

PRESENTATION

This volume originates from the XXVI International Conference *Emotions and Flourishing: From Magda Arnold's Proposal to Contemporary Psychological and Philosophical Perspectives*, held in Rome from 25 to 27 February 2026 within the framework of the [Human Flourishing Project](#) of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. The conference brought together scholars in philosophy, psychology, education, and related disciplines to examine the role of emotions in human flourishing and to reconsider the enduring significance of Magda B. Arnold's work for contemporary research.

Magda Arnold's contribution to the study of emotion occupies a distinctive place in twentieth-century psychology. Her research on appraisal, emotion, motivation, personality, memory, and neurophysiological processes was guided by a comprehensive understanding of the human person. Rather than treating emotions as irrational forces or merely subjective states, Arnold understood them as intentional and motivational responses grounded in the appraisal of objects and situations as significant for the person. Her account therefore highlights the close relationship between cognition, affectivity, desire, action, and personal development.

This integrated perspective provides the intellectual point of departure for the present collection. The volume does not aim simply to reconstruct Arnold's theory, nor does it seek to establish a single interpretative framework for the study of emotion. Its broader purpose is to promote a dialogue between philosophical and psychological approaches, exploring how their different methods and conceptual languages can contribute to a richer understanding of emotions and their place in a flourishing human life.

The contributions are organised around four interconnected areas. The first part examines the integration of philosophy and psychology in Arnold's work and considers her intellectual legacy in relation to broader traditions of emo-

tion theory, philosophical anthropology, phenomenology, and the philosophy of psychology. The second part focuses on the relationship between emotions and human flourishing, addressing questions concerning desire, meaning, well-being, suffering, personal integration, and the good life. The third part explores the role of emotions in virtue, character, and moral formation, with particular attention to affective maturity, habits, practical reason, moral education, and the formation of evaluative and motivational dispositions. The final part extends the discussion to social, educational, and clinical contexts, showing how the study of emotion and flourishing can illuminate concrete areas of contemporary human experience.

Across these different fields, the volume is united by a common set of questions. How should emotions be understood within the unity of the person? What is their relationship to cognition, desire, value, and action? How do emotions contribute to the formation of character and identity? In what sense can they support—or hinder—human flourishing? And how can philosophical concepts such as virtue, practical reason, happiness, and the good life enter into a constructive dialogue with psychological accounts of well-being, self-regulation, personality, and motivation?

The volume thus seeks to continue the interdisciplinary orientation that characterised both Magda Arnold's work and the conference from which it emerged. By bringing together philosophical reflection, psychological inquiry, and applied perspectives, it aims to contribute to a more integrated understanding of emotions: not as isolated experiences, but as dimensions of personal life that shape how human beings perceive value, respond to the world, form relationships, act, and pursue a meaningful and flourishing existence.

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