

PSYCHOLOGY
AND CATHOLICISM

Contested Boundaries

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CONTENTS

	<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page vii</i>
1	An introduction	1
2	The major fault line: modernism and psychology	32
3	Neoscholastic psychology	66
4	Psychology as the boundary: Catholicism, spiritualism, and science	119
5	Psychoanalysis versus the power of will	165
6	From out of the depths: Carl Jung's challenges and Catholic replies	203
7	Institutionalizing the relationship	261
8	Humanistic psychology and Catholicism: dialogue and confrontation	306
9	Trading zones between psychology and Catholicism	351
10	Crossings	396
	<i>References</i>	<i>435</i>
	<i>Index</i>	<i>481</i>

An introduction

The science and profession of psychology emerged in the mid- to late nineteenth century. In all its varieties, including “pop psychology,” psychology is one of the ways that we in the contemporary world ask the questions: “Who am I?” “What sort of things are we?” “How shall I live my life?” “What makes me happy, sad, confused, anxious?” These questions arise not only in the abstract, they occur also in activities of healing, correcting, adjusting, guiding, treating, managing, counseling. Even though in many quarters, psychologists have distanced themselves from such questions – call them philosophical – the inescapable truth is that they surface in all psychologies, pure and applied. Psychology asks these questions and psychology answers them. Questing for the nature of human nature, of mental illness, of cognition, of personal growth, for the tasks and challenges of childhood and old age, and in countless other ways, psychology addresses the vexations of living and dying.

And so psychology is an ethical science, ethics being the discipline that seeks to know how we should live our lives. Textbooks and clinicians and researchers, in one way or another, advise us how to conduct our lives. At the very least, they provide information, but all such information implicitly offers guidelines for conduct: description is prescription. This is not an indictment of psychology, for there is great effort to be fair and neutral within the field; it is simply stating the obvious case that no science that describes and explains human behavior and mental life can avoid indicating better and worse ways to act, think, and feel.

For these reasons, psychology makes claims in areas already occupied by the religious traditions – traditions that not only have positions on our nature and our place in the cosmos, but also on how we should act, think, and feel. Religions offer care for the soul in sickness, depravity, and loss. The Catholic Church is no exception in this regard, having a long history of reckoning with the nature and rectification of human life. So when psychology emerged in the nineteenth century, and as it continued to grow, bubbling forth from the ground of twentieth-century life, there were bound to be points of difference and convergence between psychology and Catholic thought and traditions. The philosophical presuppositions of some prominent psychologists, for example, were precisely the kinds of doctrines identified in the 1918 *Code of Canon Law*

(*Codex iuris canonici*, 1918) as being antithetical to the Catholic faith. Some psychotherapeutic practices, in how they encouraged patients to think and act, were called immoral by some Church officials and by some Catholic psychologists. The fact is that psychologists take positions on ground deemed sacred and protected by the Church. Psychological expertise proclaimed on this sacred ground cannot be sheltered from religious counterclaims when the Church has provided other knowledge and guidance for centuries.

This book explores some of these conflicts and convergences. The primary focus is on what those psychologists who were also Catholic said and did about the relationships between modern psychology and Catholicism. The book further has an emphasis on the American scene. Without a doubt, modern psychology and, of course, Catholicism, are international in scope, but there were some particulars of the American social landscape that individuate that history. Distinctive features of the American context, such as its traditions regarding the separation of church and state, were not shared everywhere, and in some countries at some times, political regimes imposed religious orthodoxies, and some of them were Catholic. Until the 1960s, because they came primarily from immigrant groups, American Catholics often felt a need to justify their being both Catholic and American. There was in the Catholic subculture a lively sense of being a minority group. There was both a sense of superiority of the traditions and teachings of the Church and a sense of inferiority, especially regarding participation in the intellectual life of the nation. Nevertheless, the narrative cannot be confined exclusively to these shores, as many ideas and people came or visited here and contributed mightily to what happened. In several chapters, the focus will indeed be in other places, including Belgium (for the beginnings of experimental psychology within a Catholic setting), France (in dealing with some of the spiritualist and miraculous phenomena), Ireland (in dealing with an early Catholic response to psychoanalysis), and Switzerland and England (especially for consideration of Catholic Jungians). The Vatican, the home of the Pope and seat of the Church, naturally plays an important role in this history, from beginning to end. In fact, a papal document serves as one bookend for the story: *Aeterni Patris* (1879/1954) was a call by Pope Leo XIII for a renewal of Thomistic thought and its positive engagement with the modern world, especially the modern sciences. This document sounded a receptive tone and thus helped to justify the cultivation of modern psychology in Catholic circles. The Second Vatican Council of the 1960s marked the end of an epoch in the questioning of boundaries between psychology and Catholicism, and there our study – although not the story – will end. After that time, things changed, and even if the components remained, their relationships did not. Finally, *Ex corde ecclesiae* (Pope John Paul II, 1990/2000) raised the question of the meaning of institutions that are both Catholic and universities, there being presumably no contradiction between the two. This document suggests a reconsideration of some of the

solutions to the sometimes difficult relationships between psychology and Catholic thought.

Non-Catholic readers, especially non-Christian readers, may wonder at this point about the relevance of what follows for a more general understanding of relationships between psychology and religion. Those relationships are very important and will remain so. Understanding one history of the conflicts and cooperation between science, however conceived, and religion, also however conceived, can provide some clarity in an area fraught with vague generalities. Hence the plan of this book is to study a specific religion and to differentiate the psychologies that it encountered. I do not assume that the relationships between psychology and Catholicism can be automatically generalized to those between other religions and other sciences. It may well be that they cannot. However, if we can talk about specific relationships and what actually happened within them, perhaps we can discern a wider range of possibilities. With that aspiration, I would say that one need be neither Catholic nor a psychologist to follow the thread of meaning through this book. The issues addressed are important for us all.

The question of boundaries

How can there be contested boundaries between psychology and the Catholic Church, since psychology is an empirical science whose sole duty is to discover the facts and then propose the theories that explain them? The Church has to do with beliefs and values. This division of labor between facts and values, between objective data and subjective beliefs, is still our taken-for-granted way of ensuring peace within ourselves and in our society. If this position, called naturalism, were the correct way to frame the relationship between psychology and religion, there could be contests of will and power, but not of knowledge. The reason for this is that, according to naturalism, the only way to gain certainty in knowledge is by natural scientific means. What we *ought* to do – ah! This the scientist cannot answer, because it is not a factual concern. At best, the psychologist could predict what consequences follow any course of action. A naturalistic philosophical presupposition, one that underlies much thinking in psychology, would ignore claims of psychological knowledge coming from a religion, because religion does not discover scientifically whatever it uncovers.

But since the beginnings of natural scientific psychology, and since the beginning of the profession of psychology in psychoanalysis and the like, church leaders, philosophers, theologians, and yes, church psychologists, have questioned psychology's knowledge claims and scientific authority. These figures have contested the boundaries between the knowledge domain of psychology and that of the church in various ways. Some have disputed the claim that psychology can be a natural science. For others, even if psychology were what

some psychologists say it is, namely, an empirical science just like biology and physics, even then, as repeated incidents over the past century show, Catholic thinkers inside and outside psychology have disputed the limits of the competence of the psychologists. (The boundaries are contested in biology and physics, too, as debates over evolution and creation illustrate.) The reasons for these disputes are many, but central to them are the objects of investigation of the various sciences. For the sciences do not have the only access to these objects – such as living things, the object of biology, and material things, the object of physics. This is all the more the case when one turns to psychology, for here is a science – of disputed character – that deals with what? It deals with behavior, with experience, with the mind, with personality, with human beings and what they think, feel, and do. What are closer to the heart of the Church, of any church, than those things? It does no good to set up in the abstract a division of labor between psychology and the Church. That has been tried repeatedly, only to founder on the rocks in the tumultuous straits of human existence. Psychologists deal with flesh and blood human beings, often with their most intimate concerns. So does the Church, which has also as its concern the eternal destiny of these human beings. So how and where can we set up a clear and distinct partition? Where shall we find one when human thought, feeling, and action are involved?

The boundaries of science

Thomas Gieryn (1983) provides a solid sociological analysis of ways that scientists engage in “boundary-work,” that is, make “attributions of selected characteristics to the institution of science for purposes of constructing a social boundary that distinguishes ‘non-scientific’ intellectual or professional activities” (p. 791). His examples include the efforts of John Tyndall in the nineteenth century to claim for scientists some of the academic authority that religion had had in Great Britain: “The Church . . . held power over educational institutions and used it to stall introduction of science into the curriculum” (p. 784), a situation that was repeated later to counter psychology’s efforts to find a place in the curriculum. According to Tyndall, science differs from religion in four ways:

- (1) Science improves our material lot; religion provides emotional comfort and consolation.
- (2) Science uses experimentation to discover the attributes of nature; religion describes spiritual entities that cannot be empirically verified.
- (3) Science does not follow any authority except the answers Nature gives to experimental questions; religion “continues to respect the authority of worn-out ideas and their creators” (p. 785).
- (4) Science is objective; religion is subjective.

These four arguments elaborate one central point, namely, that science yields knowledge whereas religion produces feelings. In claiming this distinction between objective knowledge and subjective feeling, Tyndall sought to claim for science some of the authority that the Church had in his day. His boundary-work, demarcating the difference between the outer world and the inner world, served to determine a domain over which religious claims were invalid. Today, when scientific authority is common sense, some religious positions seek the status of scientific authority, as in the case of arguments for Intelligent Design.

Central to Gieryn's study is the conditions under which boundary-work is likely to occur. He identifies three situations: "(a) when the goal is *expansion* of authority or expertise into domains claimed by other professions or occupations . . . ; (b) when the goal is *monopolization*¹ of professional authority and resources . . . ; (c) when the goal is *protection of autonomy* over professional activities" (pp. 791–2). Gieryn concludes that "the boundaries of science are ambiguous, flexible, historically changing, contextually variable, internally inconsistent, and sometimes disputed" (p. 792). This analysis helps discern how boundaries are drawn without deciding in advance what significance to give to the truth claims of the participants.

Tyndall's demarcations serve to point to a larger issue, namely the question of what distinguishes something called "science" from other types of activities that also make knowledge claims. Gieryn's (1999) sociological studies of disputes over the nature of science illustrate the difficulties. Science as it exists in the "wild" is a complex thing:

[It] is not embodied only in these first-time-through practices, instruments, research material, facts, and journals; it has several other realities too. Science [is] . . . a bit of the cognitive schema we use everyday to navigate material and symbolic lands. Science also exists in codified bureaucratic procedures, as when university catalogs divvy up the universe of learning into natural science, social science, and humanities.

(pp. 19–20)

It is this cultural complex called "science" that is at issue in this book, not some supposed ideal essence of science. In the chapters that follow, we will attempt to find out what the science of psychology has meant by examining what the participants in the various struggles have claimed it was. This view of the authority of science based on its knowledge claims is critical for the analyses in this book. In psychology, the basic questions about human beings are far from settled. As a consequence, what type of knowledge counts in psychology? Who can legitimately speak of human psychology, to put the matter bluntly, if to be human means to have an eternal destiny? Does not any science which

¹ Gieryn (1999, p. 16) calls this "expulsion," that is, the effort to deny the epistemic authority of science to contenders whom the other players deem non-scientific.

ignores that destiny ignore the most important point? Or is that destiny a matter of faith alone, and has the science of psychology plenty to do without tackling the questions of the soul? Questions such as these have been behind the boundary-work between psychology and the Catholic Church.

For Gieryn, the difficulty is not simply that boundary-work has occurred, because it might be the case that some contestants are simply wrong if, for example, we take the view of science developed by the philosopher, Karl Popper. Then we might say that psychoanalysis and Neoscholastic psychology (a type developed in the Catholic world) mistakenly called themselves sciences, but in fact they were not, because their key proposition could not be falsified, meaning that no scientific test could dispute their knowledge claims. One such claim would be the Neoscholastic conclusion that the evidence of psychology points to the reality of the rational soul as a spiritual, not a material, substance. From a Popperian point of view, how could such a conclusion be tested empirically? Therefore, so the argument would run, Neoscholasticism is not science. If Neoscholastic psychologists engaged in boundary-work, claiming scientific status for their psychology, that would not legitimate it as science, because it did not conform to the canons of science. But efforts to define in advance what science is by asserting a criterion such as falsifiability play only one part in determining what science is and what is the authority of science. Other considerations and other participants, sometimes remote from the laboratory or the university, decide what counts as science. At the same time, this does not mean that “anything goes” with science, because the cultural institutions that have stakes in science will object and will exclude or protect its autonomy and thus their epistemic authority. In this book, we will not define in advance what science is and is not. We will look at the disputes over its limits in order to see what science has become for us.

Such a strategy is vitally important for psychology, in which disputes over the nature of the discipline, its status as a science and, indeed, the meaning of “science,” have been and remain integral to the kind of thing that psychology is. That is, boundary-work is not something psychologists do only when pressed by contenders; boundary-work is a distinguishing characteristic of psychology. Using Thomas Kuhn’s terminology, we can say that boundary-work is part of “normal science” psychology and not only a part of “revolutionary science.”

For psychology, there is the ever-recurring boundary dispute between the natural science and the human science approaches, with some attempting to define psychology as a natural science to the exclusion of a human science approach, and others seeking to enlarge the meaning of “science” to include the human sciences. Rather than rehash these arguments, this book takes the position that all science is interpretative or hermeneutical activity. Don Ihde (1997), approaching the natural sciences from a philosophical angle, argues that the tried and true differentiation between the natural sciences and the human sciences in terms of the former explaining nature and the latter interpreting

human realities has been challenged on the ground that the natural sciences too are interpretative. Ihde develops a theme from Bruno Latour, who presents the case that science works by producing a series of representations, each one of which becomes data for further interpretation, and that the very instruments used in the laboratory (the epitome of “real” science) are devices that inscribe – and Ihde adds, depict – something. Scientific activity entails, among other things, reading these inscriptions and depictions. Thus all science is an interpretative activity, and not only the human or social sciences. Heelan (1998) furthers this conception by using the metaphor of the library: when nature and Scripture are read, in terms of which library are they read? The modern sciences, starting with Galileo, read natural phenomena in terms of a mathematical library, in contrast with ancient science, which turned to other sources. This view of science differs from Gieryn’s sociological analysis, but it is a reminder that whatever else science is, it is an activity performed by members of a larger cultural community. It also serves as a reminder that science has a history, and that it has had other libraries to draw upon.

Science and religion: the larger picture

What holds true for science in this study also holds true for religion. Both have histories, and the question “Whose Science? Whose Religion?” (Brooke and Cantor, 1998, p. 43) is relevant. Religion, whatever it is, does not claim to be – with some exceptions, such as Christian Science and Scientology – science. In this book, the parallels between science and religion are fairly precise, because here we are not dealing with religion in general but with a specific religion, Roman Catholicism.² With this religion, the questions of authority and of who speaks for the Church seem much clearer than with science, and especially with psychology. The Church has a hierarchical structure, and the Pope has, in a very real sense, the last word. Psychology has no pope. Even acknowledging the more or less fixed structure of the Church, in this study we are not dealing with an abstract entity, but with a living community composed of individuals responding to unique cultural and historical events. In addition, the Church is no monolithic structure, so that the questions of what the Church is and how it responded to developments in the sciences do not have univocal answers. As we shall see, there have been boundary disputes between the Church and psychology, and

² Because of this limitation, the whole question of what is and what is not a religion can be avoided, although others have not avoided it. Pargament (1999) has made one attempt to define religion, especially in relation to spirituality. As he points out, authors going back to William James (1903) in *The varieties of religious experience* have had to make decisions about what to include and what to exclude. The present effort has the same limitations. So nothing in this book should be assumed to apply *a priori* to other religions or forms of religion. I do not think that there is an essence of religion that would permit us to draw the lines of demarcation between religion and psychology deductively.

moreover, boundary disputes within the Church between Catholic psychologists and other Catholics, some of whom were also psychologists.

The larger vicissitudes of science and religion I shall not discuss (see Asad, 1993; Pickstock, 1998). Assuming that they are not fixed entities, their relationship cannot be defined categorically. Brooke (1991) has described three standard concepts of the relationship: conflict, complementarity, and mutual advantage. The conflict model is familiar these days in the political wrangling over creationism, but Brooke has shown with specific historical examples that conflict is not a necessary relationship between religion and science, and creationism is as much a conflict between theologies as it is a conflict with science. Complementarity can take many forms, including the one Tyndall described. Typically, perhaps, it takes the form of a division of labor, especially where a natural scientific psychology prevails. Mutual advantage can occur at the practical as well as at the theoretical level. When a church hires a psychotherapist, or a religiously affiliated institution establishes a psychology department, we have examples of mutual advantage. When Victor White sought to collaborate with Carl Jung, he intended mutual advantage for both Thomistic theology and for analytical psychology. Brooke (1991) has concluded that no simple answer to the relationships between science and religion exists and that they are better addressed with examinations of specific instances.

Boundaries between psychology and religion

One of the significant ongoing boundary-making efforts that define psychology as a science has been its relationship with spiritualism. Coon (1992) observes that, over the past century, “psychology has been a magnet for cultural anxieties about the hazy borderline between science and pseudoscience, between the natural and the supernatural” (p. 143). Coon’s study of how early experimental psychologists came to grips with the claims of the spiritualists, including mediums, “mind-readers,” and mental healers, is a good case in point for the difficulties in drawing the lines between what is science and what is not (and what is religion and what is not). Coon concludes in part by saying:

In an era of increasing skepticism about God, scientific naturalism offered the latest and best substitute providing order and reason in the universe. In this worldview, espoused by the majority of experimental psychologists, psychophysical parallelism held sway. Physical phenomena could only occur as the result of physical causes. Psychological phenomena might bear a one-to-one correspondence to physical phenomena but could not cause or be caused by them.

(p. 149)

Psychophysiological parallelism was a position close to that of the spiritualists, who asserted the effectiveness of the parallel world of the spirit in the material

world. Efforts by some early psychologists to distinguish themselves from the spiritualists were complicated by the fact that William James, the premier psychologist at the turn of the twentieth century, took the spiritualists' claims seriously. In reaction to what were seen as the spiritualists' excessive claims, many in psychology found the embrace of a materialistic conception of science enticing. Where did this outcome leave the psychologist who was also a religious person, for whom the physical world could feel the effects of the action of the spiritual? Where did it leave the psychologist who at the same time rejected spiritualism and its promise of "a new secular faith" (p. 144)? This was the position of the psychologist who was also Catholic, who held that the immaterial soul acted on the body, and that miracles, such as those reported at Lourdes, happened. This is an example of the problem that faces us.

Many have been the boundaries drawn between psychology and religion, and between psychology and theology. Bear in mind that these lines often serve practical purposes, such as securing the independence of a psychology department in a college, or persuading a congregation that its members suffering from addictions or abuse need counseling in addition to prayer. Others erase or redraw the lines in order to deal with the less than sage advice, in the name of some enlightened theory or other, that therapists may give to their Christian clients. But these practical matters often arise from or lead back into more speculative ones. The fact is that, before the nineteenth century, the boundary between psychology and the care of the soul did not exist. Even when physicians, lawyers, and bankers offered clients advice on living the good life, in much of the western world prior to the nineteenth century, there was more of a common ground for ethical decision-making than now exists (MacIntyre, 1984). I am not prejudging the issue here, and throughout this text I will avoid slipping into either a "grand narrative" of progress or of regress. Moral pluralism is our condition, and in light of the extant alternatives, we may hope it remains our condition. The point is that given our contemporary situation, the question of boundaries between psychology and religion promise to remain viable and contested.

So how have the boundaries been drawn? Without pretense of being complete,³ here are the main ways.

³ This way of describing interactions between psychology and religion is not the only one. Kevin Gillespie, SJ, offers another one, drawing on the work of John Haught. In this view, there are five types of relationship between psychology and religion: conflict, contrast, contact, confirmation, and – to be avoided – conflation. Conflict occurs when "science invalidates religion" (Gillespie, 2007a, p. 176); contrast means that science and religion have nothing in common (for example, there is no theology of reaction time or color vision); contact means that the two differ but can interact (Gillespie uses the setting up of the American Catholic Psychological Association as an example); and confirmation signifies how the two work toward a common end. Conflation is psychology-as-religion. These categories overlap the ones I am using: Haught and Gillespie's conflict is "psychology as religion"; contrast is the "divorce" of psychology and religion; contact is similar to the

- (1) *Psychology divorced from philosophy and theology.* First, and most common, is that which derives from the stance that psychology is a natural science. As such, it derives its data from empirical investigation, and on that basis it forms theories to explain the relationships between the facts. Psychology so conceived makes no philosophical, theological, ethical, or political statements. Indeed, if it is indeed a natural science, it cannot make them. In this view, the boundary seems clear.
- (2) *Psychology bound to philosophy and theology.* A second position is that since all psychology has underlying presuppositions, philosophical, cultural, and historical, the lines between psychology and religion are not easy to draw. This position may push the question about boundaries to philosophy, where a boundary question also arises: "Can there be a Christian philosophy?" This position also makes it imperative to probe the presuppositions of psychological theory, and to ask of them their compatibility with views of human nature stemming from religious tradition. In principle, the autonomy of psychology is recognized, but it is not absolute, since competing and even superior claims must be acknowledged.
- (3) *A Christian psychology.* Third is the view that scientific psychology has largely been a secular affair and that what is needed today is a Christian or even, more specifically, a Catholic psychology. This position sees secular psychology as hostile to the claims of religion and as competing with them.
- (4) *Psychology instead of religion.* A fourth position asserts that psychology is a more rational approach to living than is religion and should replace it. A variant on this theme is more irenic, and it significantly alters the nature of the boundary. In this view, psychology does not replace religion; it rather participates in one of the traditions of "unchurched spirituality." This route appeals to those for whom religions, with their teachings and competing claims to ultimate truth, seem irrelevant, but for whom matters of the spirit are vitally important. The "spiritual but not religious" portion of the contemporary population often turns to psychology of one sort or another instead of to religious faith. This group probably makes up the majority of those who pursue this fourth path. "Where religion was, let psychology be," seems to be the heart of this approach.

If the first two alternative ways of drawing a boundary are guided by the principle that "good fences make good neighbors," the second two challenge

second alternative presented here, except that "contact" has to do with ways that psychology and religion interact positively, and this, in my view, can be seen in a variety of ways under my second category, although my way stresses more the theoretical. Virtually all the topics covered in this book could fit under "contact." "Confirmation" is also largely handled in my second category. "Conflation," "psychology as religion," I would see in terms of unchurched spirituality and contend that it is not conflation but a unique formulation of a psychologized spirituality. A purely Christian psychology could be a better example of conflation.

the disciplinary autonomy of any scientific psychology. Let us look at each of these ways of drawing the lines more closely.

Psychology divorced from philosophy and theology

This first position has much to do with the history of psychology defining itself by its adherence to the so-called scientific method. Wisdom about human nature abounds, so this view goes; however, only with the rise of a scientific psychology do we have the foundations for an empirical science of human nature. The Bible and Shakespeare may exceed psychology in penetrating insights, but psychology like the other sciences only makes a genuine contribution when it renounces the wider view and humbly pursues the data in methodical ways. Howard H. Kendler (2005) recently reaffirmed the first position by defining the boundary between psychology and (in this instance) ethics by means of “the fact/value dichotomy that denies the possibility of logically deriving value judgments from empirical evidence” (p. 321). Kendler wants to safeguard psychology from self-destruction: “An educated democracy will not buy the idea that psychology is capable of identifying the right political policy or the correct way to live” (p. 323). This position is probably the most widely accepted one in psychology. It rests, however, on a contentious principle, namely, the fact/value dichotomy. The principle underlying this dichotomy (with the “/” as the boundary we are discussing) is that the methodologically purified evidence of our senses cannot determine values. Ethical judgments, in this view, are subjective – that is, based on feelings. Feelings have no epistemological status in science. It follows that religion is a private matter, and it ought not to interfere with or be adversely affected by science. In other words, Kendler shares Tyndall’s view of the matter.

An important variant of this first position affirms the autonomy of psychology even as it acknowledges the necessity of its integration with theology. In reviewing the state of things in the limited area of the psychology of religion – where the question of boundaries is ever-pressing – Vassilis Saroglou (2003) has asserted that psychology, in order to make any contribution to the topic of religion, must “be based on the methods of observation and of explanation used in the different psychological fields . . . The utilization of these methods guarantees a capacity to reduce, insofar as possible, the influence of the subjectivity of the researcher” (pp. 474–5). One reason for this insistence on psychology’s autonomy is that for, and especially for, a psychology of religion, “the legitimacy of its approach depends on the recognition by one’s peers [in psychology], a recognition based on its ability to refer to theories and methods in general psychology” (Saroglou, 2000, p. 752). Psychology can make no contribution if it is absorbed into philosophy or theology, and it does have an independent standpoint.

The levels-of-explanation approach, which David C. Myers has done much to champion, adheres to this position. It holds that “all levels of reality are

important (the physical, chemical, biological, psychological, social, and theological), that each dimension or level of reality is uniquely accessible to study by the unique methods used in each discipline, and that the boundaries of each should not be blurred” (Johnson and Jones, 2000a, p. 38). According to Johnson and Jones, those who take this approach are Christians and academics who hold that “true science will be impeded by the intrusion of faith beliefs from any quarter that cannot be empirically documented” (ibid.). In this concern, Christian psychologists such as C. S. Evans (1982) resemble the Neoscholastics, those philosophically-based psychologists who sought to carve out a space for scientific psychology in Catholic higher education in the first half of the twentieth century. Scientific methodology, in this way of marking the boundary, does not carry with it its own presuppositions.

Boundary maintenance from this point of view means justifying “methodological atheism” (Teo, 2009, p. 61) or “methodological naturalism” (Bishop, 2009, p. 109). Bishop states that this position claims to make no judgment concerning the reality of God; it simply seeks “natural causes as explanations of events in nature and see how far such explanations will go for particular limited purposes” (ibid.). We shall attend to a surprising example of methodological naturalism in the debates over the reality of miraculous cures at the French shrine of the Virgin at Lourdes (in Chapter 4). There, the Catholic position was to consider only those cures as miraculous that could not be explained through natural causes, thus excluding the cures of all functional or psychosomatic diseases. As we shall see, methodological naturalism in this case intended to strengthen the claims for those cases deemed miraculous, in the face of “metaphysical naturalists”⁴ who *a priori* dismissed the possibility of miracles.

So we need not assume that this way of drawing the lines makes for conflict. Indeed, complementarity and mutual advantage could be the outcome of defining psychology narrowly as a natural science. Then, psychology like medicine becomes something useful, especially when it shows respect for the ethical boundaries set for it by the churches.

Psychology bound to philosophy and theology

The second way of drawing the lines has many variants. William James sketched out one possibility for the subordination of psychology when he argued in *The Principles of Psychology* that psychology as a natural science

⁴ Bishop (2009), among others, distinguishes methodological and metaphysical naturalism. The latter dismisses the idea of God categorically. Even methodological naturalism is problematic from some theological points of view, particularly those that stress the freedom of Divine Will. The Neoscholastic point of view, however, was compatible with methodological naturalism.

assumes that states of consciousness follow one another in a deterministic manner, but that ethics assumes freedom of the will, and that, in the order of things, ethics has the higher claim. The Neoscholastic psychologists argued in a similar vein for the proper autonomy of psychology, while owning that psychology's basic categories derived from philosophical inquiry into first causes, and that philosophy was ancillary to theology. So psychology's autonomy was relative, and it had a subordinate place in the unity of knowledge.

This way has long been the stock-in-trade of the human science approach in psychology, which argues that there are no facts without theories and no theories without philosophical presuppositions. This position, which owes much to the phenomenological and Kantian traditions, has support from those in the history of science, such as Thomas Kuhn (1970) and Peter Galison (1999), who describe the theory-laden character of facts in the physical sciences. Stenner's (2009) elaboration of this approach is apropos here, as he shows that the very concept of "nature" assumed by methodological and metaphysical naturalists, as well as by some of the theistic opponents of one or both (see Slife and Reber, 2009a), was itself a theological concept forged by, among others, Isaac Newton, for whom "science (or rather natural philosophy) was the ideal territory on which to clarify theological matters" (Stenner, 2009, p. 104). So however we understand the *natural* sciences, we are at the same time affirming philosophical and theological conceptions of the real. *A fortiori*, the same applies to psychology.

In a related approach, *Psychology and Christianity* (Johnson and Jones, 2000b) presents four ways of conceiving the relationship between psychology and religion, including the "integration" model, which binds psychology to theology. Widely pursued in contemporary evangelical circles in psychology, the integration model in some ways resembles the Neoscholastic approach in the Catholic world, but with a characteristic theological difference that pertains to evangelical Christianity. While the Neoscholastics affirmed the unity of all truth, they typically stopped at the level of philosophical discourse, unlike the integrationists, who have sought to develop "a biblically-based" psychology. In the words of Bruce Narramore (1973), a leading integrationist, "we are in a position to gather relevant objective data, seek well constructed theoretical views and find improved techniques for applying our biblical and psychological data" (p. 17).⁵

⁵ Note the use of the term "data" in this quotation from Narramore. Rhetorically, it serves to legitimate bringing biblical considerations into psychology without abandoning the claim that psychology is a science. However, as with Neoscholastic theology, which held that divine revelation could be expressed in propositional form, Narramore risks a kind of theological positivism. In what sense except the metaphorical can Scripture provide "data," as that term is employed in scientific discourse? Data are sense data, whereas Scripture claims a higher authority than that of the senses. Myers (2000) uses a similar phrase: "Knowing that no one is immune to error and bias, we can be wary of absolutizing human interpretations of either natural or biblical data" (p. 58). In this context, the use of "data" supports Myers' "levels-of-interpretation" approach, meaning that empirical data in

So, whereas the Neoscholastics sought a pre-theological philosophical integration of psychology with the Catholic faith, Evangelicals do not, insisting that psychology acknowledge explicitly the truth claims of Scripture.

Integrationists, Catholic and Evangelical alike, affirm that there is only one ultimate Truth, namely God's Truth, which is in fact a person: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Carter and Narramore (1979) sketch the ground for integration in these terms: "Our position is that there is a unity of truth and such conflicts do not in fact exist. We hold that all such conflicts between theology and psychology are conflicts between theory and interpretation of the facts rather than between the facts themselves" (p. 27). Here the trouble begins, for facts do not exist in themselves, independently of theory and interpretation. This is complicated further when they assert: "a fully integrated model . . . requires a full commitment to both the learned facts of psychology and the revealed truths of Scripture" (p. 104). If this be the basis of integration, then the result would be diversity bordering on chaos: surely it makes a difference which conception of the truth of Scripture is affirmed, as surely as it makes a difference which are the facts of psychology. Hence, in this position regarding psychology and religion, underlying assumptions become key considerations.

Central to the concerns of both the Neoscholastics and the Evangelicals – taking these psychologists as representative of this second type of boundary-work – is the pluralism of contemporary society. Catholic psychologists in the mid-twentieth century felt the sting of dwelling in an intellectual ghetto – the term has often been used – and part of the Neoscholastic strategy was to carry forward a Catholic position without being dismissed by non-Catholic psychologists as dogmatists. Hence their emphases that psychology is a natural science and that psychology has philosophical presuppositions that cannot be determined empirically. The Evangelicals, too, worry about isolation, as Narramore (1973) observes: "As Christians we will lose our effectiveness if we develop a superior or paranoid attitude toward the world . . . An isolationistic attitude may maintain our doctrinal purity but it will cause us to fail to grab hold of a large portion of God's general revelation" (pp. 16–17). These issues of marginalization and purity loom large in discussions of the relations between psychology and religion, and these Neoscholastic and Evangelical views are representative of one of the central ways of doing this boundary-work.

A Christian psychology

The third approach divides the psychological world into secular and non-secular psychologies. This approach also takes many forms. In recent years,

psychology do not necessarily support what Christian psychologists think that Scripture says. While Narramore means to include biblical "data," Myers argues for the independence of empirical data vis-à-vis theology. This use of "data" is a good example of what Gillespie (2007a) means by conflation.

especially as psychology-as-science has come under scrutiny from a variety of sources – the critical, postmodern, and hermeneutical among others – proposals for Christian psychologies have become more common, and they have come to hold a more mainstream position within psychology. Christian psychologists have American Psychological Association (APA) approved graduate programs, they have journals, and they have organizations.⁶ Robert C. Roberts (2000) spells out the goals of a Christian psychology in these terms:

A primary aim of Christian psychology is to make available the distinctive psychology of the Christian tradition to the intellect and practice of persons in our times. It is a different enterprise from integration [of psychology and theology], whose aim is to produce a happy blend of one or another of the twentieth-century psychologies with the thought and practice of the church. The goal of Christian psychology, then, is two-dimensional: to read the tradition *pure* and yet to read it for what we and our contemporaries can recognize as *psychology*.

(p. 155)

While his conception of integration (what I am calling the second approach) may be debatable, what is noteworthy in Roberts' approach is his claim that what we call psychology today is that of the "psychological 'establishment' – represented by psychology departments in major universities and the American Psychological Association" (p. 149). For Roberts, a main limitation of establishment psychology is its historical amnesia rooted in its Enlightenment and Romantic past, from which it derives its bias against Christianity. Roberts would define psychology more broadly, and so include the psychologies of Aristotle, the Desert Fathers, Augustine, Aquinas, Jonathan Edwards and others – and above all others, the Bible. Roberts challenges the positivistic narrative that has defined mainstream psychology for much of the past century.

Roberts' approach does not seek to subsume the psychology of the APA to Christian psychology. Indeed, from his point of view, that cannot be done, because "the psychologies of the twentieth century are all, in one way or another, rivals and alternatives to the Christian psychology" (p. 155). Hence his concern with purity and the dangers of secular psychology. Brent Slife and Jeffrey Reber (2009a) make a similar but more nuanced case for institutionalized biases – against not Christianity alone but theism in general – in mainstream psychology. They conclude that "theists require God as a

⁶ Graduate programs in the United States include the Fuller Theological Seminary, Regent University, and the Rosemead School of Psychology. The Institute for the Psychological Sciences is a Catholic graduate program aiming at integration of psychology and theology. Journals: *Edification: The Interdisciplinary Journal of the Society for Christian Psychology* and the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*. Organizations include the Christian Association for Psychological Sciences, the Society for Christian Psychology, and the Society of Catholic Social Scientists.

primordial premise . . . and naturalists deny this requirement” (Slife and Reber, 2009b, p. 130). While they seek dialogue with naturalistic (meaning metaphysically naturalistic) psychologists, still, they see no way to merge a theistic with such a psychology. So like others who take this third position, there is no unifying set of assumptions to bridge a psychology-with-God and one without God.

Catholic examples of this approach exist. A century ago, there were Catholic criticisms of the new psychology because it was a “psychology without a soul.” But even when this new psychology was disparaged for its neglect of the soul and for being materialistic, the Catholic psychology proposed in reply was not meant simply to exist alongside the materialistic one: it was meant to replace it. This could be proposed because these psychologists, Neoscholastic or not, did not intend to bring theological concepts or principles directly into psychology. Rather, the philosophical psychology that they articulated was sufficient to their purposes, especially as it provided proofs for the existence and immortality of the soul and its special creation by a Creator. Paul Vitz’s criticisms of secular psychology fall into this third type, because he seeks to base psychology on Christian principles.

Psychology instead of religion

The fourth alternative is the secular counterpart to the third. Freud’s *The Future of an Illusion* was a clear statement of it, an enlightenment essay that argued that, as religion no longer keeps human passion in check, there is the necessity – if we value civilization – to provide a more rational means for dealing with our desires. That alternative was, of course, psychoanalysis. Freud was not alone in seeing psychology as superseding religion. Freud’s was one way to read the positivist’s dream of the triumph of reason and science. John B. Watson’s radical behaviorism was another variant, as is Martin Seligman’s positive psychology.

Perhaps the most common form of this approach is that of positivism. Positivism derives from the nineteenth-century French thinker and founder of sociology, Auguste Comte. Comte proposed a history of human thought that progressed from religion and myth, in which natural events had divine causes – the gods cause lightning – to philosophical systems that purport to explain nature – the final cause of rain is to make the flowers grow – to the period of positive science, which is empirical and experimental. Positive science rejects religious and philosophical explanations, and the natural sciences have progressed by liberating themselves from religion and philosophy. A theme of the “new psychology” at the end of the nineteenth century was that psychology had indeed freed itself from philosophy, building on the other natural sciences: physics, chemistry, and physiology. Not all the significant psychologists a century ago accepted this positivist reading, including Wundt, but in the North American scene it was and remains the dominant view. Not all

theologians of the time were hostile to this reading of intellectual history, and many, especially liberal Protestant thinkers, agreed to the superiority of a purely naturalistic interpretation of natural events.

This fourth approach need not be as strident as the positivism of Freud or Watson. Taylor (1999) describes a spiritual tradition in American society, stretching back to colonial times, of people finding spiritual sustenance outside the established churches, largely through the cultivation of religious experiences. Much of this tradition entailed psychological theorizing and therapies, visible in the ways that phrenology and hypnotism were assimilated into nineteenth-century American culture, and also in what was called “New Thought” a century ago and called “New Age” today. For Taylor, in the rise of transpersonal psychology, this tradition of dissent, this tradition of the personal pursuit of spiritual growth, has found an institutional home within psychology. William James’ (1903) century-old set of lectures, *The varieties of religious experience*, is the key document of this attempt to transcend the boundaries between psychology and religion. Vitz (1994) and Myers (2000) take a less benign view of psychology-as-religion approach, seeing in it an idolization of the self. However, this spiritual-but-not-religious mindset has deep roots, going back, in other forms to be sure, to the fourteenth century. Hanegraaff (1996) sees it as a counter-movement to the rise of the natural sciences, flourishing first in Renaissance hermeticism and natural magic, and changing over time. Characteristic of the contemporary epoch is what he calls the “psychologization of religion and the sacralization of psychology” (p. 224), which may be a good definition of much of contemporary interest in New Age spirituality and in personal growth. Over the past forty years or so, this psychologized spirituality has earned institutional respectability and even legitimation, generating graduate programs and empirical research.⁷

Perhaps the most common form of this approach is less theoretical than practical: many people turn to one psychology or another in addition to the churches for spiritual sustenance. Some psychologies – Jungian, for example – often seem to promote this kind of psychology-as-religion (or unchurched spirituality), with their psychologized and symbolic readings of the Bible and of myths. Carter and Narramore (1979) depict this position in terms of two “models,” both of which tend to strip Scripture or theological formulations of any transcendent reference and make them “symbolic” of psychological categories. Thus, sin becomes a violation of the moral code (according to their reading of Orval Hobart Mowrer and Karl Menninger), rather than “an offense against God” (p. 84), and God “is certainly in some way a projection of our inner self” in the psychology of John Sanford, again according to Carter and Narramore. For Erich Fromm, “religion is constructive (and congruent with

⁷ For example, the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology and Naropa University. There is a *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*.

psychoanalysis) to the degree that it promotes freedom, love, truth, and independence” (Carter and Narramore, 1979, p. 83). If this variant substitutes psychology for religion, it provides a bridge to the religious realm for those who find themselves at odds with it. Psychology as a kind of secular spirituality de-emphasizes transcendent notions of the divine, seeking the holy within. At the same time, by drawing on contemporary physics, it articulates a spiritualized picture of the cosmos, so becoming a type of scientific spirituality.

All four approaches engage in boundary-work of one form or another. A common factor is that they identify psychology with mainstream scientific psychology, the “psychology of the American Psychological Association,” as one Neoscholastic (pejoratively) put it. This is because natural scientific psychology, for all its own diversity, is the dominant social, political, and economic force in psychology.

The boundaries today?

We live in a time of porous boundaries, insecure boundaries, invisible boundaries on every level. Political, economic, geographical, informational, social, and interpersonal boundaries are not what they used to be. Boundaries of the beginnings and ends of life lack clarity in the public sphere, and the margin of uncertainty grows in what Ivan Illich called our “amortal” society. Psychology, ever a twig in the cultural stream, follows suit. Some thirty-five years ago, the Dutch phenomenological psychologist, J. H. van den Berg (1971) wrote that, whereas in Freud’s day sexual matters lay in the unconscious, in the present moment, there is a “spiritual unconscious.” Well then, from a van den Bergian perspective, existence has mutated once again. Listen to the psychologists: it is now possible to speak of spirituality, “psychology’s clearest taboo” (Miller, 2005, p. 14). The taboo gone, we see that “disciplinary allegiance to secularism has long blinded psychology to phenomena that are of natural interest in understanding human behavior and has encouraged psychologists to divorce their science from the insights and priorities of a theistic perspective” (p. 15). Delaney and DiClemente (2005) reiterate this point: “Throughout most of the 20th century, the idea of taking Judeo-Christian teaching seriously within psychology was generally considered taboo” (p. 31). Transpersonalists and others, such as the Jungians, may object that they had not encountered the spiritual as a taboo, but truth be told, those groups continue to dance at the margins of the “psychology of the American Psychological Association.” What is different now is that in terms of working assumptions (such as the existence of choice in human action), topics (correlation of spiritual well-being and mental health), and methods (qualitative research primarily), religion and spirituality do not threaten mainstream psychology. Of course, this means a change in the mainstream, with developments such as positive psychology and its studies of character and virtue. So the taboo against religion has crumbled.

Other conflicts will arise. It is not difficult to imagine that this new interest in religion and spirituality will produce a secularist countermove across the boundary. Will psychologists in general think it is an advance that some psychologists can now speak of sin, to pick a prime example? What else comes through the embrace of a postulate for psychology of “an unseen spiritual dimension of reality to which humans are meaningfully related” (Miller, 2005, p. 16)?

A critical perspective

Religion and spirituality are surely basic foci of human action and thought, so it is important that psychology reckon with them. Nevertheless, there is reason to express concern over the violation of the old taboo against psychology making inroads into religion and spirituality. I will express this concern by taking a critical perspective in the course of relating the history of psychology and Catholicism. Let me explain the critical psychological approach I will take, since there are various things that fall under this name.

A clear account of a critical approach is Kurt Danziger’s (1994) discussion of how the history of psychology is written. He distinguishes two: internal and external histories. Internal histories are those written by psychologists for psychologists and, Danziger asserts, they tend to be celebratory. Like Little Jack Horner, the celebratory historian shows how psychology has overcome past obstacles and come to a clear road to the truth. This is the kind of history one sees in textbooks, and Boring’s *History of experimental psychology* (1950) is the classic example of celebratory insider history. Hans Van Rappard (1997), in partial rebuttal to Danziger, notes that some insider history is more lamentation than celebration, and he has a point. The history of psychology from Christian perspectives concentrates more on the secularism of psychology than on its glorious rise as a science. For example, Johnson and Jones (2000a) write that “the ‘new’ or *modern* psychology, then, was birthed through the union of a legitimate quest for empirically validated truth with a modernist worldview that separated psychology from theology and philosophy” (p. 31). This way of construing the history both celebrates and laments, for in invoking “modernism,” Johnson and Jones mean a “tendency to empty culture of its religious significance, discourse, and symbols” (p. 14). Nevertheless, in recent years the laments have turned to cautious alleluias as psychology has shown interest in religion and spirituality again, this time casting them in a favorable light: “For the first time in its history, the American Psychological Association has published a series of books on the interface of psychology with religion and spirituality” (Miller, 2005, p. 14). Whether they praise or blame, however, these histories of psychology and religion are insider histories.

Danziger calls for insider histories that take an external or critical stance, and in light of the importance of the topic of psychology and religion, I find that this

area is in need of such an approach. What characterizes it? A critical approach looks for the conditions of possibility for the manifestation of a phenomenon but, following Danziger, I take these conditions of possibility to be historical conditions. That is, I will not be seeking the ontological possibilities for the appearance of contested boundaries between psychology and Catholicism, as if there were some rift in the nature of the cosmos demanding them. The critical approach here means an examination of the historical conditions of possibility for boundary-work. Psychology's categories and methods are historical phenomena. What this means is that concepts such as personality, memory, perception, intelligence, need, neurosis, drive, etc., can be shown to have had historical contingencies at the basis of their formulation. Because of the human tendency to appropriate what is said about human nature, not only the categories of psychology have historical contingency: "human subjectivity, the reality behind the objects of psychological investigation, is itself strongly implicated in the historical process, both as agent and as product" (Danziger, 1994, p. 475). One of the chief ways that human subjectivity has been agent and product over the past century has been through the emergence of psychology in its various forms. We come to know ourselves and others, seek to change ourselves and others, through psychology. Other ages had other means at their disposal, as Foucault (1978) illustrated: stoic maxims, monastic ascetic practices, disciplines of the school, the prison, and the factory, were all means of coming to know and work with our very selves. So a critical approach seeks the historical conditions that made possible the emergence of particular forms of "psychology," "subjectivity," "religion," etc.

The study of the historicity of subjectivity and of psychology brings an "outsider" perspective to psychology. Nevertheless, it is a perspective that has a place and a hearing within psychology these days (Blackman, 1994; Danziger, 2003; Greer, 1997; Rose, 1996; Staeuble, 2006; Van Hoorn, 1972). This critical approach has a complex lineage itself, with the influences coming from phenomenology (van den Berg, 1972), Foucault (1972), social constructionism (Gergen, 1997), and other studies that take the historicity of the mind seriously (Duden, 1991; Vernant, 1991).

What this critical approach means for this book is that we shall look at the various conflicts as arising in specific cultural and historical moments. The conflict indicates what counted as "psychology" and what counted as "religion" at that moment. Moreover, within the conflict, we shall examine the particulars of the conflict. For example, one conflict was over confession and sexuality, and another over that of the will and obedience. What were these objects at the heart of each contested boundary between psychology and Catholicism? Most important, we shall ask about the configuration of human subjectivity in the conflicts. In each conflict, the character of subjectivity was at stake. Often enough, that this was at stake received recognition by at least some members of the conflict. For example, in early Catholic criticisms of a "psychology without a soul," there

was a clear understanding that what was at issue was not simply a philosophical concept, but that there were clear implications for the conception of the subject as an individual and as member of larger social bodies, implications for education, and most important of all, implications for human self-understanding as having an eternal destiny or not.

Part of the methodology that I will employ draws on what Foucault (1972) called “contradictions,” here, the contradictions between psychology and the Church during the past century: “contradictions are neither appearances to be overcome, nor secret principles to be uncovered. They are objects to be described for themselves, without any attempt being made to discover from what point of view they can be dissipated, or at what level they can be radicalized” (p. 151). I take this as a heuristic, intended to offset the “passion for unity” that fires many in the study of the relations between psychology and religion. Foucault continues: “By taking contradictions as objects to be described, archaeological analysis does not try to discover in their place a common form or theme, it tries to determine the extent and form of the gap that separates them . . . [It] describes the different *spaces of dissention*” (p. 152). If we look at “spaces of dissention,” this does not mean ignoring or denying spaces of consensus or convergence. It means, in my reading of it, suspending all assumptions of unity and harmony between psychology and religion. This kind of intellectual discipline is appropriate for the current moment, when mainstream psychology now studies religious topics and even, in some quarters, adopts religious presuppositions. Beliefs in pre-established harmony in this area are as commonplace as assertions of the fact/value dichotomy.

Foucault described types of contradictions, two of which are especially relevant: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic contradictions “reflect the opposition between distinct discursive formulations” (p. 153). Relevant to our study are those contradictions arising from differences between psychological discourses and the religious and theological discourses that were mingled with those of psychology. An example of that would be efforts to integrate natural scientific facts with biblical teachings. Intrinsic contradictions, writes Foucault, unlike extrinsic contradictions, “derive from a single positivity” (ibid.). These intrinsic contradictions are “two ways of forming statements, both characterized by certain objects, certain positions of subjectivity, certain concepts, and certain strategic choices” (ibid.). The single positivity at the heart of our analysis is that of “psychology/Catholicism.” Examples of intrinsic contradictions include the place of the soul in psychology, the meaning of symbols in our psychological lives, and the meaning of obedience to authority.

The political battles between evolutionary theory and creationism, for example, indicate extrinsic contradictions, since each side disputes the legitimacy of the ground from which the other speaks, biology and biblical fundamentalism not participating in the same knowledge system. In the intrinsic contradiction

between the Church and psychology, however, both the subject⁸ and the objects belong to a single and common ground and area of concern: “modern man in search of a soul,” to borrow Jung’s (1933) phrase. Of course, both psychology and the Church are not simply bodies of thought; they are complex institutions with considerable overlap, making for possible conflict. The “single positivity” within which intrinsic contradictions between psychology and the Church arise is the teaching authority and the pastoral activities of the Church, which correspond to the expertise of psychologists, particularly in applied areas such as education and psychotherapy. I call them intrinsic rather than extrinsic contradictions in order to stress, at least as a hypothesis, that those who have claimed that in some way psychology substitutes for religion (I include Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and John B. Watson here, as well as their critics in psychology, such as Rudolf Allers and David Powlison) notice *something* that those who see the two as capable of being integrated or otherwise harmoniously related miss. Not that the claims for hegemony are simply correct on their own terms, but that there is a region that psychology and religion co-occupy.

An overview of psychology and Catholicism: contested boundaries

The critical approach brings a number of questions to each topic. In addition to the obvious ones, such as attending to the specifics of person, place, and time for each of the contests that we will review, there are others. These questions include:

- (1) In each instance, what is meant by “psychology”? What kinds of claims are made about this object of the discourses under question? What is the perceived history and organization of this object? These questions are necessary because “psychology” means a number of things: the new experimental psychology, psychoanalysis, humanistic psychology, psychotherapy, etc.
- (2) From where in the Catholic Church does the opposition to psychology arise? Into which context do we need to situate the conflict from the point of view of the Church? Does the source of the opposition lie at a local level, national level, or at the level of the Vatican? What is at stake?
- (3) For both psychology and the Church: who has the authority to take up the “subject position” in the dispute? Who, that is, is in a position to speak the truth? How is authority understood, and what are its bases?
- (4) Which types of discourses and practices frame the contest? Is it a discourse on modernism, on progress, on democracy? Are the practices those of teaching, counseling, administering the sacraments, etc.?

⁸ “Subject” refers to who or what can make authoritative statements: who speaks for psychology? Who speaks for the Church? By the term “objects” is meant the categories of things that “subjects” can speak about: What is psychology? Is psychoanalysis a substitute for Confession? What is intelligence? Motivation? Will?

- (5) Not to invent a contest where none exists: if there is agreement or harmony, in what terms is it meant and carried out? Does the harmony take place within a larger contest?

With these questions in mind, let me turn to the specific issues that will occupy the body of this book, chapter by chapter.

Chapter 2. The major fault line: modernism and psychology

No discussion of psychology and Catholicism can ignore the trauma of the modernist crisis of a century ago. Modernism was a name given to many things, but for many in the Catholic Church it signified a profound threat to the integrity of Christian teachings. Modernism chiefly meant attempts to update church teachings and organization with the findings of the modern sciences. Modernism, it was claimed, was the desire to substitute “science” for “religion,” using quotation marks to indicate that we will need to specify exactly what was supposed to replace what. The shadows of this crisis fall on boundaries between psychology and the Church to this day in a variety of ways. Psychology was implicated in the modernist crisis, at least indirectly, since many of the modernists, real and alleged, made appeal to experience and to the subjective a part of their theology. The name of William James appeared in modernist literature. The 1918 *Code of Canon Law*, which solidified the Church’s position against modernism, named many of the philosophical bases of psychology as antithetical to Christianity. But the modernist crisis is not only of historical significance: it plays through much of the discourse over the place of psychology in the Church to the present day. One of the earliest and most important Catholic psychologists, Cardinal Mercier, articulated a clearly anti-modernist foundation for psychology at the turn of the twentieth century. However, the intertwining of his story with that of one of the leading modernist, George Tyrrell, who adumbrated a psychology of the subconscious, shows how deeply the emergence of scientific psychology was tied to this major and divisive issue in the Catholic world.

Chapter 3. Neoscholastic psychology

Neoscholastic psychology was the major Catholic response to modernism and to the rise of the new psychology in the first half of the twentieth century. The Neoscholastic empirical psychologists walked a fine line between charges from some Catholics of abandoning authoritative Church teaching on the one hand, and accusations by some psychologists of being unscientific on the other. Neoscholastic psychology became the Catholic response to the new psychology because in 1879, Pope Leo XIII institutionalized a return to the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas as the foundation for Catholic thinking in philosophy and

theology. Any psychology that developed after that time was supposed to conform to the categories of Thomistic thought. At the same time, this Thomistic view recognized that psychology, like all the sciences, had its proper autonomy. Neoscholastic psychology developed two paths: the first a philosophical psychology that articulated a theory of the soul, and the second a scientific psychology, employing experimental and statistical methods to compete with positivistic conceptions of psychology. Neoscholastic psychology flourished in both academic and applied settings until the Thomistic “synthesis” broke up in the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1962–5).

Neoscholastic psychology led to the first contest we shall examine: debates over the rise of the “new” psychology at the end of the nineteenth century. This new psychology was an experimental psychology and it was a physiological psychology. For some Catholics, these characteristics were sufficient to call it into question as a “psychology without a soul,” since characteristic of much of the new psychology, although not of all, was its abandonment of metaphysical questions, including those about the soul. Nevertheless, it was more the practical applications promised by the new psychology that made it suspect in Catholic circles. At the same time, the practical implications of psychology proved to be the royal road to the acceptance of psychology in Catholic communities.

Abandoning the soul meant a number of things beyond the loss of a metaphysical center for the human person. It also meant the reduction of thinking to the level of sensation, and the human ability to conceive universals was important in Catholic thought in the early twentieth century, because our ability to do so was said to rest on the immateriality of the rational part of the soul. Also threatening Thomistic teachings on the intellect was the elevation of the importance of the instincts and feelings, which seemed to pervert the Church’s image of human nature. So we shall investigate what the Neoscholastics had to say about human cognition.

In so doing, especially looking at the work of Thomas Verner Moore and his students, we see that they developed a psychology that, while Neoscholastic, drew on other streams of thought too. Moore was not a purist in his psychology, and he received some criticism for it. What happened was that a modern Neoscholastic psychology developed, with the ability to engage the Catholic and the larger psychological communities at the same time. We shall also look briefly at other contributions to Neoscholastic psychology, in particular developmental psychology and clinical assessment, there focusing on work of Magda Arnold and her students.

Chapter 4. Psychology as the boundary: Catholicism, spiritualism, and science

Whatever their limitations, the Neoscholastics had an expansive vision of human life. Death was not its end, and they argued that the facts of human

life led to the conclusion that we are ensouled, that the soul is immaterial, and that we have an immortal destiny. They rejected materialism and phenomenism. The spiritual world was real, we have access to it, and it had its powers, promises, and dangers. Mainstream psychology, with some exceptions, such as the all-encompassing William James, held the spiritual world at arm's length after a brief love affair with the psychic researchers. That being said, the squeamishness of the experimentalists was not shared by all who had psychological interests and – given that psychology was not defined solely by the academics – we see that psychology in other contexts was very much a spiritual psychology. I refer here to that broad sea of interest in the influence of the mind over the body and, with it, of the transcendental view of mind that has characterized much of American popular religion and psychology from colonial times onward. Called the “shadow culture” by Taylor and the “unchurched” by Fuller, this tradition has taken various forms over the past three hundred years. In most cases, it involved the incorporation of non-Christian, pantheistic or quasi-pantheistic views of the universe with some form of Christianity. In more recent years, under the umbrella name of “New Age” thought, the Christian component may be muted. It definitely relativized Christian teaching, typically asserting that Christ was one of those enlightened beings who appear from time to time – and who foreshadow the inevitable evolution of human consciousness to a higher state. This chapter looks at the ways that in the arguments over spiritualism, hypnosis, and various forms of mental healing, including Christian Science and Mind Cure, psychology played a boundary role between the Spiritualists and modern science. It is a complex story, because there was a Catholic version of spiritualism and mental healing, associated with shrines, in particular with that at Lourdes in France. Here the Church defended the miraculous nature of some of the cures, using psychological categories to discriminate between real and merely psychological healing. The chapter closes with attention to James Joseph Walsh, a New York physician and author of *Psychotherapy*, an early twentieth-century attempt to integrate the results of the study of hypnosis, spiritualistic phenomena, psychological medicine, and Catholic teaching.

Chapter 5. Psychoanalysis versus the power of will

As a means for treating mental disorders and as a compelling theory of the soul and, indeed, of religion, psychoanalysis threw down the gauntlet to people of faith throughout the twentieth century. The story of Catholic responses to psychoanalysis is a complex one, ranging from outright rejection to measured embrace. Early Catholic responses focused on the relationship between psychoanalysis and the sacrament of confession. Not doubting psychoanalysis' effectiveness (unless to denounce it as pseudo-science), views ranged from analysis as a complement to the confessional to it being an inferior replacement of it,

thus affirming the power of confession not only to forgive sins but also to heal the sufferings of the soul. And if confession does the latter, what is the purpose of psychoanalysis?

Neoscholastic interpretations of Freud's work varied, with Thomas Verner Moore giving measured acceptance to some of the techniques, if not to the theory behind them. Then there is the story of Edward Boyd Barrett, the Irish Jesuit who came to the United States in the 1920s. His work is often referred to in histories of the Catholic critiques of Freud, but less well known is how he developed his own version of psychoanalysis, how he left the Jesuits, hung out his shingle in Greenwich Village, and then, late in life, how he reconciled with the Church. His writings, especially on sexuality, before and after his break with Rome, show two strikingly different interpretations of Freud and of Catholic thought and life at the time.

Psychoanalysis did have an impact on one area of traditional Catholic practice – the training of the will. Will-training was no doubt less a Thomistic than a Cartesian practice, but it was widespread throughout the period covered in this book. Psychoanalysis cast doubts on it, and Moore, with his dynamic psychology, agreed with the critiques. Nevertheless, Catholic psychological thinkers kept a place for the will in their psychologies, from Moore and Boyd Barrett to van Kaam, despite the eclipse of the will as a category in mainstream psychology.

In 1940, the Viennese psychiatrist Rudolf Allers attacked Freud's theory and therapy as incompatible with Catholic principles and anthropology. His colleague at the Catholic University of America, Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, took up Allers' position and reopened the conflict. In 1947, Sheen denounced Freudianism from the pulpit of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, raising a storm of protest from Catholic psychiatrists in the area. Among the marvels of that furor was that no one questioned the effectiveness of psychoanalysis. Its allegedly destructive effects on the soul, making peace of soul impossible, were the object of Sheen's criticism.

In the 1950s, more nuanced interpretations of Freud appeared, often published in the Catholic periodical, *Cross Currents*. In addition, new versions of psychoanalysis served to dispel some of the antagonism with religion. With the decline of psychoanalysis as the dominant form of psychiatry, much of the conflict abated.

Chapter 6. From out of the depths: Carl Jung's challenges and Catholic replies

Forty years ago, one could speak confidently about ours being a secularizing age: the more science and technology progressed, the more religion receded. Carl G. Jung could write about "modern man in search of a soul" as a consequence of secularization, with religious symbols, rituals, and beliefs losing their force in increasing numbers of lives. There were for the first time in history

entire nations, especially the Soviet Union, dedicated to atheism. The positivist dream was being fulfilled.

But secularization has not simply progressed. The public sphere is in many ways increasingly areligious, but this is highly contested ground. If much of Western Europe and Canada seem contentedly secular, in the United States, as in many nations in the east and the south, intense religious ferment has exploded on the cultural and political stages. Religious and spiritual issues, once on the fringe of mainstream psychology, as represented by the APA, have come front and center. Even biomedicine, that bulwark of secularized views of the body and illness, acknowledges more readily the spiritual and religious dimensions of life and their usefulness in preserving health and fighting illness. One cannot speak of desecularization, however, for secularization proceeds apace. The situation is more complex and fragmented, and within and without the dominant secularized and tolerant culture, there are pockets of resacralization and large areas where religious views, often hostile to the natural sciences, hold sway. Most telling of all is the increasing presence among us of those who are “spiritual but not religious,” those simultaneously secularized and engaged with the sacred.

If we turn to the question of spirituality in psychology, in relation to the Catholic Church, the work of Carl Jung is most prominent. Jung is an important thinker in this area, and his work itself occupies a boundary condition. One of the most important psychologists of the twentieth century, his work rarely finds a place in academic psychology, although it has influenced literary, religious, and cultural studies in the universities. Jungian psychology verges on “pop” psychology, despite Jung’s enormous erudition and despite his lack of the easy optimism and the positive thinking that characterizes popular spiritualized psychology. Jungian psychology thrives at independent institutes and through the practice of analytical psychology. Catholic takes on Jung and the Jungians are various as well, and this chapter begins with the Catholic (mis)appropriation of Jung. While a number of psychologists and theologians will occupy attention, at the center is Victor White, the English Dominican theologian who had a complicated relationship with Jung and Jungian thought. The deaths of White in 1960 and Jung in 1961 mark the end of the pre-Vatican II era, when anxieties over modernism were foremost.

The starting point for the significance of Jung’s thought is the “wasteland” motif of the post-World War I period. There was a widespread sense that modern men and women were cut off from the myths and traditions that rooted and nourished human living. The “hollow men” who could no longer believe in Christian teachings turned to Jung for help. Jung’s claim to be a natural scientist was granted him by many a Catholic thinker, although others, such as Agostino Gemelli and Magda Arnold, questioned the basis of his psychology.

Jung, unlike many of his contemporaries in psychology, actively sought out theologians, philosophers, classicists, and others for purposes of understanding the nature of the soul. In this way, Jung provided a model for how a

psychology interested in its relationships with Catholicism (and religion generally) might move forward today in recovering from its amnesia and connecting with the long traditions of thought and action about the human soul and its well-being. In this chapter on Jung, we thus look at the Catholic thinkers who participated in the Eranos conferences from the 1930s to the 1950s. We then turn to how Catholic psychologists replied to Jung's work on the cure of the soul, especially the work of Raymond Hostie, Josef Goldbrunner, and centrally, Victor White. White's Thomistic interpretation of archetypes and symbols was an important contribution to the development of a Catholic perspective in psychology.

Chapter 7. Institutionalizing the relationship

The boundaries that psychology staked out in Catholic contexts were not only theoretical and practical, they were also institutional. Psychology confronted and contacted (Gillespie, 2007a) Catholicism in the establishments of psychology departments in American colleges and universities, a process that was still contested as late as the 1950s in most Catholic colleges, even later in a few others. In this chapter, we look at the Catholic universities that had the first graduate programs in psychology. The incorporation of psychology into what had previously been a domain of philosophy and theology, shows a surprising development. In all four of these universities, psychology established itself in part by showing its applicability to pressing social problems that were the pastoral concern of the Church. While often beginning as experimental programs, their genius lay in applied psychology.

Then we turn to Catholic psychological organizations, starting with a brief look at the Chicago Society of Catholic Psychologists, begun by Charles I. Doyle, SJ,⁹ in the 1930s. Doyle was present when, after War World II, the American Catholic Psychological Association (ACPA) was formed. Then, we turn to the 1952 founding of the Guild of Catholic Psychiatrists (later, the National Guild of Catholic Psychiatrists). These professional organizations provided a ground, within an identifiably Catholic context, for the cultivation of psychology and psychiatry. The differences between the ACPA and the Guild shed much light on the differences between psychology and psychiatry as they do on two ways of rapprochement between psychology and Catholicism.

Chapter 8. Humanistic psychology and Catholicism: dialogue and confrontation

The "third force" in American psychology promised a new conception of the boundary between psychology and Catholic thought in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁹ SJ, the Society to Jesus, i.e. the Jesuits.

Here was a psychology that was not reductionistic and that did think that questions of value and meaning were important in human life. But the humanists and the phenomenologists also questioned the boundaries between religion and science by first challenging the conception of science that the Neoscholastics had accepted. The old division of labor between the philosophical and the empirical psychologies broke down in this challenge. In addition, humanists and existentialists alike challenged religion by delving into spiritual issues. The picture is complicated by the fact that these trends in psychology coincided with the “cultural revolutions” of the 1960s, which cast all authority into question. As an example, in 1968, a group of psychologists active in the ACPA raised a series of questions in response to the encyclical, *Humanae vitae*, asking if the understandings of human relationships in the encyclical were based on sound knowledge of human nature.

We examine humanistic challenges both to natural science psychology and to the Neoscholastic formulation of a basis for natural science psychology. Psychologists did not initiate the latter – the break with Neoscholasticism originated with theologians and philosophers. Later, in the 1950s, a number of Neoscholastically trained psychologists turned to the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers and to phenomenological thought (which had many ties to Neoscholasticism). The work of Charles A. Curran and Adrian van Kaam features large in this transition, although so does the work of Magda Arnold, Raymond McCall, and Alden Fisher.

The chief significance of humanistic and phenomenological psychologies for our story, however, is its relationship to Catholic spiritual psychology. So this older psychology is presented – an ascetical psychology with deep roots – and its continuation and transformation in the work of van Kaam and others. Themes of the will and of the spirit emerge, as well as how these themes played themselves out in the distinct historical movement of the 1960s. The meanings of “authority” and “obedience” were irretrievably altered as a result.

Chapter 9. Trading zones between psychology and Catholicism

At boundaries, other things than conflicts occur. One of the most important is trade or commerce – a hermeneutic enterprise par excellence – and in this chapter we will draw on the notion of “trading zones” developed by the historian of science, Peter Galison. We will look at two different trading zones, one in education, the other in counseling. To establish a presence in Catholic universities, psychologists such as Moore developed a “pidgin,” a way of speaking that both the psychological and the Catholic communities could understand, even if they understood the key terms in strikingly different ways. A key word of this pidgin was “personality,” which evoked the soul and the unity of human nature for the Catholic community, and empirical studies of traits for the psychologists. At the level of praxis, the development of pastoral

psychology in the 1950s was a prime example of a trading zone, as a full-fledged “creole” formed to create a new discipline in the Catholic psychological world. What we see, however, is that after Vatican II, the older pre-established harmony between psychology and moral theology broke down, within both sciences and between them, as psychology removed homosexuality from its roster of psychopathologies, and some moral theologians rejected earlier objectivistic views of human action. This topic points to conflicting boundaries that developed after the period addressed in this book.

Chapter 10. Crossings

At this point in our history, it is time to look ahead and see what the prospects are for future contested boundaries. The nature of the person is the most central, and in terms that psychology used to understand, the nature of the soul is perhaps the most pressing. A term that itself sits on the boundaries that are at question in this book, a notion of the soul is the most easy to reject as being unscientific and as importing into psychology something that is best left out. In reply, I contest that boundary. Without committing to a particular conception of the soul, the question arises, as it did for Franz Brentano more than a century ago, whether psychology loses something central in losing the soul. Drawing on the previous chapters, this *final chapter* asks if there is a conception of the soul or the psyche that has a place in psychology, however defined. It asks further: can there be a conception of the soul rooted in empirical evidence, in experience? Can such a concept lend itself to philosophical and theological discourse? To anticipate: there is such a conception, and it has roots in Neoscholastic, psychoanalytical, Jungian, and phenomenological approaches in psychology. Formulation of this concept of the soul marks the boundary of the present study.

To proceed with the new crossings of the boundaries between psychology and Catholicism, crossings that do not follow the worn paths of modernism and Neoscholasticism and Jungian psychology and humanistic psychology, to turn toward the future, that is, we must Janus-like turn to the past. In conclusion, I propose a *ressourcement*, a turn to the sources of our collective discourses on all things psychological, pure and applied, to find the refreshment needed to forge ahead into uncharted regions of the borderland.

Is there a Catholic psychology?

Henryk Misiak and Virginia Staudt asked this question in their landmark work, *Catholics in psychology* (1954). Their answer? It is a complex answer, an unreconciled answer. First of all, they assert:

There is no Catholic psychology any more than there is a Catholic biology, Catholic physics, or Catholic medicine . . . The fact that in scientific

psychology there is no discussion or mention of the soul need neither surprise us nor create any hostility toward psychology, or suspicion or condemnation of it, such as was found among so many Catholic scholars in the early history of psychology.

(p. 13)

Misiak and Staudt drew the boundaries by asserting that psychology is a natural science and so makes no philosophical or theological claims. In this, their position is that of Kendall's, described above. In fact, they state that "Catholic psychologists can still retain their philosophical and religious beliefs, while collaborating with materialists or physicalists in the discovery of the facts" (p. 14). They go further:

Since Catholic psychologists are not only psychologists but also Catholics, they will always endeavor to integrate psychology, philosophy, and theology . . . ; but this endeavor does not preclude their participation in science even if this science assumes physicalistic methodology or is cultivated by people who do not share or care about Catholic philosophy or theology.

(*ibid.*)

The integration will be in the person of the psychologist and not in psychology. But this division of labor, which allows the Catholic psychologist to function in what sounds like a hostile environment within psychology, is complicated by the fact that "all three – psychology, philosophy, and theology – besides having a common object of study, namely, man, also have a common goal, the pursuit of truth" (p. 15). In their schema in which these three studies exist within a hierarchical relationship, there can be only apparent conflict and not real conflict, since truth is one.

But what if the hierarchy breaks down? What if how the "common object of study" construed philosophically within psychology conflicts with how the object is conceived within the regnant theology? What if presuppositions in psychology really matter, as many have argued over the years? Then what? It seems that if any of these questions are pursued, then the question of a Catholic psychology surfaces, as has the possibility of an evangelical Christian psychology. In other words, the question is not so easily settled. So the question will haunt the entire book. Only at the end can we return to it.