Sister Annette Walters, CSJ, pursued the twin goals of faith and knowledge in a world of seemingly constant change. She was born Margaret Walters in Elmwood, Wisconsin, on May 18, 1910, the second child of Anna Berglund Walters and Emil Walters.[3] When she was about three weeks old Walters was baptized at "a small evangelical Lutheran church in the neighboring hamlet of Hatchville." Walters' mother "came from a family whose male members achieved university degrees in the 1890s" and her father, who had been born in Germany, "came from a family of landowners and jewelers." Walters' only sibling, Harold, was two years her senior.[4]

During her formative years, Walters had a somewhat unstable family life. She was less than two years-old when her father's jewelry store was destroyed in a storm and flood. After assessing the devastation, Walters' family decided to leave Wisconsin and move to the south Minneapolis area of the Twin Cities region of Minnesota. A few years later, Walters experienced the pain of both her parents' separation and her father's service in World War I. In 1921, when Walters was about eleven years of age, her parents officially divorced and her mother remarried.

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[3] Elieen A. Gavin, "Sister Annette Walters Unfinished Dream" in *Women of Vision* ed. Elieen A. Gavin, Aphrodite, Clamar, Mary Anne Siderits, (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2007), 163. As there is no biography of Sister Annette Walters, the first two pages of this section are heavily dependent upon this short article.

[4] Ibid., 164.

Walters' sense of stability was further disrupted when another family relocation to a different part of Minneapolis, causing her to leave Central High School, where she had studied during her freshman year, and register for classes at West High School for her sophomore year.[5]

Walters' parents' divorce troubled her, and she was concerned that she would fall into a similar scandalous situation herself when she grew older. Her fears seemed to be on the path to realization when at the age of only fourteen she found herself with an older boyfriend who owned a car and who used it to bring her to "an unauthorized and unchaperoned weekend party with underage peers, at which liquor was served."[6] The incident, which occurred during the period of nationwide Prohibition, became known to some of her teachers at West High school. In order to avoid further scandal Walters' mother decided to transfer her to another school for her junior year. Walters' mother let her choose the school, and she picked St. Margaret's Academy.[7]

Even before her transfer to St. Margaret's, Walters had begun exploring other religious traditions. After she transferred to St. Margaret's Academy, however, Walters developed great respect for several of the religious sisters who taught there. Within two years of her graduation from St. Margaret's Academy, Walters had converted to Catholicism. She began attending the College of St. Catherine with the intention of becoming a medical doctor. Although Walters was in a serious romantic relationship during her first year of college, she eventually made the decision to terminate that relationship. Walters also abandoned her original plan to become a physician. She made these decisions because she had decided to become a Sister of St. Joseph Carondelet, the religious order that ran both St. Margaret's Academy and the College of St. Catherine. In 1931, Walters became Sister Annette, a Sister of St. Joseph Carondelet. In 1933, she graduated from the College of St. Catherine with a Bachelor of Arts in chemistry.[8]

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[5] Ibid., 165.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 166. Walters apparently chose St. Margaret because she had a friend who already attended it and because it dismissed early, allowing her time to go see her other friends after their classes were finished for the day.

[8] Ibid., 167.

Sister Annette Walters, CSJ, encountered some noteworthy people in the years following her entrance into the community. The first president of the College of St. Catherine, Mother Antonina McHugh (1863-1944), encouraged Walters to pursue graduate study in psychology at the University of Minnesota because she wanted Walters to teach psychology at the College of St. Catherine after she finished her degree.[9] Shortly after she began studying psychology at the University of Minnesota in 1933, Walters became acquainted with Starke Hathaway (1903-1984), developer of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), "as well as other psychology luminaries, including Richard Elliott and a young professor, B.F. Skinner."[10] Walters' friendship with Skinner and his wife, Yvonne or "Eve," lasted the rest of Walters' life despite their numerous intellectual disagreements over religious and philosophical matters.[11]

From the very beginning, Walters was a very successful academic. She received a Masters of Arts in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota in 1935. During the summers of 1936, 1939, and 1941, she engaged in research and study at the University of Chicago. The final two years were conducted on a General Education Board Fellowship and the final year concerned research into human growth and development. Walters also took summer courses in both theology and psychology at the Catholic University of America in 1940 "where she met Dom Thomas Verner Moore."[12] Walters officially received her Ph.D. in the science of experimental psychology from the University of Minnesota in 1941.[13]

Walters was launched into the world of higher education immediately after completing her doctorate. As a religious sister who was also the only Ph.D. in psychology at the College of St. Catherine, she immediately became both a professor of psychology and the chairperson of the psychology department. She continued to hold both of these positions until 1960. During this

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[9] Ibid., 169.

[10] Gillespie, *Psychology and American Catholicism*, 71. Richard Maurice Elliot (1887-1969) was the chair of the psychology department at the University of Minnesota from 1919 to 1956. He later suggested that Walters write a textbook for Catholic students that became *Persons and Personality*.

[11] Ibid., 73-74 .

[12] Ibid., 71.

[13] *Curriculum Vitae*, Sister Annette Walters, Ph.D., Fall. 1977 (obtained through Marquette Archives), 1.

time Walters also served as a part-time clinical psychologist for the Bureau of Catholic Charities of St. Paul, Minnesota and for the Child Guidance Clinic at the College of St. Catherine. From 1946 until 1951 she was also a member of the Advisory Commissions on Teacher Education for the State of Minnesota and for the Association of American Colleges.[14]

Walters was actively involved in Catholic academic life beyond Minnesota. Despite the fact that she had received most of her formal psychological training from a non-Catholic institution, Walters was one of the founding members of the American Catholic Psychological Association in 1947. From the beginning of the existence of the organization, Walters expressed her hope that it would be able to help ease some of the remaining suspicions that many Catholics felt toward modern psychology.[15] Walters received a Fulbright Fellowship in 1952 that allowed her to spend the 1952-1953 academic year studying at the University of Louvain where "she took classes in existentialism, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis."[16] She served as a visiting lecturer at the graduate school of Marquette University during the summers of 1952 and 1954. During the summer of 1955, Walters was both a visiting lecturer and a mental health consultant at St. Louis College in Honolulu, Hawaii.[17]

Walters found a new way to teach modern psychology at the close of the nineteen fifties when she conducted two educational television courses on psychology for KTCA, Channel 2, in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Quinlan Foundation subsidized the first course, "Psychology of Mental Health," which was produced in 1958, and "several colleges and University of Minnesota Department of Public Health" offered students credit for taking it.[18] From 1959-1960, the Ford Foundation sponsored Walters' second educational television show, "The First Course in

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[14] Ibid, 1-2.

[15] Kugelmann, *Psychology and Catholicism*, 278.

[16] Gillespie, *Psychology and American Catholicism,* 75.

[17] Walters, *Curriculum Vitae*, 4. St. Louis College later became Chaminade University.

[18] Ibid., 4.

Psychology," which consisted of 77 filmed lectures, and six colleges offered credit for it.[19] About

80,000 people were estimated to have watched these programs.[20]

Despite her overwhelming success as a professor of psychology, Walters' vocation as a

woman religious led her to take a temporary hiatus from psychological work and accept a new

challenge. In 1960, Sister Annette Walters was "handpicked" to become the second executive

secretary of the Sister Formation Conference.[21]

At the 1952 convention of the National Catholic Educational Association in Kansas City,

Sister Mary Emil Penet, IHM, (1916-2001) made several very forceful comments about the lack

of educational formation of religious sisters during a teacher education panel "centering on Pius

XII's remarks to the 1951 Roman Congress of Teaching Sisters regarding sisters' educational

preparedness."[22] The discussion that resulted from these comments led to a survey of religious

congregations. When Sister Mary Richardine Quirk, BVN, (1908-1994) interpreted the results

from the surveys, she determined that religious sisters frequently had serious problems related to

"time constraints, inadequate resources, and a lack of understanding [of the how to teach] that

impeded, if not damaged, the necessary formation of young sisters across the country in both

small and large religious communities."[23]

The National Catholic Education Association responded to the problem of inadequate

sister formation in 1953 by forming "a new committee called 'SEPS' (Sister Education and

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[19] Gavin, 169. One of Walters' professors at the University of Minnesota, Alvin C. Eurich, had become the head of the Ford Foundation and, in that capacity, approved the proposal of financial support for this program. In 1936, Walters and Eurich had co-authored a paper for *The Journal of Educational Psychology*, "A Quantitative Study of the Major Interests of College Students." (*Journal of Educational Psychology*, Volume XXVII, November 1936, Number 8, 561-571).

[20] Gavin, 162. Original source: CSJ Archives.

[21] Carol K. Coburn, "Ahead of Its Time… Or Right on Time?: The Role of the Sister Formation Conference for American Women Religious," *American Catholic Studies*, (Volume 125, Number 3, Fall 2015, pp. 25-44), 38.

[22] Mary L. Schneider, "American Sisters and the Roots of Change: The 1950s," *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Vol. 7., No. 1., Transitions in Catholic Culture: The Fifties (Winter, 1988, pp. 55-72), 62.

[23] Carol K. Coburn, "Ahead of Its Time… Or Right on Time?: The Role of the Sister Formation Conference for American Women Religious," *American Catholic Studies*, (Volume 125, Number 3, Fall 2015, pp. 25-44), 30.

Professional Standards), complementary to the NEA organization (TEPS) created seven years earlier." At the 1954 NCEA conference SEPS became the Sister Formation Conference and Sister Mary Emil Penet became its first official chairperson.[24] The Conference held regional meetings, workshops, published *Proceedings* of these gatherings, and released its own quarterly *Bulletin*.[25] Its editor, Sister Ritamary Bradley, sent the first issue "to 100 persons in fall 1954."[26]

For a brief period, the Sister Formation Conference was the only existent organization that sought to represent the interests of all religious sisters in the United States and in which all the representatives were themselves religious sisters. Yet, only a few years after the Sister Formation Conference was established, representatives of the Holy See began to urge the congregations of women religious in the United States to set up an umbrella organization that would be composed of some of the superiors of the communities of women religious. In 1956 the wishes of the Vatican were finally realized and the Conference of Major Superiors of Women Religious was formed.[27] That same year, the Sister Formation Conference produced "The Everett Curriculum Report," a 145-page document that suggested that religious sisters should be taught "psychology, sociology, political science and current events."[28] Sister Mary Emil Penet finished her term as executive secretary of the Sister Formation Conference in 1960 and suggested that Sister Annette Walters should serve as her successor.

Sister Annette Walters' tenure as executive secretary of the Sister Formation Conference roughly coincided with Pope John XXIII's preparation for and opening session of the Second Vatican Council. A variety of new theological and political ideologies appeared to be on the verge of acceptance within the Catholic Church, including "liberty of conscience, subsidiarity,

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[24] In 1957, "the NCEA moved the SFC from 'committee' to 'sectional' status." Sister Mary Emil Penet was then elected its first executive secretary. Coburn, "Ahead of Its Time…", 35.
[25] Schneider, "American Sisters and the Roots of Change," 64.
[26] Coburn, "Ahead of Its Time…", 31.
[27] Gleason, *Contending With Modernity*, 233.
[28] Schneider, "American Sisters and the Roots of Change," 65.

and collegiality."[29] In this context, the Sister Formation Conference held workshops that resulted in "a unique cross-fertilization that combined developments in the *nouvelle theologie* with the postwar boom in the social sciences, and applied both to the sister-specific question of how women religious could be more effective in their work to transform society."[30]

Walters became the leader of the Sisters Formation Conference during the period when the Conference of Major Superiors of Women Religious had only been in existence for a few years. Although the Sister Formation Conference had been created under the auspices of the National Catholic Education Association, there were many people in the hierarchy of the Church that believed that the Sisters Formation Conference now belonged canonically beneath the Conference of Major Superiors of Women Religious. In 1964, seemingly at the direction of the Vatican, the Sisters Formation Conference was taken from the National Catholic Educational Association and given to the Conference of Major Superiors of Women Religious. Walters ceased to be the executive secretary of the Sister Formation Conference in the summer of 1964 shortly after a meeting that she was not even invited to attend.[31]

After her removal as executive secretary, Walters spent a year at the University of Minnesota in order to become better acquainted with the developments in modern psychology that had occurred during her time with the Sisters Formation Conference. During this period, Walters discovered that other religious sisters were spreading rumors about her that implied that she was either mentally ill or was considering defection from religious life and the Catholic Church. Walters also became aware of similar rumors that seemed to focus on other religious

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[29] Coburn, "Ahead of Its Time…", 38.

[30] Amy Koehlinger, "Race Relations Needs the Nun," *US Catholic Historian,* Vol. 23, No. 4, Transitions and Transformation from the 1950s and Beyond (Fall, 2005, pp. 39-59), 45.

[31] There are several different theories about why this transpired. One of the dominant theories among historians of the Sisters Formation Conference concerning Walters removal is that the male hierarchy was afraid of her innovations. Another possibility is that some of the major superiors were upset with Walters for an institute that she gave suggesting that superiors should not act as the conscience of their subordinates. A third theory is that Sister Mary Emil Penet herself was behind the change after Walters and Bradley severed ties with her new favored program, the Better World Movement.

sisters who had also been trained in modern psychology. When possible, Walters personally

explained that these rumors were untrue and that she had no plans to leave religious life.[32]

 After Walters was satisfied that she was ready to return to psychological work, she

launched into several new projects. In 1966, Walters was sent to found a department of

psychology at St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa. This allowed her to work with her friend

and collaborator from the Sister Formation Conference, Sister Ritamary Bradley, and to have the

opportunity to teach both men and women.[33] Walters would serve as both full-time professor and

the chair of the psychology department at St. Ambrose College until 1974.

There were two phases of Walters' time at St. Ambrose. According to Walters, when she

first arrived at St. Ambrose College, its administration "was comprised of scholarly priests with

Ph.D. degrees... who took giant strides toward bringing women into full partnership on the St.

Ambrose campus."[34] Unfortunately, after 1973, "an ex-priest who does not possess a doctorate, is

indifferent to scholarship, and who the students claim is racist as well as sexist" became the

dominant force in the administration. By this point, St. Ambrose College had essentially become

a "secular corporation," such that even the Bishop had only a single vote on the Board of

Directors and was unable to oversee "even the theology curriculum or its faculty," while

remaining "responsible for the seminarians at St. Ambrose who come from six diocese."[35]

Walters' life at St. Ambrose College entered its most negative period in March of 1974

after the new administration refused a request that she had made for "a one semester Sabbatical to

accept an appointment as a Yale Fellow." Walters "filed a sex discrimination suit with the Iowa

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[32] The papers of Sister Annette Walters at the Marquette University Archives.

[33] Gavin, 172.

[34] The source of this quote (and the rest of the quotes of this paragraph) is from a loose paper labeled "Insert, p. 2" that I discovered among Walters papers in the Folder labeled. It is not dated and does not bear her name, but a handwritten revision that changes "we" to "Sister Ritamary Bradley and I" indicates that Walters herself was the author. It was very interesting to me and is quoted extensively in this paragraph because it indicates that Sister Annette Walters, CSJ, did not primarily blame the Catholic Church, or even the local bishop, for the sexist treatment that she received from the administration of St. Ambrose College.

[35] The source of this quotations is a four page document entitled "Sex and Age Discrimination at St. Ambrose College" from the Marquette Archives. Walters name appears on the final page as the author. 1.

Civil Rights Commission" that "was later amended to include age discrimination." St. Ambrose responded with a two-year terminal tenure contract, and followed that with an offer for "a part-time position which would have entailed dismissing two outstanding part-time psychologists who had served the college well for seven and eight years, respectively." Walters "refused this offer as well as a later one for a full-time position at full salary" that stipulated she "would agree never to sue the college again in civil or criminal court."[36]

After leaving St. Ambrose in 1976, Walters served for a short time as a "part-time professor of psychology" at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois during the spring of 1977. Sadly, Sister Annette Walters developed cancer while the lawsuit with St. Ambrose was still pending. She died on February 22, 1978 after a brief hospitalization and surgery.

The life of Sister Annette Walters, CSJ, was filled with spiritual, academic, and political activities. Although she had some training in neo-Thomist thought and operated according to a broad Thomist framework, her doctorate in experimental psychology provided her with many of her most important insights about human beings. Yet it was her view of the human person that would become the central focus of her writings and that was a concept that she found to be supported in both modern psychological theory and Catholic theology.

<center>Walters' Psychology of Persons</center>

Sister Annette Walters, CSJ sought to save the human soul from modern psychology through her emphasis on the entire human person. Walters did not believe modern psychology was a danger to spiritual life as long as it was practiced as the study of persons. In this sense, Walters' approach to modern psychology had an affinity with the more strictly neo-Thomist approach of Robert Brennan, OP, in that they both sought to save the human soul through an anthropological vision. Brennan asserted that the unity of body and soul must be the pre-investigative starting point of psychology, that psychology should be the study of the man, and

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[36] Walters, "Sex and Age Discrimination," 1-2.

believed that the end of psychology should be theology. In a similar way, Walters believed that the human person should be the starting point of modern psychology, that psychology should be the study of persons, and that the foundation of psychology should be a metaphysics that is compatible with theology. She argued that psychology and theology should work together to form human beings who recognize their personhood. Walters' approach to modern psychology also had an affinity with that of Thomas Verner Moore in the sense that both of their approaches to the subject emphasized the importance of the human personality.

Walters' position is unlike these two earlier figures, however, in that she did not pursue the project of either a systematic or theoretical synthesis between modern psychology and neo-Thomist thought. Walters viewed the concept of modern psychology through the individual human person in both her own research and in her teaching. Although she was a practicing Catholic who believed in the importance of Catholic theology, she did not seek to construct a unique neo-Thomist or Catholic psychology, nor did she dream of changing modern psychology into something more neo-Thomist or more Catholic. Instead, Annette Walters simply focused on teaching modern psychology to her many Catholic students in a way that firmly acknowledged neo-Thomist metaphysical principles, and yet which mostly focused on the practical applications of psychological theory. Walters wanted her students to recognize the metaphysical assumptions of the various schools of modern psychology and to be able to critique those assumptions with the neo-Thomist principles from both her class and their other classes.[37] Yet she also wanted them to understand the basic principles of modern psychology, to understand their value, and to be able to use those principles in their everyday lives. In essence, Walters wanted to help to form educated persons with an adequate understanding of both neo-Thomism and modern psychology and whose competence in both traditions would serve as the source of their unity. In other words,

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[37] Sister Annette Walters, CSJ "The First Course in Psychology: The Psychology of Persons," in *The Journal of General Education,* Vol. 1, No. 3 (April 1947, 187-194), 188. Walters mentions that as part of her course, her students "must become aware of the philosophical assumptions that underlie the study of psychology." She also suggests that this will help to supplement similar information from other sources, including their philosophy classes.

Walters sought a personal integration between neo-Thomist theology and modern psychology instead of theoretical or practical integration.

This section examines two short pieces that Sister Annette Walters wrote about the relationship of the human person to modern psychology. The first piece, written early in her career, also presents some of Walters' philosophical and theological views about modern psychology. The second piece, written a year or so after she had left her position with the Sister Formation Conference, is from an address where Walters explained how the insights of modern psychology about the human person could be useful to the Catholic school teacher. Although the two pieces were written more than a decade apart and were directed at different audiences, they illustrate that Sister Annette Walters consistently interpreted modern psychology through the needs of the individual human person, argued that modern psychology could be beneficial to Catholics, and attempted to bring modern psychology and theology into respectful partnership.

"The First Course in Psychology: The Psychology of Persons" (1947)

In 1947, Walters wrote an article for *The Journal of General Education* called "The First Course in Psychology: The Psychology of Persons." In this relatively brief course overview, Walters sought to contrast the method and premises regarding modern psychology with that of the more common general psychology courses of the period. Walters implied that her courses emphasized individual cases whereas general psychology courses usually stressed technical vocabulary without paying adequate attention to context or practical application.[38] Since Walters wrote this article about her "First Course in Psychology" when she had only been teaching at the College of St. Catherine for about five years, it provides an early witness of the theological and philosophical foundation of her person-based approach to the study of modern psychology.

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[38] Walters paraphrased her students as declaring that their friends that took the General Psychology courses "'know more terms than we do, but we understand more.'" Ibid., 193.

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In very neo-Thomist language, Walters explained that the purpose of her "First Course in Psychology" was "to create a synthesis of knowledge within the intellectual grasp of college sophomores."[39] Walters defined psychology "as the study of the person, or as the philosophy and science of man."[40] She intended for this definition to be "broad enough to include man's [sic] essential nature as well as the behavior that proceeds from this nature." Walters acknowledged that the study of human behavior was an important aspect of modern psychology even while she also insisted that confining psychological investigation to observable behavior alone necessarily "rules out the possibility of ever understanding man's [sic] essential nature."[41] Walters wanted modern psychology to attend to all aspects of the human person because she conceived of it as a discipline capable of examining "human nature in its entirety- man as a biological organism, man as a social animal, and man as a person."[42]

Annette Walters envisioned modern psychology as "at once a natural science, a social science, one of the humanities, and a philosophical discipline."[43] Like Robert Edward Brennan, Walters believed that modern psychology possessed great integrative potential for the formation of the individual student. She argued that when modern psychology is taught correctly "it can help students more than any other subject, except religion, to apprehend all aspects of reality in their essential relationships."[44] Although she did not seek to systematically change the entire science of modern psychology herself, Walters did hope that modern psychology would become more closely identified with the humanities "while remaining a biological and social science."[45]

Despite her generally positive assessment of modern psychology, Walters acknowledged that there had been instances when "the study of psychology, and psychology alone, which has

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[39] Ibid., 191.
[40] Ibid., 187-188.
[41] Ibid., 189. Although Walters is remembered for her advocacy of women, certain cultural assumptions from her own time led her to refer to "man" in her early writings in a way we would reject today.
[42] Ibid., 188.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid., 194.

prevented the student from acquiring a consistent theory of knowledge and a satisfactory concept of man."[46] She also conceded to the critics of modern psychology that when psychology is taught incorrectly "it can destroy all unity in the curriculum, and produce in the student a skeptical or cynical attitude toward all truth; it can frustrate any attempt 'to build up a solid core, really and fully human.'" Yet Walters attributed these kinds of difficulties to the fact that many modern psychologists have a positivistic approach to the discipline that leads them to "teach their subject from a purely 'scientific' angle and ignore its philosophical foundations" rather than to the discipline itself. [47] She claimed that the philosophical positions of these professors of modern psychology influenced their interpretations of their data and presentation of their conclusions, particularly in those instances "when the teacher emphatically denies that philosophy has any truth to contribute to the understanding of man."[48] Nevertheless, Walters also insisted that even the most extreme interpretations of these psychologists were of some benefit in discovering the truths of human nature "because of the wealth of scientific data at their disposal, the truth and significance of which can scarcely be questioned by any unprejudiced observer."[49]

Walters believed that modern psychology was at its best when it was performed as an interdisciplinary activity. She was concerned that "specialization in psychology sometimes results in a mental myopia which prevents the psychologist from viewing human beings or teaching human nature from any but his own particular method of inquiry." She worried that this kind of provincial attitude resulted in modern psychologists who had abandoned the study of human beings because they were too focused on either promoting "a single method of study" or conducting a "partisan defense of a 'school' of psychology."[50]

In her course, Walters sought to "integrate psychological research with data from other sciences which deal with man, notably: biology, sociology, anthropology, education, and

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[46] Ibid., 189.
[47] Ibid., 187.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 190.

medicine."[51] Furthermore, Walters held that when Christians decide to engage with modern

psychology, they must do so while affirming that the unique dignity of each human person "rests

not upon his highly developed nervous system, which makes him king of all the animals, but

upon his soul which is made to the image and likeness of God."[52]

Walters recognized that it is often difficult to integrate psychology with other courses at

Christian colleges because the author of the textbook is either not a Christian or "assumes that his

religion is one thing and psychology another, and that there is no connection between the two."[53]

For example, Walters noted that many Christian institutions had no choice except to use

introductory psychology textbooks that "either ignore the moral point of view or disparage it as a

relic of a prescientific age."[54] She argued that modern psychology should be taught to Christian

students within a Christian context because "Christian humanism, rooted in God rather than in

man himself, must be the major goal of general education in the Christian college." Walters

believed that her own method of teaching modern psychology through a psychology of persons

avoided these problems, proclaiming that "the humanistic ideal, toward which the psychology of

the person is directed, will make God rather than man the measure of all things."[55]

"The Importance of the Person" (1966)

In April 1966, more than a year after she had left the position of executive secretary of

the Sister Formation Conference and less than a year before she formed the department of

psychology at St. Ambrose College, Sister Annette Walters, C.SJ., gave an address to the

National Catholic Educational Association on "The Importance of the Person."[56] The theme of

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[51] Ibid., 191.
[52] Ibid., 194.
[53] Ibid., 189.
[54] Ibid., 190.
[55] Ibid., 194.
[56] Two slightly different revised and edited versions of this talk were published. The first version was published in the Messenger Guide of the Young Catholic Messenger Teacher's Edition (No. 32, Volume 82, May 1966, pages 1, 7, 10, and 12). The second version, edited by Dorothy Kestel, appeared in the

Walters' address was that both modern psychology and Catholic theology proclaim the importance of the human person. Since she was speaking to teachers in particular, Walters used the kinds of situations that ordinary Catholic school teachers might encounter in the everyday performance of their duties as examples for her argument.

Near the start of her address, Walters explained that a proper understanding of the human person was important in many aspects of life and was even a necessary prerequisite in order to properly implement the decrees of the Second Vatican Council. Walters asserted that the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, or *Gaudiam et Spes*, had specifically taught about the importance of the human person when it proclaimed "'that the beginning, the subject, and the goal of all social institutions must be the human person." She also interpreted the same document's statement that "'all things on earth should be related to man as their center and crown'" to mean that "the person …is at the center of all human problems; it is at the level of the person that we can enter into dialogue with others, both in and outside the Church."

Walters believed that a variety of human relationships would be better improved if people had a better understanding "of the growing body of psychological research which throws light on the threats to the attainment of full personhood."[57] For example, Walters explained that when a school principal possesses an authoritarian personality, by which she meant a personality that "is characterized by a tendency to condemn, reject, and punish people who are different in any way from those abiding by conventional norms," the entire educational institution is adversely affected. She claimed that under an authoritarian principal, those teachers that have "only a slight tendency to authoritarianism themselves may become so anxious about conformity that they bring into their relations with the children and other teachers judgmental attitudes which work against

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National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin Curriculum for Renewal (Vol. 63, No. 1, August 1966, 367-375)) as part of the "Report of the Proceedings and Addresses at the Sixty-Third Annual Conventional of the National Catholic Educational Association, Chicago, Illinois, April 11-14, 1966."
[57] Kestel ed., Bulletin. Walters, "Importance of the Person," 368.

wholesome, interpersonal relations."[58] Walters also argued that when school teachers are sufficiently aware of current psychological theories of social conformity, cognitive dissonance, and "destructive obedience," they are better able to form students into mature persons who respect themselves enough to acquire "the inner courage to accept the onerous burden" of their own freedom and responsibility.[59]

Walters maintained that Catholic school teachers can only hope to "convey to children a sense of the dignity of the person" when they are already aware of their own personhood. She argued that an individual that is entirely "defined by a role rather than as a person will be seen as an object." She proposed that the individual Catholic school teacher "can maintain her sense of being a person and prevent herself from slipping into the role of functionary if she will become immersed in the conciliar documents and in the biblical theology from which the contemporary emphasis on the person has emerged." Walters also stressed her firm belief that "within the whole Church we are moving away from an overemphasis on the juridical aspects of the Christian life into a simple and more profoundly scriptural emphasis upon the person and personal encounter with God."[60]

From Walters' perspective, the Christian understanding of the human person proclaimed within the documents of the Second Vatican Council was the proper balance between collectivist notions of the common good and pure individualism. She saw this understanding of the person as valuable for modern psychology as well as for the Church and the culture. She argued that when we overlook the fact that "there can be no common good unless there is a society composed of persons, we may sacrifice persons by allowing them to be absorbed into an undifferentiated mass of collective energy."[61] She explained that the temptation to collectivism could corrupt multiple aspects of human life, noting that "psychological methods not directly unethical can be used for

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[58] Ibid., 368.
[59] Ibid., 368-369.
[60] Ibid., 370.
[61] Ibid.

evil as well as good ends if one is guided by an exaggerated esteem for collectivity." As an example, Walters noted that many of the psychologists that work for the Soviet Union "employ the same methods of group dynamics as are common in the United States; and the pressure of the group is brought to bear on all age levels, even in the nursery school period, to bring a child who deviates from group consensus into line."[62]

Walters interpreted modern individualism in the Western hemisphere as making an opposite mistake from that of Soviet collectivism because individualism ignores the truth that "persons become fully human only as members of a social group."[63] Although she recognized that there was scientific value in studying statistical differences between children, she expressed concern that defining children according to their place on a statistical chart "can reveal nothing to us of the meaning of the whole person." She argued that this practice of constantly comparing each individual child to a statistical model of children "is based on a statistical concept of man, and the child who is viewed only as he compares with others on a statistical curve of distribution is not seen as a person."[64]

Sister Annette Walters made the human person the central focus of her psychology from the beginning of her academic career until the end. Although there were different nuances in her approach in her various presentations of her psychology, her basic focus on the wholeness of the person was a consistent theme throughout all of her psychological work. Yet this is seen most clearly in her major work, *Persons and Personality* (1953), the textbook in psychology that wrote in partnership with another Sister of St. Joseph Carondelet, Sister Mary L. O'Hara.

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[62] Ibid. 371. Walters concluded her example of Soviet Russia by explaining that "The Soviet concern with the psychology of the child is focused on manipulating his milieu in such a way that he will turn out to be a thoroughly indoctrinated member of the Soviet collectivity rather than a person with the freedom to choose alternative beliefs and ways of acting."

[63] Ibid., 370.

[64] Ibid. 371.

The Idea of the Book

After Walters's death in 1978, Sister Mary L. O'Hara allowed select passages from a few of her personal letters from Annette Walters to be published in a memorial newsletter at the College of St. Catherine. In the first of those letters, written in January of 1948, Walters indicated that she was working on a project that sought "to pull together and to show the interrelatedness of scientific (including clinical) and philosophical psych., and to point out at every point in which practical applications are to be drawn, the necessity of viewing human beings in the light of faith." While insisting that her idea had genuine merit, Walters expressed uncertainty regarding her own ability to turn her project into a real book, indicating that she was currently imagining it only as "materials for my own students."[65]

As the letter continued, Walters remarked "we shall be doing a service to St. Thomas & to the Church if we try, honesty, to sort out what is perennial in his work… from what is [sic] ephemeral."[66] Shortly thereafter, Walters noted that a short passage from the *Summa Theologica* "certainly contains a theological truth that needs to be woven in" to her project.[67] Walters also complained that she understood "the scientific and clinical material so much better than the philosophical and theological" and that everything that she had "written so far falls far short of integration." And, by the end of the letter, Walters was suggesting openly that O'Hara "might want to collaborate with me in writing the book" and that their differences in training and approach would allow each of them to supplement the work of the other.[68]

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[65] Sister Annette at Work: Some Letters to Sister Mary L. O'Hara. (College of St. Catherine, Spring 1978) 12
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid. The passage that Walters cited was "Summa Theologica, Prima Secunda [sic], Ques. 89, Art. 6. As O'Hara noted in the article that accompanied the letter, it "concerns the development of a moral sense in children… whether or not a child could commit venial sins before baptism." Ibid., 13.
[68] Ibid., 12.

When it was completed, the product of their collaboration, *Persons and Personality: An Introduction to Psychology* (1953), was dedicated to "Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom" and consisted of a short preface, followed by nine parts among which twenty-four chapters were distributed. The first part, "Nature, Scope, and Methods of Psychology," contained two introductory chapters, of which the first was "The Nature and Scope of Psychology," and the second was "Methods of Psychology."

The Personalist Approach to Modern Psychology

In the preface to *Persons and Personality*, Walters and O'Hara explained that the book that had resulted from their collaboration was "partisan in its approach to psychology" because its two objectives were, first, "to present the data of scientific psychology in such a way that the person rather than isolated mental functions is the center of interest" and "to relate scientific psychology wherever feasible to relevant theological and philosophical considerations." The preface also stated that the psychology found throughout the rest of the work "grows out of several distinct but related disciplines- natural science, social science, the humanities, and theology" and attempts to integrate and transcend them. Finally, Walters and O'Hara stressed that the text was intended for Christian students who are sometimes confused by "the seeming disharmony between psychological science and Christian principles." [69]

In the first chapter of *Persons and Personality,* "The Nature and Scope of Psychology," Walters and O'Hara defined modern psychology as "the systematic, scientific study of human beings."[70] They suggested that their readers look around at the people that they know and think about "*why* these people behave as they do, feel as they do, and think as they do."[71] They pointed out that while it is possible to "easily observe *what* people do, you cannot observe *why* they do

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[69] Persons and Personality, vii.
[70] Ibid., 3.
[71] Ibid. Emphasis in original.

it."[72] Furthermore, they explained that someone else is not necessarily understood just because "you can indirectly control some of his responses by manipulating his environment." Finally, Walters and O'Hara insisted that by "studying psychology you will learn the general principles that govern the behavior of people in general," even as they noted that "an inescapable fact of everyday experience is that all people differ."[73]

Walters and O'Hara expressed their desire for "the Thomistic notion of psychology as the study of man" to "permeate this book." They noted that St. Thomas Aquinas had taught that "*man*, the composite of body and soul, rather than *soul*" ought to be "the proper subject matter of psychology." Furthermore, they used traditional Thomist vocabulary mixed with modern terminology to construct a framework that distinguished between their three central concepts of person, the personality, and character. They defined person as "the very substance of man, the subject of his actions, that is, what is unchangeable in him."[74] In contrast, they explained that their own usage of the personality "primarily refers not the substance, but to the 'accidents' of man." In other words, Walters and O'Hara used the more modern concept of the personality to indicate "the sum total of all potentialities which have become actual" in the individual person. Yet they also used the traditional Thomist concept of accident, which for them referred to "that which cannot exist except in another being." Finally, Walters and O'Hara defined the traditional concept of character as "the aggregate of traits, mental and moral, comprising the personality as evaluated by a particular set of standards."[75]

The authors of *Persons and Personality* also viewed modern psychology in a Thomist framework in the sense that they understood it as organically related to many other aspects of human life. For example, they explained that several other academic disciplines study human beings, that many other occupations that utilize modern psychology, and that there are various

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[72] Ibid. Emphasis in original.
[73] Ibid., 4.
[74] Ibid., 6.
[75] Ibid.

subdivisions of modern psychology.[76] They stressed that even though modern science "deals with *means*, not ends" there are many important ethical considerations that modern scientists, including psychologists, ought to be aware of when they apply their research to the real world.

Walters and O'Hara, like Fulton Sheen, interpreted the creation of the nuclear bomb as a moral failure of modern scientists even while they asserted that its creation had led scientists to realize "that they could not be indifferent to… social consequences [of their research] nor could they comfortably dodge the question of their own moral responsibility." Yet, in contrast to Fulton Sheen's harsh diatribes against the philosophical overreach of scientists, and while acknowledging that modern scientists are often untrained in philosophy, Walters and O'Hara insisted that the modern scientist "is also a human being, living in close association with other human beings…has certain rights which other men are bound to respect, and other men have rights which he is bound to respect."[77] In other words, they avoided Sheen's mistake of treating the metaphysical philosopher and the modern psychologist as if they were two completely different kinds of entities whose areas of expertise were fundamentally distinct.[78] Walters and O'Hara recognized that even though the modern psychologist and the neo-Thomist philosopher have different kinds of academic training and often have dramatically different levels of competence in those disciplines in which they are not specialists, they are nevertheless both persons existing in the world.[79]

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[76] Walters and O'Hara mentioned that anthropology, cultural anthropology, sociology, psychiatry, biological sciences, and the humanities all study human beings. They noted that law, medicine, nursing, social work, teaching, business and industry, and the military all utilize psychological knowledge. And they explained that modern psychology was commonly divided into general, experimental, developmental, child, comparative, differential, social, abnormal, clinical, physiological, theoretical, applied forms of psycholoy.

[77] Ibid., 12.

[78] In Sheen's account, of course, the metaphysical philosopher was the arbiter of both disciplines and could provide explanations for the discipline of the modern psychologist (and even the modern physicist) via a metaphysical system that modern scientists were not allowed to answer.

[79] Although there is a genuine contrast between this position and that of Sheen, it must also be acknowledged that Sheen's chief problem was that he believed that modern scientists often portrayed their personal views on metaphysical subjects as if these views were the objective conclusions of their

In "Methods of Psychology," the second chapter of *Persons and Personality*, Walters and

O'Hara surveyed the basic patterns of psychological research. They explained the scientific

method, the importance of controlled scientific experiments, and the usefulness of field studies in

those cases where independent variables cannot be properly isolated.[80] They also noted that there

can be genuine value in examining biographies and autobiographies, in reading clinical case

studies, in distributing questionnaires, and in engaging in statistical analysis when possible.[81]

Finally, they argued that there are advantages and disadvantages to both objective and subjective

forms of observation, and they suggested that one method could be used to supplement the other.

Yet they were also somewhat critical about the value of personal introspection on the grounds

that it is "inaccessible to verification by and another person, and in this sense does not meet one

of the canons of scientific method."[82] For Walters and O'Hara, therefore, the personalist approach

to modern psychology entailed the recognition of the genuine value of the scientific method, even

if it meant admitting that a traditional Thomist (as well as early modern psychological) method of

inquiry, such as introspection, was of relatively limited value.

Applying Catholic Personalist and Neo-Thomist Thought to Psychology

The second part of *Persons and Personality*, "Constitutional, Environmental, and

Personal Factors that Influence Psychological Development," considered those factors that affect

the development of the human person, such as heredity, environment, family, and the wider

cultural milieu. Within these larger themes, smaller questions were raised, including the

importance of social and emotional development, the nature of human freedom, and the role that

the wider culture has on the development of children. The treatment of Walters and O'Hara

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discipline rather than merely their own pre-existing metaphysical positions projected back upon their data.

[80] Ibid., 22-30. They also explained that good field studies decide on the conditions of their study beforehand and so make it possible to observe a real life situation with certain procedures.

[81] Ibid., 31-36.

[82] Ibid., 41.

regarding human freedom was, unsurprisingly, given from a Catholic perspective; while they

acknowledged the importance of a healthy environment, they also insisted that each human

person is unique and "is never wholly determined by heredity and environment, but that to some

extent he always remains free."[83]

Walters and O'Hara did not make this judgement on the basis of any concrete scientific

data, however, for they instead invoked the witness of those "great novelists and playwrights

throughout the ages, and works of art that have endured" that had proclaimed "the human struggle

as the struggle of good and evil with the soul of man, the final outcome which depends upon his

own free choice."[84] In other words, the warrant that they used in order to make this claim about

human freedom was not based in the neo-Thomist philosophical propositions, scientific data, or

even the Catholic theological tradition. Instead, they argued for the existence of human freedom

based on the testimony of art and the humanities about human beings. While this kind of an

argument might seem inadmissible in a purely scientific form of modern psychology, it was very

much in keeping with the more humanistic form of modern psychology that Walters consistently

argued should hold priority within the wider field.

Walters' and O'Hara's examination of the biological aspects of the human person in the

third part, "The Human Organism," was a standard presentation of anatomy with the possible

exception of one page at the end of chapter six where they mentioned the four internal senses of

traditional Thomism: "(1) the common sense, (2) imagination, (3) the memory, and (4) the

estimative sense (in animals) or cogitative power (in human beings)."[85] In contrast, in the

"Dynamics of Human Adjustment," the fourth part of their book, they considered the concept of

adjustment from a Christian perspective even as it also addresses some of the classical

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83 Ibid., 93.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid., 151. The biological discussion focuses on the sense receptors, the muscles, and the nervous
system, since these are the areas that relate to perception, reflex action, and intellectual activity.

psychological theories on emotions, unconscious motivation, and compensation. According to Walters and O'Hara,

> The problem of human adjustment is a focal point toward which philosophy, theology, and science converge. What constitutes a good adjustment is a question for theology and philosophy. How it is achieved is a question for philosophy, for theology, and for science. Science in itself has no resources for determining what "ought" to be or what "should" be; it can only tell us what is or what probably will be under certain given observable conditions. To a limited extent only can science tell us how a good adjustment can be achieved since the ends and the means in human adjustment are intimately related.[86]

Walters and O'Hara argued that the Christian person must "use all of the circumstances of his life, the pleasant and the unpleasant, acceptance or rejection, to foster his spiritual growth rather than to hinder it."[87] They claimed that "supreme maladjustment in the supernatural life is sin," and defined "sin" as "a rejection of God for something that is less than God."[88] Despite their own focus on modern psychology, they acknowledged "that that the most important thing to know is the state of man's [sic] interior life, and not his external disposition or temperament or even his superficial motivation."[89]

In their subsequent discussion of the "interior life," Walters and O'Hara relied heavily upon one of the chief expositors of traditional neo-Thomist thought in the mid-twentieth century, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1877-1964), who had asserted in one of his spiritual classics that when a person "'is fundamentally egotistical, his intimate conversation with himself is inspired by sensuality or pride.'"[90] He went on to explain that this egoist's love of self "'makes him wish to make himself the center of everything, to draw everything to himself, both persons and things.'" Yet all is not lost, argued Garrigou-Lagrange, for even when a person "'who is not

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[86] Ibid., 214.
[87] Ibid., 216.
[88] Ibid., 224.
[89] Ibid., 224.
[90] Ibid., 225. Quotation originally from Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life* (St. Louis, B. Herder Book. Co., 1947), 40-41.

in a state of grace begins to seek goodness,'" his inner monologue changes to become something more noble. As a result, Garrigou-Lagrange concludes, if he starts "to love himself in a holy manner, not for himself but for God" then "he begins to understand that he must pardon his enemies and love them, and to wish eternal life for them as he does for himself.'"[91]

For Walters and O'Hara, as well as Garrigou-Lagrange, the interior life ultimately meant a spiritual life of prayer or "'an elevation and a transformation of the intimate conversation that everyone has with himself as soon as it tends to become a conversation with God.'"[92] Walters and O'Hara saw prayer as central to the purpose of human existence and explained that a person who has become immersed in the habit of prayer "progressively knows himself and God."[93] Although they affirmed the Thomist concept of a positive habit as a "virtue," they argued that the attempts of modern psychologists to help those with disturbed personalities "to develop wholesome mental attitudes rather than to stress acquisition of certain routine acts is, in some respects, similar to the traditional notion of the way in which virtue is acquired."[94] In essence, they interpreted the Thomist use of "habit" to include what modern psychologists distinguished as mental attitude and habit as well as "the concept of *freedom* in making one's own personality because of the capacity for making *free choices*."[95]

The fifth part of *Persons and Personality*, "Human Activity and Adjustment," provided an overview of attention, perception, memory, learning, and imagination. In an early section on "Mental Hygiene, Walters and O'Hara cited Thomas Verner Moore in *The Nature and Treatment of Mental Disorders* (1944) for his claim that "'mental difficulties'" should be classified "'according to the degree to which they involve a disorder of the whole mind and the eventual disintegration of the personality' under four headings in a roughly descending order of

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[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid. This is the final quotation of Garrigou-Lagrange on this page.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., 233.
[95] Ibid. Emphasis in original.

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severity."[96] Walters and O'Hara list the four headings as: "(1) psychoses, (2) psychoneuroses, (3) constitutional psychopathic states, and (4) behavior problems."[97]

Walters and O'Hara followed this order of classification in discussing several well-known mental disorders, such as psychopathy, multiple personality disorder, and childhood functional psychoses.[98] They also considered various psychoneuroses, such as hypochondriasis, neurasthenia, psychasthenia, and hysteria.[99] As one aspect of the hysteria neuroses, Walters and O'Hara looked at the common accusation that many apparently miraculous events are simply manifestations of hysteria. For example, they addressed the common charge that "all miraculous cures, such as those occurring at Lourdes or the Shrine of Ste. Anne de Beaupré, are in reality hysterical cures brought about by 'suggestion.'"[100] They dismissed this possibility, however, on the grounds that suggestion does not usually cure hysterical symptoms because that requires the transformation "of wrong attitudes that have been built up over a long period of time." Walters and O'Hara suggested that if the water of Lourdes manages to change a person's "whole outlook on life" then it has managed to work "an even greater miracle than the cure of the physical condition." Their conclusion, however, was that since all "authentic miraculous cures are permanent" and "the dossiers signed by physicians at Lourdes often report cures of ailments which are ostensibly organic, and which, so far as we know, have never been dissipated by psychotherapy or suggestion," then the cures that originate at Lourdes, at least, are not properly viewed as hysterical cures.[101]

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[96] Ibid. Thomas V. Moore, *The Nature and Treatment of Mental Disorders*, 4.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid., 381-382. These include social withdrawal, emotional rigidity, and usual attention to detail.

[99] Ibid, 366-373. Hypochodriasis "is characterized by an abnormal concern over one's health" (373). Neurasthenia "is a condition of extreme mental and physical fatigue" (373). Psychasthenia (often identified with "scruples") is an obsession with a powerful idea, often of harming someone, which the person may not wish to do but cannot seem to stop thinking about. (371). Hysteria is the transformation of "mental conflicts into physical symptoms" (367).

[100] Ibid., 368.

[101] Ibid. In truth, this is more of an obvious implication of all their statements on the matter rather than an explicit conclusion because, technically, they leave their obvious conviction about the matter unarticulated.

While Walters and O'Hara acknowledged that certain "extraordinary spiritual gifts, such as the stigmata," seem to have similarities to "physical symptoms which have an hysterical origin," they followed this admission with the explanation that there are only superficial resemblances between a symptom of an hysterical disorder and an extraordinary spiritual gift, insisting that the entire context, including the motivation of the person who seems to be experiencing the phenomenon, has to be considered.[102] Relying again upon the works of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, Walters and O'Hara explained that theologians use particular criteria for assessing the difference between a saint and a hysterical person that help to reveal the nature of the phenomenon, such as the stark contrasts "(1) on the part of the subject; (2) on the part of the phenomena; (3) on the part of the effects."[103]

Using these criteria to assess people with hysterical symptoms, Walters and O'Hara noted that they are "highly impressionable and suggestable, guided by emotion and feeling rather than intellectually acceptable principles" and that the relevant "symptoms are a means of retreating from reality" rather than engaging with it.[104] In additon, they explained that the hysterical people are frequently "motivated by a 'prudent morality,' a morality based not upon moral principles but upon expediency," meaning that the average hysterical person "is predominantly selfish and his criterion of what is good or bad is determined by what he 'can get out of it.'"[105]

Walters and O'Hara contrasted this with the life of a "saint (who is the subject of mystical phenomenon)," is usually "exceptionally stable; his emotions are controlled and directed by his intelligence."[106] They maintained that rather seeking to escape from reality, such a figure "sacrifices everything he is and has to the attainment or reality." Furthermore, they argued that the saint with such spiritual gifts "rejoices in suffering not because he is insensitive to it or because he is masochistic, but because he sees in suffering borne in union with Christ the means

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[102] Ibid., 369.
[103] Ibid., 369.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., 370
[106] Ibid., 369.

for becoming an 'other Christ' and thus of attaining his eternal destiny."[107] They noted also that

the saint "shows a steady growth in disinterestedness and selfishness."[108]

Although Walters and O'Hara recognized that the ecstatic behavior that both saints and

hysterics sometimes practice can appear to be a similar kind of activity, they claimed that they are

very different things in reality. Citing Garrigou-Lagrange yet again, they explained that

> 'There is absolutely no relation between so-called hysterical ecstasy and the
> ecstasy, for example, of Bernadette during the apparitions of Lourdes. In a real
> ecstasy there is no morbid excitation, no strange agitation, no entirely physical
> delectation, followed by depression. Ecstasy is the movement of the whole being,
> both body and soul, toward the divine object present in the imagination or
> intellect. Ecstasy ends in the calm return to the natural state, with simple regret
> over the disappearance of the celestial vision and the wholly spiritual joy that it
> gave.'

Walters and O'Hara ended their discussion on the relationship (or lack thereof) between

hysteria and spiritual gifts with a reminder that "Pope Benedict XIV (1675-1758) in his *De*

Servorum Dei Beatificatione (1749) laid down the basic principle that we must not call

miraculous what can be explained by natural forces" and asserted that his position remained "in

harmony with present-day thinking on psycho-somatic medicine."[109]

In part six, "Stages of Growth and Development," part seven, "Personality and Social

Psychology," and part eight "Maturity and Old Age," Walters and O'Hara traced the stages of

growth of the human person from infancy to old age. As they had throughout the rest of *Persons*

and Personality, Walters and O'Hara sought to be faithful to the scientific elements of modern

psychology while maintaining a traditional Catholic theological perspective in which the human

person was the focus of attention. When they addressed more controversial subjects, like the ideas

of Sigmund Freud or the school of behaviorism, they consistently sought to recognize those

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[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid., 370.

[109] Ibid.

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aspects of the particular theory they accepted while also acknowledging those elements in which

they were in disagreement. In the case of Freud, for example, Walters and O'Hara recognized that

in his concept of unconscious motivation Freud had discovered "a most significant psychological

principle."[110] They also credited Freud with a great insight in distinguishing between manifest

and latent content in dreams.[111] Yet, when they turned to the subject of Freudian terminology,

such as mechanisms of adjustment like compensation, projection, and regression, they prefaced

their explanation of these mechanisms with the insistence that even though they were "using

terms taken from psychoanalysis, we are not accepting the Freudian theory of mental life."[112]

Later, in a section where they offered theological critiques of different philosophical systems,

Walters and O'Hara explained that

> it is not the scientific findings nor the clinical observations of psychoanalysts to
> which the Christian takes exception. It is the philosophical assumptions about the
> reality of God, the nature of man, and the nature of truth to which the Christian
> objects. For Freud, God is only a projection of man's mind: God does not create
> man; man creates God. In a sense, the Freudian and the Christian view of life
> take their starting points at opposite poles: the Freudian looks from the earth
> upward, and sees reflected in the heavens the image of the earth. The Christian
> looks from heaven downward and sees heaven reflected upon the earth. To the
> Freudian, only the material world exists, and all of man's aspirations, be they
> social, artistic, scientific or religious, are projections or sublimations of his
> biological instincts. The basic reality is matter; the 'spiritual' aspirations and
> activities of man are "caused" or, at least, proceed from his animal drives. The
> Christian, on the other hand, sees God as the primary reality- God, Who is pure
> spirit. The created world, including minerals, plants, animals, and men, is
> essentially "good" in every respect since it reflects or mirrors the attributes of
> God. Man's aspirations and cravings- his longings for goodness, for truth, and for
> beauty- are not sublimations of biological instincts. They are spiritual
> characteristics in which man mirrors the perfections of God, in Whose image he
> has been made. Man's literary and artistic creations, his scientific and practical
> achievements, even his procreation of other human beings, are all participations
> in the creative work of God. In the Christian scheme of things, the lower is

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[110] Ibid., 199.

[111] Ibid., 530. "The *manifest* content, according to Freud, is the obvious content of the dream, that is, people, animals, and rivers as the dreamer actually dreams and reports them. The *latent* content, on the other hand, is not obvious but is indirectly expressed in the manifest content. The latent content consists of the unconscious desires which find an indirect expression through being clothed in symbols which disguise their real meaning."

[112] Ibid., 207.

interpreted and understood in terms of the higher. In the Freudian scheme, the higher is explained in terms of the lower.[113]

The Telos of <u>Persons and Personality</u>

In the twenty-third chapter of *Persons and Personality*, "Trends and Viewpoints in Psychology Today," which was also the first chapter of the ninth and final section, "Theoretical Framework of Psychology," Walters and O'Hara traced the history of modern psychological thought from the laboratory of Wilhem Wundt, to William James, to their own present circumstances, and also looked at many of the common viewpoints within modern psychology from a Catholic perspective. They argued that every school of modern psychology had "imparted something of positive value to psychology as a science," as well "as a profession." For example, they noted that behaviorism had contributed an "emphasis on habit formation and upon objective observation" that "led naturally to the study of children." They also explained that the behaviorists' "denial of instinct and of heredity resulted in a new interest in manipulating the environment so as to foster psychological growth."[114]

In the final chapter of *Persons and Personality*, "Science, Philosophy, and Theology," Walters and O'Hara addressed the traditional Thomist concerns with the relationship between modern science, psychology, philosophy, and theology. They affirmed the neo-Thomist claim that "philosophy and theology are even more properly called 'science' than are the natural sciences, for the natural sciences cannot penetrate to the *essences* of things."[115] Furthermore, they argued that the knowledge through causes that modern science can achieve is necessarily accidental, in the Scholastic sense of the term, and that the modern scientific method is simply unable to attain to ultimate truth. They also recited the standard neo-Thomist clarification that the natural sciences "deal with proximate causes and with specialized experience" and affirmed that

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[113] Ibid., 640.
[114] Ibid., 638.
[115] Ibid., 645.

"knowledge of scientific psychology alone would give a very inadequate and limited understanding of human nature."[116]

At the same time, Walters and O'Hara made a very important Thomist argument about the relationship of modern science, philosophy, and theology. They explained that truth can be obtained through revelation, reason or science, that there is a hierarchy of truths, and that "there can never be any real conflict between the truths derived from any of these three sources."[117] They argued that if "a scientific finding seems to be in conflict with a truth of revelation or reason, one must carefully review the scientific generalization."[118] Yet they also acknowledged that "what a person accepts as revelation may not be revelation" and what appear to be true premises of reasoning may really be false premises.[119] Furthermore, they argued that it is detrimental to their spiritual and intellectual development" when students attempt to avoid conflicts between truths through compartmentalization.[120]

In answer to this problem, Walters and O'Hara reflected on the way that different forms of human knowledge relate to each other and affect the human person that possesses them. They explained that natural human knowledge, "whether of agriculture, philosophy, or psychology," has the potential to enrich the life of the individual person toward true "'fullness of life.'"[121] Yet they also admitted that a person could "know the facts and principles of psychology without necessarily being improved by such knowledge."[122] Their point was that every form of knowledge that human beings possess only becomes understanding in relation to other kinds of knowledge. They argued that if the world "was only a world of time and if everything ended with death," then a purely natural view of the world would be the correct one.

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[116] Ibid., 651.
[117] Ibid., 646.
[118] Ibid., 654.
[119] Ibid., 653.
[120] Ibid., 654.
[121] Ibid., 656.
[122] Ibid., 655. Although they did not mention it in this context it is, of course, also true that a person could know all of the facts of theology and philosophy and not be improved by that knowledge, either.

Walters and O'Hara explained, however, that the Christian should understand that "there is a supernatural life- a life illuminated by the gifts of the Holy Ghost."[123] They maintained that "since man has a spiritual soul and is destined for eternal life, his understanding of the temporal world must go beyond what he can know by his own unaided reason." They argued that those who have the proper grounding in traditional theology have the power "to view this knowledge in light of all eternity" and beyond the realm of the merely natural.[124]

Walters and O'Hara believed that to the extent that science examines "'the natural man'" it is unable to demonstrate the way that human nature "is refined and elevated by supernatural grace." Yet they argued that this was because "the natural man is a pure abstraction" and what real people actually deal with is concrete human persons- "with the whole man, body and soul." Furthermore, they asserted that the Christian person must seek to know human beings, not only though science and philosophy, but "must also know theology and understand the working of grace in the human soul." Finally, they proclaimed that "the freedom of the human will and the transcendent effect of supernatural grace… must permeate his scientific and clinical understanding of man" so that it would be "deep enough to meet the practical problems of everyday life in human society in such a way as to glorify God."[125]

Recognizing Women as Persons

Like all of the previous figures who have been considered, Sister Annette Walters was well-acquainted with the neo-Thomist philosophical and theological tradition, was a teacher of students, and was an author of books. Like Sheen, Brennan, and Moore, Walters taught courses to undergraduate students at a Catholic college. Like Brennan, Moore, and White, Walters was a consecrated religious. Like Brennan and Moore, Walters had a Ph.D. in psychology, engaged in psychological research, and authored textbooks in psychology. Like White, Walters was a convert

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[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., 655.
[125] Ibid., 656.

to Roman Catholicism in late adolescence and had some personal and intellectual confrontations with Church authorities in late adulthood. Like Sheen, Walters hosted a television program, had friendships with some noteworthy people, and had a relatively brief period of expanded ecclesial authority that ended with bitter feelings and recriminations.

These similarities are analogies, not equivalencies. Walters had many experiences that were similar to the other four figures but her experiences were not identical to their experiences. For example, when Annette Walters formally embraced the Catholic faith, she may or may not have done so for the same kinds of reasons that Victor White converted. White's father had been a priest of the Church of England who was known for his high church practices and there are indications that White's conversion to Catholicism was at least partly a response to his father's ministry. Although Lutheranism may have been the dominant form of religion in Minnesota during that period, it was not an established Church in the same way that the Church of England is supported by the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Walters' parents seemed to have encouraged her to find a religious tradition that was right for her but they do not seem to have played an active role in her decision to become Roman Catholic or to enter religious life. In other words, even though Walters and White were theoretically engaged in the same kind of activity, we have no way of knowing for certain how similar the meaning was to them.

There is, of course, one way that Sister Annette Walters was very different than all of the other figures considered in this study. Sister Annette Walters was both a woman and a "woman religious." Although it would be reductive to suggest that Walters' feminine experience entirely explains her entire theological approach to modern psychology, the role that her gender played in her approach should also not be overlooked or underestimated. Walters' experience within the Catholic Church of the mid-twentieth century was very different than their experience. They were men in an ecclesial institution that was run by other men. All of them were ordained priests and were theoretically capable of being elevated to the hierarchy of the Church or even being elected pope. Sheen eventually became a titular archbishop, Moore served as the prior of the Benedictine

community that he helped to found in Washington, D.C., and White very nearly became the master of studies for his Dominican community at Oxford. Sister Annette Walters may have been the executive director of the Sisters Formation Conference, and may even have been among the most influential woman in the Church for a brief period, but her voice within the Catholic Church was never allowed to have the same kind of authority as an ordained clergyman because she was never considered a part of the Catholic Church's Magisterium. As Walters herself noted on several occasions in different contexts, the Second Vatican Council had determined that all non-ordained religious were part of the laity rather than a part of a separate category of "religious" between the laity and the ordained members of the Church hierarchy.[126]

As a Ph.D. in experimental psychology, however, Sister Annette Walters could speak on equal terms, with at least an equal level of authority, as any other professor of the science of modern psychology. As her prestige grew, Walters found that her psychological expertise was taken seriously within the wider world, within academic circles, and even within the Catholic Church itself. As a result, Walters was able to use her mastery of modern psychology to improve the lives of both women religious and ordinary laywomen. Her method, as always, was to highlight the fact that their status as human persons was equally true in terms of both modern psychology and Catholic theology and to suggest various ways that their personhood could be concretely realized and supported. Although Walters was clearly very concerned about the way that the membership of the Church hierarchy treated women, she also frequently targeted the treatment that women received from each other and, in particular, the kind of treatment that the rank and file of women religious received from their religious superiors.

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[126] Sister Annette Walters, "Religious Life Yesterday and Tomorrow," *New Catholic World* (March 1972, Vol. 215, 74-77), 76.

The Benefits of Modern Psychology and Theology to Women

Walters' special focus on women was already apparent in her early article on the "First Course in Psychology: The Psychology of Persons." Walters believed that knowledge of modern psychology could be of great help to women if it was taught to them in the proper way. Although Walters acknowledged with approval that the "studies of Thorndike, Terman, and others" had demonstrated that men and women are equal in intelligence, she also argued that this did not mean that men and women were exactly the same.[127]

Walters believed that women often have different educational needs and interests than men. She observed that despite the many freedoms that American women had managed to obtain for themselves in the relatively recent past they had not, according to "the few research studies at our disposal and the accumulating popular literature on the subject" achieved an equivalent happiness.[128] Walters cited both popular and academic literature, such as an article by Margaret Mead on "What Women Want" and an article by R.G. Foster, to provide evidence of the general dissatisfaction of modern women, even educated modern women.

Since Walters was a teacher at a woman's college, she was particularly concerned with educated women. She noticed that women's educational levels did not seem to improve their happiness or give them a greater ability to cope with the problems that they encountered in their daily lives. She pointed out that educated women mentioned problems in categories such as "personality, finances, health, husband-wife, relations with associates, recreation, housekeeping, relations with relatives, parent-child, crisis, in-law, sex, religion, vocation, and education."[129]

Walters believed that modern psychology had the ability to help women with many of these issues. She noted that at least one study suggested that "women tend, even in our culture, to be more interested than men in 'administrative occupations young, helpless, and distressed.'" Walters concluded from this apparent desire of women to nurture others that the knowledge of the

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[127] Watlers, "First Course in Psychology," 190.
[128] Ibid., 190.
[129] Ibid., 191.

human personality that the subject of modern psychology provides could be useful to both women who wanted to be homemakers and those who wanted careers.[130]   In essence, Walters seems to be arguing that sometimes the greatest benefit that psychology can give to a woman is to allow her to help someone else.[131]

If Walter's early arguments about the benefits of modern psychology for women sometimes stressed that it allowed them to be useful for others, many years later she would instead focus upon the value that psychology could have for women themselves. In her 1966 address on "The Importance of the Person," Walters argued that it is particularly psychologically important for women to be recognized as persons and that modern psychology has helped us to recognize this. In one sense, however, Walter's reasoning was the same as it had been in her early argument, for one of the reasons she gave for the need to recognize women as persons was that "a teacher cannot convey a sense of personhood to a child if she herself is not treated as a person and is not deeply aware of her dignity as a person."[132]

Walters framed the issue of women's personhood in terms of women's roles in society. She was concerned that many women's "pre-chosen roles, no matter how noble," act to obscure the individual woman's personhood. She argued that even when a woman willingly takes on roles such as "spiritual mother" or "heart of the house" these roles simply are not "absolute" in the same sense that the woman's personhood is necessarily absolute. For Walters, these roles are fundamentally dependent upon the relationship that the woman has with another person or location, such as a child that must be parented or the house of which one is to be the heart.[133] In other words, they are things that can pass away without her consent. If they are the woman's sole

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[130] Ibid.

[131] It should be noted here both that I am interpreting Walter's observation and that her piece on "The First Course in Psychology: The Psychology of Persons" was written in 1947. Based on her other speeches and writings, it seems fairly certain that Walters would have made the same point somewhat differently if she had been writing it at a later period. It is, for example, easy to imagine her arguing emphatically something like "sometimes the greatest benefit that a *person* can receive from modern psychology comes from helping another *person*."

[132] Walters, "Importance of the Person," 373.

[133] Ibid., 373.

identity, then she will be robbed of her very identity. Yet, if her identity is bound up instead within her personhood, then she can never be robbed of it.

In this context, Walters noted that Pope Pius XII's own "sublime conception of the role of women as 'spiritual mothers'" was not intended to "limit the meaning of woman to her role in society and in the Church." Walters' interpreted the pope to be teaching to those who believed "that the only place for the woman is in the home" that in fact "the home itself and the welfare of children and of the family are greatly influenced by social and economic conditions external to the home and that these influences could be bettered through the participation of women in civic affairs." In other words, she believed that the idea had been limited to the role of "spiritual mother" had been originally intended by the pope as a teaching about how women should "involve themselves actively in the improvement of social conditions."[134]

A few years later, in a 1972 piece for the *New Catholic World* entitled "Religious Life Yesterday and Tomorrow" in which Walters provided her own short narrative account of some aspects of the Sisters Formation Conference, Walters' was somewhat less understanding of the Church's view of women. Near the beginning of the article, Walters pointed out that while "[t]he *Official Catholic Directory* has listed in full the names of all priests in the U.S., down to the youngest recruit from the seminary," it only mentions religious sisters in anonymous groupings, "as '20 Sisters of St. Joseph' or '8 Sisters of Notre Dame." Walter's interpretation of this practice resonated with the emphasis that she consistently placed on the person within her psychology, for she proclaimed that according to the logic of the Directory, all of these ordained "men were 'persons;' the Sisters were 'personnel'- interchangeable, nameless, faceless."[135]

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[134] Ibid., 373.

[135] Sister Annette Walters, "Religious Life Yesterday and Tomorrow," *New Catholic World*, 74.

The Benefits of Modern Psychology and Theology to Women Religious

One of the places where Walters' belief that psychology could have a benefit for religious life is found in her contribution to the sixth volume of a series on "Religious Life in the World" (1966) that came out of a 1962 presentation at the Theological Institute for Local Superiors that the University of Notre Dame annually sponsored. For this volume, *Psychological Dimensions of the Religious Life* (1966), Walters provided a two-part article on "Psychological Aspects of Modern-Day Religious Life" that focused on the topic of stress and leadership among women religious.[136] This article was originally written as two talks delivered to local religious superiors and the concerns that it addressed, as well as the perspective that it took, reflected this purpose.[137]

In the opening talk Walters focused on the role that local religious superior takes on in order to act as "the spiritual mother who must be lovingly concerned with the mental and physical health of her Sisters and with their personal growth in spiritual perfection."[138] In her second talk, Walters addressed the place of the local religious superior "as a leader of the community- a leader who keeps the living tradition of the founder before the eyes of her Sisters, a leader responsible for the morale of the group and for helping her community to coordinate its apostolic efforts with the universal redemptive mission of the Church."[139]

In the first article, subtitled "Stress in the Lives of Sisters: Causes, Consequences, and Alleviation," Walters explained that there are many religious sisters who operate "as if stress were somehow a result and a sign of moral weakness" in those who experience it.[140] According to Walters, it was common for some sisters, even local religious superiors, to advise other sisters

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[136] Sister Annette Walters, C.SJ., "Psychological Aspects of Modern-day Religious Life" in *Psychological Dimensions of Religious Life* (Religious Life in the Modern World: Selections from the Theological Institute for Local Superiors, Volume VI) (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 137-172. Unlike the two male contributors to this volume, the surname of "Sister Annette, CSJ," the only female contributor, was not provided.

[137] The first part of this article appeared in the Spring, 1963 issue of the Sister Formation Bulletin. It has sometimes been suggested that when the second part of this article was published in the Sister Formation Bulletin, it was the final straw that led to Walters' removal as executive secretary.

[138] Ibid., 137.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid., 138.

that simply practicing greater trust in God and more faithful prayer would always solve such difficulties. Walters believed that this kind of advice often appeared to the sister who received it as "an implicit accusation that is an affront to her image of herself at a moment when she is already discouraged."[141]

One of Walter's major themes in these talks was the role that a proper understanding of modern psychology could play in shedding light on some of the problems religious sisters faced from their lives in community. Walters provided an anecdote from experimental psychology in which repeated and unpredictable stressful situations were imposed upon sheep. In this particular psychological experiment individual sheep initially received an electric shock after a consistent event. Later, however, the same sheep were shocked in ways that were not predictable, with the result that they gradually developed severe heart conditions and poor health.

Walters followed her explanation of this experiment with a few examples of stressful situations that religious sisters might face because of the inconsistency of their local religious superiors. For example, Walters noted that religious sisters who were assigned to answer the phone for the community were required to report the incoming calls to the religious superior. In an insight that may have been drawn from personal experience of community life, Walters remarked that religious sisters assigned to phone duty frequently feel like failures even when they seek to faithfully execute this duty to the best of their ability. According to Walters, if the busy religious superior might berate the sister for bothering her even if the phone call were deemed important and yet the same religious superior might criticize the same sister if she failed to report even an unimportant phone call.

In a second example of inconsistency within a religious community, Walters explained that the religious superior might treat the same action differently depending on minor circumstances that are unknown to the others sisters. She gave an example in which a religious superior frequently reminds the other sisters to attend wakes or funerals for people associated

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[141] Ibid.

with the community. Walters suggested that the usual practice was that one or two religious sisters would normally volunteer to attend and so represent the rest of the community. Yet there were also occasions in which multiple sisters knew the person and more than the usual amount of sisters would volunteer to go. According to Walters, sisters who were unaware that several others had already offered to go might be reprimanded for requesting to attend a funeral in such circumstances even though they might be praised and thanked in different circumstances. The clear implication of Walters' anecdote was that religious life lived under a religious superior who appears to arbitrarily change her reactions to the same kind of behavior without warning is an unpredictable stress that can lead to severe medical problems over time.

In the second part of the article, Walters focused on leadership in a religious community. Walters argued that even though the community as a whole has a mission, such as the performance of "certain works of mercy in the name of the Church," that does mean that it is permissible for "the individual Sister as a person to be submerged in the group."[142] Walters warned that "when an individual Sister loses her sense of being part of a great organism in the Church, her religious community, in which as an individual has an important role to play, her immersion in the group can lead to a diminishing of personality." Walters insisted that even the holiest sisters were in danger if the superior fails to "see them and deal with them as unique and personally value individuals- not just as more or less useful cogs in an apostolic machine."[143] In other words, if they were viewed in a purely mechanical fashion that failed to recognize their personhood, they could lose the desire for greater spiritual perfection that ought to be the underlying goal of all religious life.

Sister Annette Walters' conviction that all people need to recognize both their own personhood as well as that of other people is the central theme of her psychology. In her presentation of the spiritual lives of women religious, she suggests that there were aspects of

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[142] Ibid., 154.
[143] Ibid.

practice, if not theology, that could prove harmful to their spiritual lives. Ironically, Walters'

observations reveal that many of those consecrated women who might be imagined to be the most

faithful about conceiving the world in Thomist and Catholic metaphysical terms were commonly

treating one another like machines instead of like sisters. While this kind of attitude might be

acceptable, or at least consistent, with the naturalist metaphysical worldview, Walters' recognized

that it had no place among Catholic women religious.

Walters on Holiness and Mental Health

Annette Walters was a woman religious who was heavily involved in the wider world of

women religious. She was also a doctor of experimental psychology, recognized as an expert in

mental health and indirectly in mental illness. Unsurprisingly, Catholic groups sometimes asked

Walters to address the relationship between the spiritual life and mental health. In these

instances, Walters sought to allay common fears about the practice of modern psychology and to

promote those behaviors and attitudes that she believed contributed to mental well-being.[144]

According to Walters, true "mental health" is something different than "happiness in the

metaphysical sense."[145] She noted that "some mentally ill people appear to be abnormally

happy," whether as a result of manic depression, psychosis, or delusions of grandeur.

Furthermore, she explained that some exceptionally intelligent people who are also mentally

healthy sometimes "see and feel difficulties that others do not see or care about" if they also

possess greater levels of compassion. In other words, their greater intelligence and love may

cause them to have greater levels of unhappiness despite their mental health. Finally, Walters

implied that an ordinary person with a minor unhappiness could be considered less happy than a

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[144] Walters did not appear to publish much on this topic and yet there are speeches or institutes that she gave on this topic in the archives at Marquette University. Unfortunately, they do not always indicate explicitly where, when and to whom these speeches were given.

[145] Annette Walters, "Mental Health and Holiness,' 2. Found in archives. Although she terms it "happiness in the metaphysical sense," her examples indicate that she meant what most people would call "ordinary happiness."

mentally ill person with a condition such as schizophrenia that produces the symptom of apathy. In other words, Walters argued that there was no necessary relationship between happiness and mental health. She recognized that life can be difficult and that "the mentally healthy are quite as subject to the tragedies, frustrations, and disappointments of life as are the mentally ill."[146]

Walters also asserted that, technically speaking, mental illness is a misnomer because the human mind "is a spiritual substance" and so "cannot be sick the sense that the body can be sick." Citing an article by Dom Gregory Stevens, Walters declared that the "diseases of the soul are sin in the will and ignorance in the intellect."[147] Walters claimed that instead of being diseases of the soul or body alone those conditions that are often classified as mental illness "are diseases of the whole person, body and soul." Her conclusion was that this meant that those conditions often regarded as mental illnesses "cannot and must not be treated as purely spiritual disorders by spiritual remedies alone."[148] Although she acknowledged the possibility of a miraculous intervention and did not deny that prayer could play a role in curing mental illness, Walters emphasized that just as a wise person would not attempt to "cure a physical illness by supernatural means alone," a wise person would not decide to only rely on spiritual means to cure a mental illness without also seeking other medical treatment.[149]

Walters stressed this point because she was concerned that many Catholics, including many religious sisters, had incorrect views about the nature of mental health that hindered their ability to receive the right kind of psychological treatment. Walters insisted that "mental health is not to be confused with virtue or sanctity, nor with being in a state of grace."[150] She rejected claims that people who were in a right relationship with God were necessarily mentally healthy and argued that this view was an example of "confusion concerning the relationship of the natural

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[146] Ibid.

[147] Annette Walters, "Mental Health and Holiness,' 2. Found in archives. Citation from Gregory Stevens, "The Spiritual Life and Emotional Disorders," *Integrity*, Dec. 1953, p. 24

[148] Annette Walters, "Mental Health and Holiness,' 1. Found in archives

[149] Annette Walters, "Catholics and Mental Health," (The Catholic World, Vol. 181, 1081, April 1955, 11-15), 1.

[150] Annette Walters, "Mental Health and Holiness,' 2. Found in archives.

to the supernatural."[151] She maintained that the view that identifies mental health and holiness "assumes that mental illness is a moral disorder and that it has its roots in the supernatural rather than in the natural life of man."[152] In a similar way, Walters rejected the idea that "psychological treatment or psychotherapy is not necessary for emotionally or mentally disturbed persons if they will only use the confessional correctly."[153]

Although Walters did not accept the identification between mental health and holiness, she did insist upon "an important relationship between mental health and growth in the spiritual life."[154] Walters argued that "supernatural grace does not supplant or take the place of nature, but that it builds on and perfects nature."[155] In Walters' view, "the more perfect a creature is by nature, the more readily it can be elevated or perfected by supernatural grace." Furthermore, she argued that, on the other hand, "the less perfect a creature is by nature, the less easily it can be elevated by supernatural grace."[156] In other words, Walters held that mental health was an important component of sanctity. In support of this belief, Walters cited Joseph P. Fisher, S.J. as having asserted that "'not a few human beings have come to the end of their growth in grace because the natural faculties of mind and will have ceased their natural functions and hence grace- which does not operate in a void- is at a standstill."[157]

Walters acknowledged that there was some debate over this last claim, at least in the sense that it is at least possible for people to "use both physical and mental illnesses as a means to acquiring sanctity."[158] Nevertheless, she pointed out that "in many of the collects of the Mass the

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[151] Annette Walters, "Catholics and Mental Health," (The Catholic World, Vol. 181, 1081, April 1955, 11-15), 1.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Annette Walters, "Catholics and Mental Health," (The Catholic World, Vol. 181, 1081, April 1955, 11-15), 12.
[154] Annette Walters, "Mental Health and Holiness,' 3. Found in archives.
[155] Annette Walters, "Catholics and Mental Health," (The Catholic World, Vol. 181, 1081, April 1955, 11-15), 11.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Annette Walters, "Mental Health and Holiness,' 3. Found in archives.
[158] Annette Walters, "Catholics and Mental Health," (The Catholic World, Vol. 181, 1081, April 1955, 11-15), 12.

Church bids us to pray for 'health of mind and body' in order that we may serve God more faithfully." Walters interpreted this as the Church's official recommendation "to regard health of mind and body as natural helps to reaching our supernatural goal of union with God."

Although Walter chose to interpret the Church as recommending mental health, she rejected the idea that there ought to be "an official Catholic view on mental health." Walters insisted that "the Church does not legislate in matters of science but only in those of faith and morals."[159] Walters maintained that the Church "has never pronounced for or against any specific system of psychology." At the same time, Walters did argue that Catholic practitioners of modern psychology ought to approach the subject from a Catholic perspective, at least in the sense that their perspective "must be consistent with the Christian view of the nature, origin, and destiny of men."[160]

Sister Annette Walters encouraged people in the Catholic Church to recognize the benefits of psychological treatment and not view such treatment as a moral failing. She wanted people to receive the psychological treatment that they needed so that they could be the most spiritual person that they could be. In a sense, Walters' view on the benefit of modern psychology toward mental health is most directly opposed to the position of Fulton Sheen, at least in the sense that Sheen seems to have believed that psychological treatment should be a last resort and was more likely to interfere with the spiritual life of the person than to enhance it.

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[159] Annette Walters, "Catholics and Mental Health," (The Catholic World, Vol. 181, 1081, April 1955, 11-15), 14

[160] Annette Walters, "Catholics and Mental Health," (The Catholic World, Vol. 181, 1081, April 1955, 11-15), 15

Conclusion

Sister Annette Walters was a complex figure who is best understood as a faithful Catholic psychologist whose social location as a woman religious provided her with a very different perspective on the use of psychology within the Catholic Church than the other figures that have been considered. Although Walters has important similarities to the other figures considered in this study, her unique use of person as a both a concept for personal healing and a site for the reconciliation of theology and psychology helped her to have a different perspective on the importance of metaphysics and the transcendent dimension of human existence. Furthermore, by focusing on the importance of educating the individual person in both neo-Thomist thought and modern psychology, Walters was able to reconcile Catholic theology and psychology on an individual level in a way that her contemporaries failed to do.

Of all the figures, Walters stands most closely in the tradition of Thomas Verner Moore. Both Moore and Walters sought a reconciliation of modern psychology with theology. Although Moore hoped that modern psychology could become more Thomist and Catholic, Walters was less concerned that the discipline of psychology should be transformed and more concerned that Catholic psychologists operate from a framework that was Catholic. Like Moore, Walters was not concerned with rigid adherence to traditional Thomist categories and vocabulary. Since Walters was not an expert on Thomist thought, at least not to the same extent that Sheen, Brennan, and White were, she did not try to be. Walters had a basic knowledge of Thomism as part of her spiritual formation but she did not consider herself an expert. Nevertheless, she consistently affirmed many of the traditional Catholic philosophical and theological positions that can be broadly construed as Thomist in her speeches and writings on modern psychology.

In both her "first course in psychology" and in *Persons and Personality*, the textbook that she co-authored with Kevin O'Hara, Walters focused on the ways that an understanding of psychology could benefit individual human persons. Walters' concern about the individual human person consistently informed her view of psychology. Walters also wanted the students

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that she trained in psychology to be faithful Catholic Christians. She expected her students to live their lives according to Christian principles and to see the world in a Catholic way. Yet Walters did not expect the science of psychology itself to become Christian discipline or operate according to Thomist principles. Walters believed that modern psychology could validly pursue truth according to its own methods as long as it acknowledged its own ultimate limits and possibility of error. From Walters' perspective, it was not particularly important that modern psychology be neo-Thomist if the practitioners of psychology already had an adequate grounding in good Thomist philosophy and, more importantly, in the Catholic faith.

CONCLUSION

PERSONALIZING THOMISM AND PSYCHOLOGY

The modern psychology of the twenty-first century possesses important similarities and differences with the modern psychology of the mid-twentieth century. While 21st century modern psychology is still a collection of separate traditions, the gradual development of humanistic forms of modern psychology, with their increased emphasis on the wholeness of the person, has put modern psychology in a position where it is more capable than ever before of dialoging with other kinds of traditions, even theological traditions. If the Thomists of the mid-twentieth century were still alive today, it seems likely that they would be less concerned about the metaphysical premises of forms of modern psychology that recognize that human beings can make choices, aim at goals, and are more than the sums of their parts.[1]

There cannot be engagement with neo-Thomism of the same kind today. Despite the dominant place that neo-Thomism had within mid-twentieth century Catholicism, the neo-Thomist tradition experienced a sudden decline and fall in the early nineteen sixties.[2] The entire neo-Thomist system was called into question and many of its previous supporters abandoned their association with it. For the diversity within neo-Thomism had provided unimpeachable evidence that there was not simply one neo-Thomism. And the fact that there were multiple forms of neo-Thomism indicated that neo-Thomist thought could not provide the unitary synthesis of all knowledge that it had always claimed to provide. Historians soon began to recognize, moreover,

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[1] Steven C. Hayes, "Humanistic Psychologies and Contextual Behavioral Perspectives," in *Psychotherapy*, Vol. 49, no. 4, 2012, (455-460), 456. These are, of course, important claims of the neo-Thomist tradition.
[2] This did not mean that all forms of Thomism disappeared, of course, or even that neo-Thomism completely disappeared. But it lost both its status as the established system as well as a great many of its adherents.

that neo-Thomism was not merely new, but that it was also quite modern. It was, in other words, a totalizing system that attempted to bring everything with which it came into contact into completion through the application of its first principles and method. And, like all such totalizing systems, neo-Thomism ultimately failed in this goal, was widely recognized as having failed, and so lost its purpose for many Catholics altogether.[3]

Yet, before its sudden demise, neo-Thomism had been in dialogue with several different intellectual traditions through the works of various neo-Thomist thinkers. And one of the intellectual traditions with which neo-Thomism had been in dialogue was that of modern psychology. As a result, in the mid-twentieth century, five neo-Thomist thinkers used five different approaches in their various engagements with the science of modern psychology. Each of these neo-Thomist thinkers shared a similar concern regarding the kinds of metaphysical presuppositions that many of the practitioners of modern psychology had. Furthermore, these thinkers were each concerned that the metaphysical assumptions of these psychologists led them to misunderstand the essentially spiritual character of the human person.

Apart from this common consideration, however, the five people examined in this study shared some interesting similarities and had some important differences with each other. All five figures were Catholics as well as neo-Thomists and two of them were converts to Catholicism. None of them were ever married and all of them took religious vows. Four of them were priests and the one who was not a priest was a religious sister. Four of them belonged to religious orders and the one who did not later became a bishop. Four of them were Americans, one of them was British, and all of them had important life experiences both in the United States and overseas. All of them were native speakers of the English language, all of them were white, and four of them were men. Three of them had doctoral degrees in psychology and two of them were primarily viewed as theologians. Two of them hosted television programs, three of them published textbooks on psychology, and four of them wrote books on the spiritual life. All of them were

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[3] McCoool, From Unity to Pluralism, 224-230.

teachers, authors, academics, and were recognized as experts in their areas of study. And sometime between 1960 and 1980 all of them died as faithful Catholics in good standing with the Catholic Church.

Despite their similarities and possibly because of their differences, each of the figures had a different attitude to the science of modern psychology that resulted in a different approach to the subject. They did not all engage with the same forms of modern psychology or focus on the exact same issues. Although they all expressed aggravations with the common metaphysical assumptions of modern psychologists, they did not all have the same level of concern over the issue, or recognize the same problems, or propose the same solutions. Nevertheless, each figure was focused upon the spiritual life of the human person in theory and in practice, and each of these figures engaged in a dialogue with modern psychology in the hopes that their efforts could benefit the spiritual lives of other people. In other words, the different theological approaches that each of these figures took to the science of modern psychology were among ways that they each of these figures engaged in religious ministry and so were tied into their vocations as Catholic priests and religious.

For Fulton Sheen, modern psychology was a subject that deserved criticism. Like all modern sciences, it lacked a proper relationship with metaphysics because it failed to recognize that there is a hierarchy to the sciences which has metaphysics at the apex. Furthermore, Sheen was convinced that many people had a tendency to lyricize modern psychology in much the same way as they did the rest of modern science. In Sheen's view, modern psychologists could describe things about the human person but they could not explain the ultimate meaning of what it is to be human. Sheen argued that the anthropologies of modern psychology that Sigmund Freud and the behaviorists missed what was really important and proposed a neo-Thomist vision of the role of human beings within creation. Finally, Sheen maintained that many of the common practices of modern psychology were more harmful to people than they were helpful. Sheen was critical of

modern psychology for while he acknowledged that it was a legitimate science, he saw very little that was good about its theories and practices.

For Robert Brennan, in contrast, there was a great deal that was good within psychology, but it was only truly good when it received the proper formulation. Brennan argued that modern psychology needed to have the right perspective and use the right kind of method. Furthermore, Brennan believed that in order for modern psychology to be truly valuable, it had to begin with the right view of the human person. Brennan was convinced that St. Thomas Aquinas had provided the correct principles with which to interpret all of modern psychology. Nevertheless, Brennan also considered the neo-Thomist claim that the human being is a union of body and soul to be a "pre-investigative" truth that all modern psychologists ought to accept. For Brennan, there was great value in modern psychology but that value hinged upon a proper reformulation of its relationship to philosophy and ultimately to theology.

For Thomas Verner Moore, modern psychology would be greatly improved if its various practitioners could come together in their metaphysics and accept a synthesis of their tradition with neo-Thomist metaphysics and Catholic theology such as the one that he practiced. Moore believed that modern psychology was still very valuable without this synthesis, however, and sought to promote the use of modern psychology within the Church. Yet Moore also wanted other modern psychologists to become aware of certain metaphysical truths because he thought it could improve the science. He believed, for example, that an acceptance of the different forms of causation could be beneficial to many diagnoses, that an acknowledgement of the soul would help modern psychologists recognize that human beings are more than just machines, and that modern psychologists were giving people the wrong impression of their true nature in denying the will. He also held that religion could play an important role in the psychological health of ordinary people. For Moore, modern psychology was good already and yet he also believed that it could become much better if it could accept a synthesis with the neo-Thomist philosophical tradition as well as the wider Catholic theological tradition.

For Victor White, the virtues of modern psychology began and ended with the analytical psychology of Carl Gustav Jung. White gave a particular focus to the work of Carl Jung because he had experienced the healing that Jung's thought could provide. White was concerned about the metaphysical positions of other forms of modern psychology and yet he was not initially concerned about Jung's own metaphysics. It was only after their eventual conflicts over the nature of evil that White began to recognize that Jungian metaphysics had issues with neo-Thomist and Catholic thought that were not easily explained away. At the same time, White always kept his conviction about the essential goodness of Jungian thought and always continued to hope that Catholic theologians and Jungian analysts would find a way to partner together for the spiritual health of the people who sought treatment from both traditions. For Victor White, Jungian thought remained a resource for growth and healing until the end of his days.

For Annette Walters, modern psychology had a great deal to offer the human person. She believed that it could help people to better understand themselves and others. She believed that it could provide people with a sense of self-worth and value that they otherwise might lack. And she believed that it provided resources by which to critique practices within the Church that failed to live up to the ideal of the Church.

The approach of Annette Walters to modern psychology ultimately combined elements that were found in all of the other approaches. Like Fulton Sheen, she was aware that it could be dangerous for the spiritual health of people if the metaphysical premises of modern psychology were left unchecked. Like Robert Brennan, Walters was concerned with that a kind of anthropology, or view of the person, should ground modern psychology and provide a source of its unity. Like Moore, Walters wanted there to be a genuine integration between modern psychology and neo-Thomist thought. Yet, unlike Moore, Walters looked for the source of this integration on a personal level instead of on a theoretical level. This ideal of personal integration, of taking two traditions together into a single person, is in some ways the ideal of the Thomist tradition itself, for St. Thomas really did bring Aristotle, the scholars of Islam, the neo-Platonists,

the Greek Fathers, and much of Western Catholic theology into a single whole synthesis- but that whole was not found within a system of thought but within himself.[4]

Like White, Walters' neo-Thomist approach to modern psychology recognized the importance of particularity even as she also anticipated a later focus within modern psychology on all the aspects of human life. Her willingness to include literature and art as source of truth about the human person rather than just dwelling on modern science and neo-Thomist thought demonstrates that she wanted a modern psychology that could expand into different areas of life. One of the many problems with totalizing systems like neo-Thomism, and one of the reasons that Walters may not have been a very good neo-Thomist, is that such systems attempt to drown out individual particularity for the sake of the system. Walters herself noted this in her concerns with Russian collectivism. They are the same basic concerns.

If Walters had a different approach than other neo-Thomists who engaged with modern psychology, she was also fundamentally different than other modern psychologists of her period, such as Edwin Boring. Whereas Boring believed that philosophy should be rejected by modern psychology, Walters recognized that his view is fundamentally absurd. For Walters, one of the keys to a good psychology was not to hide your metaphysical premises or attempt to divorce them from your psychology; the position that Misiak and Staudt advocated for the relationship between philosophy and psychology is a bad idea. Instead, Walters argued through both her theory and her practice that both metaphysical and theological premises should be stated up front from the beginning of the instruction in modern psychology so that they can always be brought in to the discussion when it becomes necessary. Although there were only sporadic direct applications to religious and metaphysical matters within *Persons and Personality*, the textbook that Walters wrote with Mary O'Hara, they stated their metaphysical convictions at the start the books and displayed their theological convictions very clearly at the end. They recognized, as Moore also

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[4] Something similar could probably be said about Moore himself with regard to the traditions of neo-Thomism and modern psychology.

had understood, that the main problem is not with having metaphysical convictions so much as it is not realizing that you have them.

Although Walters' constant emphasis upon the person was the central part of her unique contribution to the neo-Thomist engagement with modern psychology, her place as a woman within the Church gave her insights that her fellow neo-Thomists did not have. She recognized that she lived within a culture that did not always treat women like respected persons. As a religious sister and a female psychologist, Walters used modern psychology as a way of helping other women as well as men. She recognized that every human person is a unique creation of God and that the dignity of the human person must always be maintained. This, in the end, is the message of her personalist approach to the subject of modern psychology. And, as was acknowledged at the beginning of this conclusion, it is an approach that seems to have found resonance with new forms of modern psychology that have been developed in the days after the mid-twentieth century neo-Thomist engagement with modern psychology.

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