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**Arthur Prior in the 1940s:
Letters and un-published works of Prior 1946-1949.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of:

**Masters
In
Philosophy**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the private and academic life of Arthur N. Prior. Arthur Prior is one of New Zealand's most famous philosophers, best known for his work in logic and his invention of tense logic in the 1950s. However, this thesis covers events and details of Prior's life in the 1940s, before his work in tense logic became recognised. The purpose of exploring this decade in Prior's life, through reading and interpreting the private correspondence that Prior shared with his wife Mary Prior as well as his good friend D. D. Raphael, is to provide the Priorian community with greater insight into who Arthur Prior was in this decade. Arthur Norman Prior (1914-1969) was born in Masterton, which is a rural town situated in the North Island of New Zealand. Following his graduation from Otago University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy in 1935, Prior's life and understanding of the world changed over the following years. There is a good account of Prior's life throughout the 1930s up until 1940, thanks to the scholastic contributions of Mike Grimshaw. However, in the later half of the 1940s there is not a great deal of information available about Prior's life. Therefore, this thesis explores Prior's personal life and academic contributions in these years, through the lens of Prior's letters and unpublished works. This thesis is an exploration of Prior's philosophical and academic journey in the 1940s, as well as an exploration of who Arthur Prior was as a family man.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, this thesis could not have been possible without the support of the scholars who maintain *The Virtual Lab for Prior Studies*. I must also give acknowledgment to my supervisor, Adriane Rini, who has supported and encouraged me throughout my time as a student of hers since 2016. Without Adriane's incredible level of support and confidence in my learning, I would not have produced this piece of writing. Martin Prior has provided me with some great information over the last year and was always willing to do so, therefore I must give thanks to him. I want to give acknowledgment to my mother and father, who also supported and encouraged me throughout my studies. Finally, I want to acknowledge my fiancé Tash, who was more than happy to listen to my rambling over these last two- and a-bit years.

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Introduction

- **The Virtual Lab for Prior Studies**

During the months of January through to March in 2020, I was part of a project in which I was given thirty documents to transcribe and annotate. These documents are part of the 1663 documents that currently make up *The Virtual Lab for Prior Studies*. This *Virtual Lab*, as I will call it, contains unpublished works of Arthur Prior, that his son Martin and daughter Ann have made available to the lab. This is not a publicly accessible site, and access must be provided by members of the team that are currently working on the Prior documents, some of whom work at the University of Copenhagen and Aalborg University in Denmark. The Prior project is a global effort. These documents range from essays, newspaper articles, diary entries, article submissions in journals and a wide variety of private letters written by Arthur Prior himself. Once an unpublished document has been transcribed and proof-read, it is then uploaded onto a publicly accessible site called *The Nachlass of Arthur Prior*. From here, these documents can then be downloaded and used by scholars around the world.

During the three months that I was assigned to the transcription project, I was allocated several documents to transcribe that Prior wrote between the years of 1946 and 1949. Furthermore, each letter required annotations that are provided to assist the reader in understanding several things, such as who Prior may have been referring to when he mentions names, the locations of place names in these letters, as well as general historical and contextual information. In **Part I** of this thesis, I have included seventeen letters from the *Virtual Lab*. These letters have been presented in chronological order because this allows us to understand Prior's thought processes and day-to-day lifestyle in a unique way. It also means that all events and publications that Prior refers to are presented in a clear order, which is important. These years that I have selected to write about are years of Prior's life that were like none other. We are given insight into the basic everyday parts of Prior's being because of these letters. They allow us to see Prior as a family man as well as an intellect, which only does him more justice. In my eyes they are an invaluable source of information, and I hope that you as the reader will come to view them in this way too. Ten out of the seventeen letters that I include are addressed to Prior's wife Mary, written by Arthur. Six letters are addressed to D. D. Raphael and are written by Prior, and one letter is written by D. D. Raphael and is addressed to Prior. I have also included two pieces of writing that are not letters, and these documents will be discussed in **Part III** of this thesis. I

decided to include these two transcriptions in **Part I** along with the letters to ensure that there is no confusion throughout this discussion between Prior's writing and my own writing.

- **My Objective**

Following **Part I**, in **Part II** I discuss what we can learn from these letters. The main objective of Part I is to discuss the seventeen letters and provide them with detailed annotations. This 'sets the scene' in one sense and creates an opening for discussion. Therefore, both **Part I** and **Part II** are independent, but also are reliant on one another. The main theme that emerges from these letters which will be discussed in **Part II** is Prior as a man, in which I discuss Prior's parental relationship with baby Martin, and Prior's relationship with Mary. **Part II** includes historical information that allows us to understand Prior as a family man in comparison to other New Zealand men and fathers in the 1940s. This part in the thesis encapsulates exactly what is significant about Arthur Prior's private letters, as we can examine Prior as a family man in a unique way. **Part III** is focussed on Prior as an intellect in the 1940s, with his religious and political beliefs and ideas taking place in the discussion. In this third and final section in this thesis, I discuss two transcriptions that I have provided in **Part I**. These two transcriptions (*Tomorrow We Die* and *Background to Overseas News*) allow us to examine the unique intellectual pursuits and interests of Prior's in the 1940s. They also help to 'round out' Prior's unpublished writing from this period of the 1940s.

I have chosen to write a thesis about Arthur Prior as a family man and then as an intellect in the 1940s, because there is a story to be told. On 02/07/45, Prior was officially discharged from the RNZAF. Prior divorced Clare Hunter, his first wife, sometime during the War, and he returned to New Zealand remarried to Mary Wilkinson, following their wedding on the 22/10/43 in Riccarton, a suburb in Christchurch (NZDF War Records). On 14/09/44, Martin Prior was born in Christchurch. From this point onward through until the end of 1949, I believe that there are parts from Prior's life that are yet to be explored and understood. The main purpose behind this thesis is to provide the Priorian scholarly community a detailed evaluation of a part of Arthur Prior's life. By contributing my findings, I hope to add to the continuously growing and changing perception and understanding of who Arthur Prior was, in this case as an intellectual but also as a father. By providing the following transcriptions in their edited and annotated format, I hope this gives something of value back to the various Prior scholars who make the *Virtual Lab* an important source of information.

I have come to think of this thesis as a continuation of sorts of Mike Grimshaw's book *Arthur Prior – A 'Young Progressive'* (2018). Grimshaw's work includes 39 letters that share the private correspondence between Arthur Prior and Ursula Bethell as well as Hugh Teague between the years of 1936 and 1941. Following the completion of his Bachelor of Arts degree and graduation in 1936, Prior married Clare Hunter, a free-lance reporter who was described as a radical and 'dangerous' woman (Copeland, 2020). In 1937, Following the completion of his MA in Philosophy, Arthur and Clare set out on a voyage over to Europe to live a 'bohemian' lifestyle, writing and reading their way through Europe. Therefore, it is important to remember that the letters Grimshaw has included in *Arthur Prior – A 'Young Progressive'*, were written by Prior when he was in Europe, apart from the last one written when Prior and Clare had returned to New Zealand in July 1941. Both Mike Grimshaw as well as Jack Copeland, who wrote the introduction for Grimshaw's work, agree that during these 'bohemian' years abroad, Prior was "anything but collegial" but was in fact was "unashamedly confrontational" (Grimshaw, 2002, p. 483), and was a "rather priggish young man" (Copeland, 2020). Both Arthur's and Clare's interest in communism during these years was substantial. Hugh Teague, who was Arthur's cousin, as well as a communist, would have surely enjoyed the correspondence concerning communism that they had during these years. In 1938, Prior wrote to Hugh from Roquebrune, a small town in the Mediterranean, giving details of his interest in French Communist papers and Communist meetings. (Grimshaw, 2018, p. 149-151). It is fair to say that Clare's influence on Prior was part of who he was as a man in the 1930s. While Prior eventually removed himself from communism and its ideologies, Clare Hunter did not. Following their divorce, records show that Clare travelled to Russia in the 1970's, where she became further involved in Communism (Grimshaw, 2018, p. 24). Regardless, Prior during these earlier years was a very different man than the man who emerges in the 1940s. His thoughts and writing from the 1930s contain a certain precociousness, that gives the impression that Prior lacked any sort of social consciousness (Rini, 2020, p. 19), but this is not the case by the 1940s, as this thesis will make clear.

Grimshaw's *Arthur Prior – A 'Young Progressive'*, contains a great deal of information on who Prior was in these earlier years. The 39 letters that Grimshaw transcribed and annotated, give us valuable insight into this part of Prior's life. Therefore, I felt that by including the 19 documents that I have transcribed and annotated, I may be able to do the same and give insight into the man that Prior became. A note: there are three transcriptions from 1948 and one transcription from 1949 that I have not included in this thesis. The reasoning behind this is

because they are dense with Prior's thoughts on syllogistic logic, which he discusses in letters addressed to D. D. Raphael. These four letters are also a combined 14,000 words, which I decided was too much material, considering that this thesis will not cover Prior's thoughts on syllogistic logic in the 1940s. However, these transcriptions will be made available in *The Nachlass of Arthur Prior* in the near future.

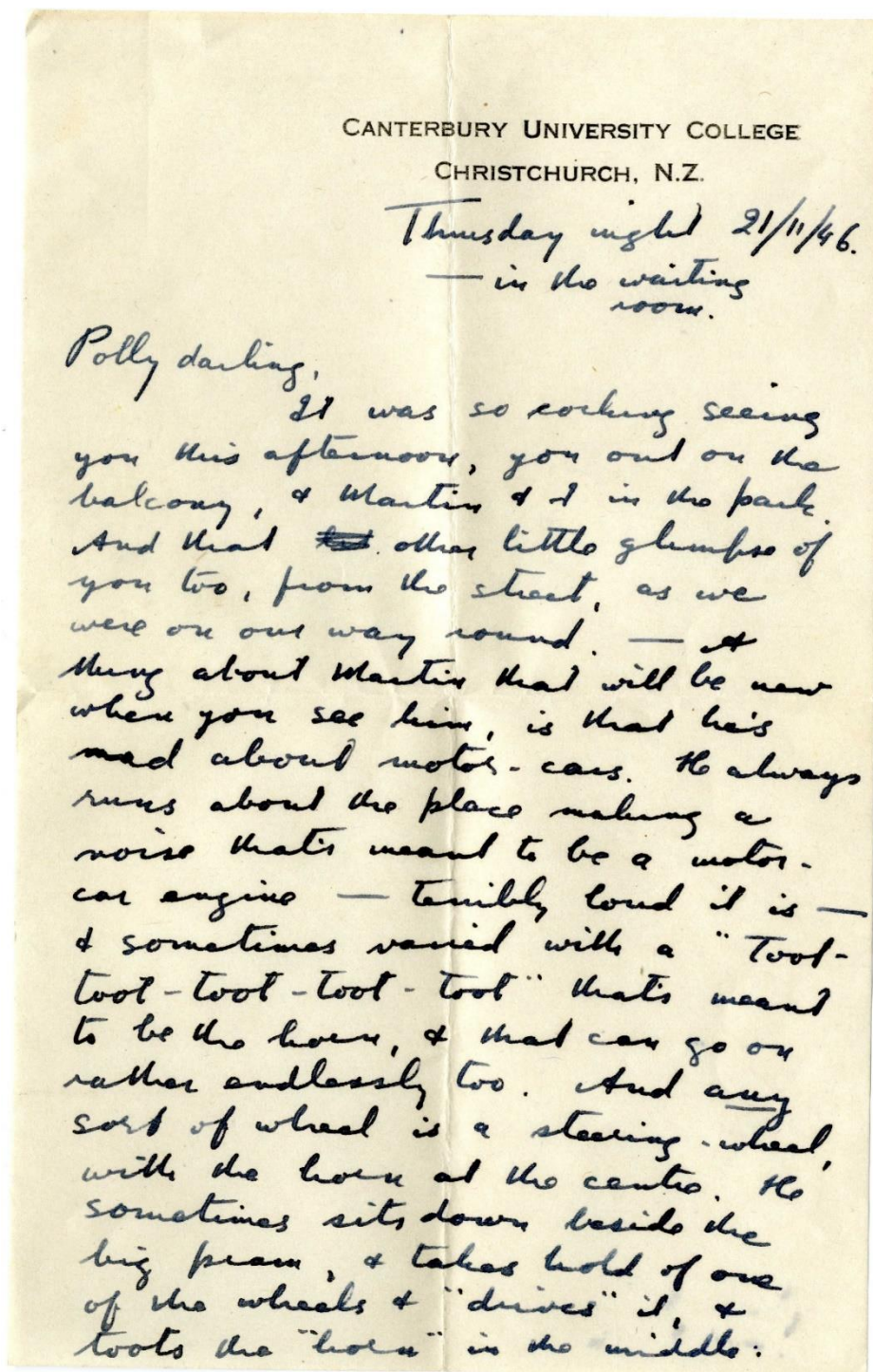
By November in 1946, which is when the first letter that I have included was written by Prior, Arthur had a loving and supportive wife and a two-year-old son. Prior was a different man, compared to the 'angry young man' that Prior was suggested to have been from the 1930s. By this point in his life, Prior was very different compared to the young man that he was when he wrote his *Three Little Essays* in 1931. Prior wrote this collection of three essays titled *Essays Literary, Essays Religious* and *Essays Scientific* during his last year at Wairarapa College in September and October (Øhrstrøm, Jakobsen, Prior, Rini, 2020, p. 5). One theme present through much of *Essays Religious* (1931) is Prior's thoughts on pre-destination and human freedom. This theme makes up a significant part of Prior's intellectual growth and development throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s. For example, Prior becomes interested in Calvinism at an early age because of the determinism-based ideas and literature, that turned him away from the Methodist church of which he grew up attending. Prior's interest in Calvinism continued through into the 1940s. For example, Prior wrote the piece *Robert Barclay, Quaker or Calvinist?* in 1941. In this article, Prior discusses the fact that there is more in common between these two groups of people (Calvinists and Quakers) than one may assume. In 1946, Prior then wrote the article *Tomorrow We Die* for the *Student*, in which he examines the idea of pre-destination, with reference to theologians' ideas of Adam in the Bible, that he discusses in *Essays Religious* (1931) and *Robert Barclay, Quaker or Calvinist?* (1941). I have therefore included *Tomorrow We Die* as one of the 19 transcriptions because it appears to be one of the final discussions that Prior has on pre-destination and determinism, within a religious context. These articles, as will be discussed, show that there is a link between Prior's earlier thoughts on human life and religion in the 1930s, and his later thoughts on religion and the human condition in the later part of the 1940s.

Notes on the Transcriptions

My hope for these letters was to transcribe them in such a way that retains as much originality of Prior's writing as possible. Therefore, any words or sentences that Prior crossed out in his writing, I have included, in their crossed-out form. Prior also commonly included sentences in the margins of his letters, and used an asterisk like so: *, as a way of referencing where the marginal sentence was to be inserted in the letter. These sentences have been included, as has Prior's way of referencing with an asterisk. To make it clear where the asterisked sentence begins and end, the sentence will be highlighted in bold font in the transcription [***like so**]. Any words that Prior underlined or capitalised as a means of giving importance, are indicated in the transcriptions, and all letter headings have also been included. However, I am unable to include the photographs of letter envelopes and a drawing for Martin that Arthur included in one letter, due to copyright issues. In short, every word and alteration of Prior's has been included to the best of my ability. I refer to original page numbers using curly brackets in bold, therefore page number four in a document for example will be noted as **{4}**. Every document that is uploaded on the *Virtual Lab* is allocated a document number. These numbers provide us with an efficient way of searching for documents in the database, as well as referencing each document. At the beginning of each letter, I have included the document number in the top-right hand corner of the page. For example, in the first letter the document number is: **(VL1627)**. This number is also included in the contents page beside its corresponding letter. To help separate these seventeen letters from just dates and document numbers, I have also given each letter a heading in bold. A heading for each letter means that it is far easier to ascertain what the content of the letter will be before reading it. The date that each letter was written is also provided in the heading, and finally the person that the letter was addressed to is also provided. For example, the first letter is titled: **Monday Morning (04/11/46) - Letter addressed to Mary**. Each letter is provided with annotations, which as I have already stated, serve to provide the reader with contextual information. I also note any words that I have been unable to clearly transcribe, usually because of the condition of the letter, Prior's handwriting, or the clarity of the photograph of the letter.

Part I – Correspondence and Unpublished works 1946-1949.

A photograph from the first page of letter 5 (VL1632) has been included below, to give you the reader, an idea of what these letters look like in their original condition. This letter is kept at Aalborg University in Denmark and was gifted to the University by Martin Prior, therefore I am able to include this photograph in this thesis.



1) Monday Morning (04/11/46) - Letter addressed to Mary.

(VL1627)

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

Monday Morning

4/11/46.

Darling Mary,

I've just scribbled you a wee note for your mother to take to you this afternoon, & this is something for them to post so that you'll get it tomorrow. And then tomorrow night I'll be seeing you again.

- I've just been down to bring in the empty rubbish-tin, & to see if there's any mail – no mail has come yet. – And all the time I'm marking these Ethics papers – there are such a lot of questions to get through by Thursday. Both Rickards & Manuel Bennett have produced rather disappointing papers so far. Kearns has given some funny Popish answers.

Heaps & heaps of love to my

Kitten – Hedgehog¹.

Annotations

(1) Hedgehog was one of the many nicknames that Prior gave himself, when signing off in letters to Mary. These nicknames show a playful and loving side of Prior that is not seen elsewhere. These nicknames, that appear throughout the letters, may even be a way of Prior teasing Mary about her admirers. Prior also includes nicknames for Martin too, when he gives Mary his love in letters.

(2) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

2) Home Saturday Morning (09/11/46) - Letter addressed to Mary.

(VL1578)

~~Canterbury University College~~

~~Christchurch, N.Z.~~

Home – Sat. morning.

Darling da,

9/11/46

I won't be able to see you this afternoon, so will give ~~you this note with your~~ your mother this note for you. I ~~saw~~ took the marks list in to Suds¹ this morning, & mentioned the large proportion of Law students who had failed. He told me that Crowther had commented on the same thing, & that it was something that always happened – Law students apparently take their ~~exams pretty easily~~ time passing, & are in no hurry. So I'm no longer worried about people like little Mr. Grossmann. ~~Suds~~ Suds also said he hadn't been told of any applications from ~~Eng~~ abroad for the job – as, indeed, of any applications at all – he was surprised to hear that they {2} closed next Wednesday. So my chances are looking pretty bright, I think².

Your mother was so good to me last night – when I got into bed I found a hottie³ had been put there, & it was ever so cosy. Martin was very wakeful, & sat in bed with me for a little while, reading “Mrs. Tiggy Winkle”.⁴ He's in bed just now, making a noise like a tram.

Heaps of love

- Arthur

XOXOXOXOXOXXX

Annotations

- (1) When Prior is talking about “Suds”, he is referring to Ivan Sutherland, who is introduced in letter 4 (**VL1631**).
- (2) Gaining any teaching role in any University in New Zealand is nowadays a difficult task, often with hundreds of applicants being considered. However, in the 1940s the competition for teaching roles was less fierce.
- (3) A *hottie* is a hot water bottle, a classic Kiwi item most likely found in every house.
- (4) Prior was reading to Martin *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy Winkle* (1905) written by Beatrix Potter.
- (5) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

3) Thursday Night (14/11/46) - Letter addressed to Mary.

(VL1579)

Canterbury University College

Christchurch, N.Z.

Thursday night

14/11/46.

Darling da,

I know it's the 14th Tonight, because yesterday was Wednesday the 13th, the day that applications for the job had to be in. – What a curious period of twofold suspense it is at the present time; waiting for you to get better, & waiting to hear about my job! – not an anxious suspense, but just a period in which there's nothing I can do to bring about the desired ends; in which we must just wait until things take their course. – I have turned up tonight a quotation from Shaftesbury¹ what I must use in my Ethics notes next year if I'm here²; another precursor of Moore on the Naturalistic fallacy³, though not so clear a one. – I'm writing this dull stuff⁴ to you from the {2} Philosophy-shop⁵, as usual; & must, as usual, make it brief.

All my love & lots of
kisses, & have a good
night

- Arthur

xxx from Marco⁶.

7

Annotations

- (1) Prior is referring to Anthony Ashleigh Cooper, Lord of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) who was an English philosopher.
- (2) Prior is referring to whether or not he remains in his present job at Canterbury. In 1945 Prior applied for a temporary lectureship role at the University, after Karl Popper left. Prior's application was successful, and he got the position in early 1946. This temporary contract was reviewed at the end of the academic year in 1946. On the 23rd of December 1946, Prior accepted the permanent position as the senior lecturer in philosophy at Canterbury. We know there were other candidates after the same position as a letter was sent out from the Canterbury University Registrar to the Universities Bureau in London, asking them to advise all other applicants that they were not successful, following Prior accepting the position (Macmillan Brown Library, 1946). Prior remained at Canterbury University until the end of the academic year in 1958.
- (3) This reference to the Naturalistic Fallacy might indicate that in 1946 Prior was working on his first book *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* (1949), in which he discusses Professor G. E. Moore's ideas. Moore claims that there is a fallacy in which one may make the "assumption that because some quality or combination of qualities invariably and necessarily accompanies the quality of goodness, or is invariably and necessarily accompanied by it, or both, this quality or combination of qualities is *identical* with goodness" (Prior, 1949, p. 2).
- (4) Prior was always honest about his works to Mary. To anyone else he was always professional, but Mary always heard all his truthful opinions. This is, perhaps the most noticeable aspect of his correspondence to her, for it is what sets his letters to her apart from his letters to others.
- (5) In several of his letters to Mary, Prior refers to his office as a 'shop', or 'philosophy-shop'.
- (6) Prior gives Martin's love to Mary after he signs off in this letter, and refers to Martin here, as Marco.
- (7) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

Monday night.

18/11/46.

Darling mine,

Your father & I have been pacing about, & your mother sitting sewing, & all of us trying to figure out just how likely it is that my application won't be being considered tonight at all, but will be held till next month¹. And on the whole, ~~it seems we're~~ piecing a lot of things together, it seems very likely indeed. In the first place, old diaries make it clear that my application for this present temporary position went in just about the same time last year – mid. November – as this one this year. And we got the news last year about a month later – mid. December - & Broadhead² tells me that it's the regular thing for the council to hold their December meeting in the middle instead of {2} at the end of the month, so as to have the year's business over before Xmas. And there really has hardly been time for the college committee to be circulated with all the applications & testimonials for all those positions by tonight. And there has been no word from Sutherland³, & when I last heard from him (Thursday) he didn't even know who the other applicants were. So I think the chances are that when I ring Gordon Troup tomorrow all I will learn is that my application hasn't yet come up. So we'll probably have to possess our souls in patience till mid-December, though between now & then, we'll hear of more straws showing the way the wind blows.

Tuesday morning – I rang Gordon an hour or two ago, & he said he knew that a lot of appointments had been discussed {3} at last night's meeting, but didn't know what was done about mine, or whether it was among them, but would ring me again. I reflected after this that the junior lectureship (the psychology one that Sutherland wants Richard Thompson for) hadn't been decided yet, & that applications for it had had to be in long before mine; so that it was probably that batch that was considered last night. Then I had another ring a few minutes ago, to tell me that the committee member with whom he had been in contact had not been present at last night's meeting, & did not yet know whether my job had been discussed, but was sufficiently familiar with the [4] of the others to believe that my appointment would go

through without any hitch – that it was “in the bag”. I am to ring Gordon at tea-time tonight, & see what further news he may have. He asked us to keep this unauthorised information very dark. {4} – Alun Richards⁵ is in Christ-church to discuss a possible merger between the “Student⁶” & “Church & Community”, & will be lunching with us; & Martin⁷ & I will stay home this afternoon. I’m not sure what I think of the proposed merger; your parents are against it, for the quite good reason that it might hamper the freedom of the “Student” to discuss topics that might shock ordinary church people⁸. At the same time, there are a lot of ~~more-studen~~ non-student church people who would be glad to be in one such discussion. – I don’t know; we’ll hear from Alun what was said at the meeting.

-It was so good to hear from your mother how well you were yesterday; & the Hospital says you’re still improving.

-Love & love & love, x

See you tonight

Pigslop⁹.

Annotations

- (1) In November of 1946, at the time that Prior wrote this letter, Mary's parents had moved up from Timaru to stay with Arthur and Martin in their house while Mary was in hospital. This would have been an important part of Arthur's life, living with Mary's parents. Prior was waiting to hear back from the University of Canterbury, as he had applied for the position as a philosophy lecturer, a position which he did get.
- (2) Henry Broadhead was a friend of Arthur and Mary's who they met when they were living in a flat in Christchurch.
- (3) Ivan Sutherland (1897-1952) was the Professor of the Psychology and Philosophy department at Canterbury until 1952.
- (4) One word here is unclear.
- (5) Alun Richards (1907-2000) had a successful career in the ministry as well as in church journalism.
- (6) *The Student* was a journal published by the *Student Christian Movement*, a journal that Prior wrote for regularly.
- (7) Martin Prior was born in September 1944, so he would have only been a little more than 1 year old when Arthur started taking care of him while Mary was in hospital.
- (8) Obviously, there was a disparity between these journals in the way in which they covered ideas. Therefore, by merging these two journals, the ideas that were represented in them, would most likely have had to become more centralised, and political/religious opinions in them would have mellowed. Prior began to prefer a variation of ideas and concepts in the systems and structures that he studied later in life, and this is what would have concerned him with the possible merger of these two journals, as Mary's parents discussed. Furthermore, as Prior discovers in himself throughout the 1940s, his investment and interest in religion is based more on intellectual grounds, rather than on spiritual. What was published in *The Student* would have encapsulated what Prior was interested in talking about, more than what was published in *Church and Community*, which would have appealed to the more "ordinary church people". This would have been another cause behind his concern of a possible merger.
- (9) Pigslop was one of the curious names Prior only ever used when signing off letters to Mary.
- (10) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

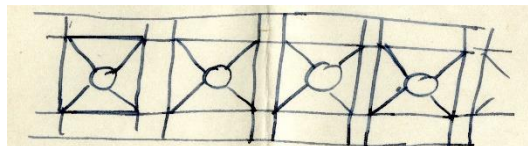
CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

Thursday night 21/11/46.

- in the waiting room.

Polly Darling,

It was so corking seeing you this afternoon, you out on the balcony, & Martin & I in the park. And that other little glimpses of you too, from the street, as we were on our way round. - A thing about Martin that will be new when you see him, is that he's mad about motor-cars. He always runs about the place making a noise that's meant to be a motor-car engine - terribly loud it is - & sometimes varied with a "toot-toot-toot-toot-toot" that's meant to be the horn, & that can go on rather endlessly too. And any sort of wheel is a steering-wheel, with the horn at the centre. He sometimes sits down beside the big pram, & takes hold of one of the wheels & "drives" it, & toots the "horn" in the middle. {2} He does the same in imagination with the pictured wheel of the pram in his "First Things" book. He does it with the wheels of bicycles parked in the street. And he found a new "steering-wheel" on the walk we had today after leaving the park. On one of the bridges across the Avon - I think the Hereford St. one - the railings at the side have a repeated design like this:¹



And blow me if he didn't get down & start tooting this horn here



And he would have done it with the whole lot of them all the way across the bridge if I'd let him! {3}

-A fire-engine drove past us today, & Martin was fascinated & I think a little terrified, but as soon as it was out of earshot he imitated the siren noise. - He knows what the word "aeroplane" means, though he can't say it. I was saying in the car today that Martin thought

that something – I've forgotten what – was an aeroplane, & he immediately gave his little stock aeroplane-imitation – moving his finger slowly through the “sky” & making a chokey noise.

My letters are all about Martin these days, but there's no one else to write about².

Love & love & love

- Arthur

XXX from Martin.

3

Annotations

- (1) Arthur included this sketch of the bridge, which correlates with an image that can be found on *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, of the railings on the bridge which still stand today. The photo of this bridge has been included below.
- (2) Prior is solo parenting Martin who is only One year old, while Mary is recovering in hospital.
- (3) This text was transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

Hereford St



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6) Friday night in the waiting room (22/11/46) - Letter addressed to Mary. (VL1626)

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

Friday night,
22/11/46.

- in the waiting room

Darling honey,

There's a little table in this waiting-room, & there used to be a little chair too, & whenever I came in I would set up this table & chair & write my letter to you. And then the chair vanished, & for the past few times I have just sat on one of the forms¹ in here – the front one of course; the one nearest the door - & rested this pad on my knee. But tonight I've brought you some flowers – it's about time I did – so I've dragged the table over here to rest the flowers on while I write on it too. And I'm discovering that the flowers have quite a scent, as well as a pleasant appearance – it wafts over to me as I write.

I've been reading old Whately's² Logic today – early 19th century standard work - & {2} it's like a breath of fresh modern air after reading Bosanquet³; ~~as I thought~~. It won't take me long to finish, & then I'll go through Mill⁴; & then Jevons⁵; & then Bosanquet's larger work, & perhaps Bradley⁶; & then some Pragmatist (Schiller⁷ and/or Dewey⁸); & then Russell's⁹ "Principles of Mathematics"; & then Johnson¹⁰. That's my good intention anyway¹¹.

I'm glad you saw Martin today – he is marvellous, though we lose our tempers with one another occasionally. I hope it's fine again tomorrow, so that you can see us again. – There's no news; & I can't think of anything new that Martin's done. He doesn't show signs of missing you, but he needs you all the same – I guess all the rest of us are pretty muddlesome bringers-up of him¹², & I hope we don't do him too much harm¹³. – Love & love & love & kisses – Pigslop

***kisses from Marco¹⁴**

Annotations

- (1) A form is a bench-seat.
- (2) Richard Whately (1787- 1863) was an English philosopher and an Archbishop in Ireland.
- (3) Bernard Bosanquet (1848 – 1923) was an English Philosopher. As mentioned in another letter, Prior was always open with Mary about how he felt about a particular philosopher, and it seems that Bosanquet was no easy read.
- (4) Prior is referring to John Stuart Mill (1806-1873).
- (5) Prior is referring to William Stanley Jevons (1835-1882).
- (6) Prior is referring to Francis H. Bradley (1846-1924).
- (7) Friedrich Schiller (1759 – 1805) was a German writer and Philosopher.
- (8) John Dewey (1859-1952) was an American Philosopher.
- (9) Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) was a British philosopher, who like Johnson, had a strong impact on Prior's interest in logic in the 1940s.
- (10) W. E. Johnson (1858-1931) had a significant influence on Prior's earlier interests in syllogistic logic. Johnson is well known for his three-volume works titled *Logic*.
- (11) Prior had an extraordinarily wide scoop of interests in philosophy, but this list is particularly telling because the books he mentions are all logic books. Prior has developed an interest in Logic by late 1946. Most of what he mentions here is the 'traditional' logic, though he also includes Russell's 1903 *Principles of Mathematics* and Johnson.
- (12) During this time when Mary was hospitalised, her parents lived with Arthur and Martin in Christchurch, as Martin would have required care when Arthur worked at the University.
- (13) As any father would, Prior would have had concerns about how 'he was doing' as a father, bringing up his son in these circumstances. It is just another small sign that shows that Prior was a forever caring and concerned parent, who took his role as a father seriously.
- (14) Prior signed off for Martin and included this sentence in the margin.
- (15) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

Wed. night

4/12/46.

Darling darling

- Your mother is at present at Lyttleton¹ farewelling Aneta Milne, your father resting on the sofa; & Martin abed. We've just finished the dishes, & I'll take the milk billy² down on my way to post this. – As usual, I guess there's not much to write about. You know, not only did your birthday letter not arrive today – there was no mail at all for me in the box. However, two wires were phoned to me, with birthday greetings – one from Masterton³, & one from your grandmother, in Dunedin. And my birthday isn't a very important date just at the moment – it's a very small matter compared with your coming home⁴. – Still, for what it's worth, I'm no longer 31, but 32. It's not really very old, as it's the age my father was when I was born. Which means that he is now precisely double my age; & from henceforth I shall always be more than half as old as he is. – Did I ever mention to you my reflection that when I was Martin's age I was interested in aeroplanes too? They had some just out of Auckland then, at Kohimarama⁵; though {2} aviation was all very new & primitive then.

- I noticed Heuson's⁶ autobiography among the luggage that came up from Timaru⁷, so I shall be able to secure it tonight & inscribe it for presentation tomorrow. I'll make it our gift to father, & make the tie from Martin.

- Love & love & love & love.

- Arthur.

XXX from Matt⁸.

Annotations

- (1) Lyttleton is the Port town just Southeast of Christchurch. There were various ferry services from Lyttleton, for example the Interisland Steamer Express used to provide overnight passenger service between Lyttleton and Wellington.
- (2) In New Zealand around the 1950s, milk became pasteurized and milk bottles were introduced as a replacement for billies that milk was contained in during the early part of the 1900s. Billies were usually metal or enamel. Both the older billies and newer bottles were reusable (*Milk Bottle Top*, Te Papa). Obviously, the Priors still received their milk in billies during the 1940s. A photo of a milk billie has been attached below.



ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY 1/2-107552-F

- (3) This would have been from Prior's family who still resided in Masterton.
- (4) Arthur would have been very excited to see Mary as she was finally recovering from a miscarriage which led to her extended hospitalisation.
- (5) Kohimarama was then a small suburb of Auckland, located east of the central part of the city.
- (6) The name written here is unclear.
- (7) Timaru is a port city located halfway down the South Island on the east coast.
- (8) Matt is another random name that Prior used to sign off from baby Martin.
- (9) This text was transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

1

{2}

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

Sunday evening²

Darling da,

It's just after tea, for which Macpherson³ & I arrived back just in time, after being out at Ron O'Reilly's⁴. They have a state house in one of these new communities of which the Hutt Valley⁵ is so full (it's just one long chain of them – you'll maybe have noticed it on your bus-ride up). I discovered that I had met Betty O'Reilly long before you had – when she was just a schoolgirl. She's a cousin of Watty Whittleston's, & Watty & I stopped a night at their place in Palmerston⁶ on that hiking tour we had. – Ron was full of Kaka⁷; who seemed quite well being full of. – I was able to see the notes of Popper's⁸ lectures on Scientific method at Dunedin; & was astonished to find how slight they were. – The impression that a translation of his earlier book will soon be appearing seems very widespread & solidly founded. – Young Matthew O'Reilly is not yet 2, but is enormous. – They enquired after you, of course, & send their love.

I had a slight headache this afternoon – slept most of it off in the bus coming back; but I think I'll miss⁹ church tonight. I've had so much of it during the week – it was quite a sabbath rest to spend today philosophising. {3} – Lex¹⁰ showed me a new article of his in the Student World; on what the Bible has to say that might have some bearing on the subject of Democracy. It's opening & closing portions are first-rate, though it sags a bit in the middle. – His new book on Vocation¹¹ is out. I shall have a sink at it when I've the time. I don't know whether it will be worth a short review in Landfall¹² (not necessarily by me), though I imagine it will merit it at least as much as the thing on Natural Law that Selwyn Grave covered in the last issue.

Lawrie Rogers is an admirer of Matthew Henry as a commentator¹³, & was delighted to find me one too. When I have time, I must do those articles on P. & M. Henry for him, for the Outlook. Mac Wilson told me at tea tonight that his ladies Guild had just had a letter of thanks from Jennie for a parcel – Mac had given them his name.

Pat Guest did do her thesis on A. Smith. I must ask her to let me see it. Macpherson says he thinks it was about the development of Smith's thought, & O'Reilly thinks it was of

poor quality; but in any case I am quite confident that it will not render redundant the thesis I have proposed for Valerai Doale¹⁴.

Goodnight kisses & lots of love

- Arthur

XXOXXOXXXX

P.S. – Am feeling much better – am going to church after all.

15

{4}

16

Annotations

- (1) The first page of letter 8 (**VL1622**), is a photograph of the envelope this letter was posted in. Due to copyright, the photograph cannot be included.
- (2) In the Virtual Lab, the letter has been dated September 01, 1947. But in the letter itself, Prior has not included a date.
- (3) I contacted Martin Prior as to whether he knew who ‘Macpherson’ was. Arthur mentions Macpherson’s name in this letter and in letter 17 (**VL1643**). Martin remembers the name, which was the “maiden name of the wife of a Dr Baird who also lived on Cashmere” (M. Prior, personal communication, December 12, 2022). The Priors lived at 8 Macmillan Avenue, which is on the Cashmere Hills in Christchurch. They moved there following the fire that burnt down their house in Dunedin in 1946. Unfortunately, this house on the Cashmere Hills also burnt down not too long after Prior wrote this letter, in 1949 (M. Prior, personal communication, January, 2017). We can assume therefore that Macpherson was a neighbour and friend of the Prior’s.
- (4) Ron O’Reilly (1914-1982) was a well-known public librarian who worked at the Canterbury Public Library in the 1950s. O’Reilly would have just completed his New Zealand Library diploma at the time of this letter being written. O’Reilly was also a philosopher, and like Prior he too was interested in Logic (Christchurch City Libraries). O’Reilly was a close friend and strong supporter of Colin McCahon, a famous New Zealand artist who lived in Christchurch between the years of 1948 and 1953. O’Reilly most likely introduced McCahon to Prior during these years, as Prior purchased McCahon’s oil painting *Canterbury Plains* in 1951 (Palenski, 2019).
- (5) The Hutt Valley is a collection of suburbs in the northern area of the Wellington district.
- (6) Palmerston is a small town that lies 50 kilometres north of Dunedin in the South Island.
- (7) The word here is either Kaka or Kafka. Prior is either referring to a Kaka, which is a mountain Parrot native to New Zealand. They inhabit areas of Palmerston where Prior and Ron were tramping. They are smart and mischievous, known for ripping through tents and stealing tramping’s food, hence why Ron was so full of them. However, the word could also pass as Kafka, if so Prior is referring to the novelist Franz Kafka (1883-1924).
- (8) Prior is referring to Karl Popper (1902-1994).
- (9) This word is unclear, therefore the word ‘miss’ has been included as it best fits the context.

- (10) Prior is referring to Alexander Miller (1908-1960) who was a Presbyterian and theologian as well as a good friend of Prior's.
- (11) Prior is referring to Miller's book *Christian Faith and My Job* (1946).
- (12) Lex and Prior co-edited the journal *Open Windows* which was Landfall's own journal.
- (13) This is a reference to Matthew Henry's *Commentary*, a full commentary of the bible, written in 1706.
- (14) The handwriting here is difficult to read, therefore the name "Valerai Doale" that has been included in this transcription, may be incorrect.
- (15) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.
- (16) The fourth page of letter 8 (**VL1622**) is a photograph of drawings for Martin that Prior did himself. They include a train, an aeroplane, a garden gnome, a bucket, an axe, a tea-cup and a safety-pin, with the words "Love from Daddy xx". Due to copyright, the photograph cannot be included.

9) Wednesday morning Timaru (15/10/47) - Letter addressed to Mary.

(VL1623)

Mr. A.N. Prior

Philosophy Dept.

Canterbury College

Christchurch

{2}

Timaru¹

Wednesday Morning²

Darling da,

M. & I have just been down to the beach & the wharves, & seen the Wainui being loaded with wool³. It's a lovely warm day – it was yesterday too. We had quite a good trip up, Martin sleeping from a little past Palmerston to somewhere past Studholme⁴. ~~He is still wearing the nappy I put on him~~ This morning he was still wearing the nappy I put on him the night before last; but by this morning it was wet. – Mine will be in this afternoon. – Tomorrow will be a great day! Till then, heaps & heaps & heaps of love

- Arthur

XOXOXOXOX

X from Matt.

5

Annotations

- (1) Mary's father was a Presbyterian minister in Timaru in the South Island of New Zealand, therefore the Priors traveled to Timaru frequently. Martin recalls seeing a lot of Mary's family but not so much of Arthur's. The Prior family lived in the North Island, a far greater journey from Christchurch (M. Prior, personal communication, January, 2017).
- (2) This letter is postmarked 15 October 1947.
- (3) The Wainui would have been one of the many ships to have transported wool from the wharfs in Timaru. The exportation of wool was a key part of New Zealand's strong economy leading into the 1950s. However, since then the exportation of wool as an industry has dramatically slowed down.
- (4) Prior is possibly referring to Studholme College in Dunedin.
- (5) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

10) House fire and review of Price (12/04/49) – Letter addressed to Raphael. (VL1638)

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

12/4/49.

Dear Raphael,

Many thanks for yours of the 3rd, which arrived today. I enclose a copy of the review of your Price¹ which I did for The Listener. There's really nothing much about yourself in it – nothing but the little nationalistic fantasy which constitutes my first paragraph - & not that much, if it comes to that about Price; but I had to consider my audience. I don't know whether there is to be a review in Landfall² nor, if so, who is to be doing it.

-We are at the moment in the process of recovering our wits after a fire³ in which we lost a great deal, about a fortnight ago. It broke out in the middle of the night, in the flat immediately below our own, & in the room beneath our own main living-room, which, beside containing all my books, separated our youngster's bedrooms from our own. We were wakened in time for me to wip through & get him, the room being full of smoke but with no actual flames in it; & after that I got a case of theological books by the door & pulled it out on to a landing. But my larger case, with philosophical books in it, was over on the other side, so I left it. The room caught fire a minute or two later, & the brigade was not in time to prevent it from falling – floor & roof & all its contents {2} – into the room below; where most of my books now are, charred leaves sat in rubble. The books I had pulled on to the landing were alright in the morning, save for dirt & damp – the firemen used that landing as a sort of headquarters – but these, though valuable, were only theological⁴ (that, no doubt, is a sad way to speak of the Queen of the Sciences!⁵) Looking back now, I think I could have saved some of the others by going through & throwing them over a veranda & clambering out that way myself; & it would have been worth doing; but I was not to know that then, & we had a narrow enough shave as it was. However, no one in any of the flats was injured; & Martin, I think, not even in mind – he found it all very interesting & exciting. – Everyone has been very good to us since. The council has found temporary accommodation both for us & for the people who were below us, who were also connected with the college. Students have been extraordinarily decent. One M.A. student of last year presented me with a few Ethics books, including Smith's Moral Sentiments⁶, & Raphael's Moral Sense. And we're slowly – ~~even rapidly~~ or rather rapidly –

stocking up again, & making ourselves comfortable, & duly learned, as before.

Nothing to do with my book was lost⁷ – a couple of typed copies, indeed, went up, but I had another; & the proofs were all read & posted back by the time the fire occurred. {3}

So much for that. – I have been intending to send you one or two comments on your introduction to your Price. One thing about it that surprised me a little was a certain apparent unawareness about Price's originality or otherwise in the distinction he draws between "absolute" & "relative" virtues. On one page you mention Carritt's⁸ suggestion that perhaps Price was the first to notice the questions (i.e. as to whether our duty is to do what is right vs what we think right), but in mentioning it you mention also that Price himself equated this distinction with an earlier one, between "material" & "formal" virtue. Carritt's suggestion, then, must be discussed, on Price's own testimony. But you don't dismiss it; & indeed you are so far from doing so that on your first page or two, where you give a little list of points at which you think Price may have been an innovator, you include this one (his distinction bet[ween] absolute & relative virtue, & his insistence that we are answerable for doing what we think right). – In fact the distinction was already an old one in Price's day; & there's a sort of outline of its history (just in a paragraph) in the chapter of Reid's Essays on the Active Powers which corresponds to Price's one on Absolute & Relative Virtue etc. – Reid says that the use of the words "formal" & "material" in this connection is of scholastic origin, & that it is still common among theological writers. – I have a Scottish {4} catechism of the 1640's (one of the things I've saved!) in which the man who disobeys his conscience, even though what he loves is in itself right, is said to sin formalites quantis non materialites. One finds the topic dealt with by old commentators of Romans Xiv.14, "To him that thinketh anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean", Matthew Henry (Exposition of the Bible, 1714) with whom most 18th century Roman conformists were familiar, distinguishes at this point between what is good "in itself" & what is so well to us – Price's "absolute" & "relative" – among philosophical moralists, the distinction between the virtue of the act & that of the agent was developed, before Price, by Berkeley (see the last of last-but-one page of the Selby-Biggs selection from the second part of his "foundations of moral goodness" – not the section in his point that is put between Clarke & Price, but the supplementary selection showed in small print alongside Cudworth, John & Locke & all those other old books). – I worked some of this stuff up into an article, which I submitted to Philosophy; but have since asked Hooper's⁹ leave to withdraw it¹⁰ – I'm not very satisfied with it as it is at present; hope to include it again later (it was done in too much of a hurry; & among other things, I think it reads too much, in parts, as a criticism {5} of yourself. Not that I suppose you'd have minded that – you always take my criticisms very good-naturedly

– but it was more of that than I really meant it to be).

- I liked, in your introduction, your remark that if Price had been a historian & Hume a mathematician, their Philosophies might have been different. Also your criticism of Price's failure here & there to appreciate the "inter-personal" character of ethics. – I hope this new book on ethics that you speak of as possibly developing out of stuff you wrote in NZ, won't be too long in emerging.

- Very many thanks for your items of news about the appearance of works of mine in recent journals. Things take so long to reach here that it is only by such personal information that one knows when one's stuff has appeared – it will be a while yet before I see the Mind, & also, I suppose, before I see the Analysis with my a fortiori thing in it. – Before your note came, I had long quite despaired of ever seeing the latter in print, & had ceased also to be at all sure that I wanted to. It was written in between my note on terms & Malcolm, & the Determinables thing; & I'm not sure how well its conclusion squares with the conclusion of the latter. I'm glad {6} now, though, that it has seen the light of day; & if it's worthy, someone will be able to show that it is.

- Is it true that your successors haven't been appointed yet. And if they re-advertise, as I suppose they will, I think I shall apply. But please don't pass that on to people in N.Z. I have a feeling that it's not a good policy for local candidates for such a position to broadcast their candidature, or to be thought of as doing so – it sometimes gives the appointing body an impression of over-confidence & so on. I have no alternative plans for trying to get a position in some other country – I'd like to go abroad again, but only on leave; I don't want to make anywhere else my home – I have too many roots here. (I can understand your own desire to be back in Britain).

Your Price, by the way, arrived here in time for me, when correcting the proofs of my book, to alter some footnote references to Price so that they referred to your edition.

- It is good of you to think that I would write a book on logic. I have at times thought so myself, but my views on that subject are not really sufficiently settled¹¹. But there is a book on Logic which {7} has been written, & only needs putting together, & very much ought to be put together by some more authoritative person than me. I mean a 4th volume to Johnson's Logic, consisting of the various articles of his that appeared in Mind from time to time during his lifetime, especially on The Logical Calculus in 1892 & two on The Analysis of Thinking in 1918, & some papers on probability that were put in a short time after his death. I have felt so strongly that this ought to be done that at the beginning of the year I wrote to Professor Broad¹² about it. He has not replied, & of course there's no reason why he should; but I think

he ought to be pestered about it (he's the obvious man to edit such a collection) until something comes of it. If you could find time, some time, to write to him to the same effect, & to urge other persons to do so – if you agree with me about the desirability of this – I'd be very grateful. – The Australasian Journal people have asked me to do something for them about G. Boole, whose first logical work was recently printed, & I think I can find an excuse to work in there a suggestion that this 4th volume of Johnson ought to exist. ***I shall in this case send a copy of the article to Broad, with a letter explaining that I have not done so in order to solicit his explanation for the text, but in order to draw his attention to the footnote on p. (about the need for Johnson Vol. IV).** And I shall seize any other opportunities of doing so that arise. (Perhaps when the off-prints of my Determinables thing arrive, I shall write a {8} letter to Ryle¹³, ostensibly to thank him, but in fact to draw his attention to the criminality of the non-existence of this volume).

- Your Price (my review copy) was among the books I lost in the fire. But I am getting another copy, which has a curious history. – When I knew that the thing was appearing, I ordered a copy at a local booksellers. And then the Listener sent me a copy to review. So I went round to cancel my order at the booksellers, but it was too late, & my copy arrived here shortly afterwards. However, I was able to talk the new junior lecturer here, Henry Scott, into buying it. – Then came the fire; & Scott told me in confidence that the M.A. class wanted to present me with a book, & he had come to sound me about what I would like. Being short of cash, his own preference was that the class should buy his copy of Raphael's Price from him & present it to me, & he wanted to know if I'd be keen to have that. I told him I would; & he accordingly told the class today that he had discretely ascertained that there was nothing I would like better than Raphael's Price, & that by a stroke of luck he happened to have a copy that he was willing to make available. One of them asked him, "but what will you do when you want to read Price?" He replied, "I'll borrow Mr. Prior's!" – Having told you of this sordid transaction, I should add that Henry has been a tower of strength to us since the fire – we stayed with him while we were looking for somewhere to move into, he lent me his suit, he took my lectures for me; in short, there's nothing he didn't do¹⁴.

Regards to your wife & yourself from us both

- Arthur N. Prior.

Annotations

- (1) When Prior refers to *Price* in this way, he means Raphael's 1948 book *A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*, written by Richard Price, which D.D Raphael edited.
- (2) *Landfall* is an Otago-based literary magazine.
- (3) This house fire which happened in late March 1949 was actually the second house fire for the Prior's. Martin Prior recalls in an interview that he gave in 2017 that their house in Opoho - Dunedin, burnt down in 1946 because a hot iron started a fire (M. Prior, personal communication, January, 2017).
- (4) It is interesting that Prior commented that the books that he lost were "only" theological, but he also seems somewhat guilty that he feels this way, or that he should not feel like that. One thing is for certain, and that is that Prior found it harder that he lost his philosophy books than his theological works.
- (5) Thomas Aquinas first referred to the discipline of theology as the *Queen of Sciences*.
- (6) *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* by Adam Smith (1759): This book would have been of great interest to Prior as he was interested in ethics in 1949.
- (7) Prior is referring to his book *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* that he published in December 1949.
- (8) Prior is referring to E.F Carritt (1876-1964) who was an English philosopher at Oxford University College.
- (9) Sydney E. Hooper was the editor of *Philosophy: The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy*.
- (10) Prior has retracted an article that was critical of Raphael, when the article had already been accepted. Retractions like this were not exactly common. Eleven days later Prior then asks Raphael for a reference for a job that he is applying for, this being the Otago chair, which can be seen in the next letter. This possibly would have been why Prior felt the need to retract the article.
- (11) Prior's interest at this stage appears to have been mainly in the 'traditional' logic and not yet the symbolic logic which later brought him fame. As he goes on to explain in this letter, he wants a 4th volume of Johnson's *Logic* to be published. Johnson's *Logic* goes well beyond the traditional logic, so Prior might have been turned onto symbolic logic from Johnson.
- (12) C. D. Broad (1887-1971) was an English philosopher.

- (13) Prior is referring to Gilbert Ryle, editor of the journal *Mind*, which Prior frequently published in.
- (14) Prior was well respected by colleagues and students during his time teaching at Canterbury University College. Copeland (2020) notes that “An exuberant, playful man of seemingly inexhaustible vitality, Prior made an excellent teacher. He had no trace of pomposity or pretension. His students appreciated the friendly welcome they would receive at his home, not to mention his relaxed attitude”.
- (15) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

11) Testimonial for job application (23/04/49) - Letter addressed to Raphael. (VL1639)

Philosophy Dept.

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

23/4/49.

Dear Raphael,

Otago has now called for new applications for the position of your successor. As I indicated in my last letter to you that I was thinking of doing, I shall be applying for it. Would there be any chance of you writing me a testimonial, based on as much as you know of me & of the reception of my writings in Britain? – saying, in fact, very much what you said in your last letter to me? - My publications constitute, of course, my main qualification for the position. – Please do not hesitate to refuse this request if it embarrasses you in any way; but if not, I should be glad of anything you can say for me. And if you can send me luck & testimonial, could you please send it soon? - applications have to be not only in Dunedin but also at a British address, by June 30.

- Shortly after I last posted to you, I had a note from Hooper, about the article that I mentioned that I had submitted to “Philosophy”, about the history of the distinction between “the virtue of the agent” & “the virtue of the act”, & one or two other matters arising out of your introduction to Price¹. He told me he had accepted the article, & had even set it up in galleys, but consented to its withdrawal, & hoped {2} to have my revised version. I must say he has been exceedingly decent about it. I hope to have the “revised version” completed by the end of the coming short vacation. It is now taking shape as a bracket of two articles on closely connected subjects. The second is about the history of the distinction between the fitness of an act & the goodness or merit of its performer; while the first is about some of the logical features of the 18th century concept of moral “fitness”. I believed when I wrote my original article that you were mistaken in denying that Price regarded “fitness” as a relation; & I still do not find your arguments for this denial very convincing; but I’m not sure now that you aren’t right all the same. But I’ll write you more about this when I’m further on with it.

I don’t think I have told you before that your daughter figures quite prominently in my son’s elementary astronomical notions. She shares this honour² with the assistant secretary to

the delegates of the Clarendon Press. The astronomical point which Martin has grasped is that when the sun leaves these parts of an evening, it goes across the sea to waken Mr Davis at Oxford & Sally Raphael at Glasgow³. How much he really remembers of Sally Raphael I don't know. ("Mr. Davis" he has seen more recently), but the name has remained in his mind. – {3} I am beginning to think it likely that Martin will really be, as he says he is going to be, a philosopher⁴. I don't pump it into him quite as James Mill did into John Stuart, but I give him an occasional examination in the subject. He has recently, for instance, heard the correct use of the pronouns "he", "she" & "it", & of course can now correct the rest of us on this point. So when I said of a motor-bus, "She has started moving", he pointed out to me that a bus was not a She, but an It. I agreed with him, but expressed my agreement by saying, "Yes, she's an It", & wondered what he would make of that one. But it was no trouble to him- he expressed his further objection by passing from the indicative mood to the imperative- "Don't say 'She's an It'; say 'It's an It'"⁵. This seemed to me very modern; Gilbertisms⁶, in fact (I take this adjective to be derived from the Christian name of the editor of Mind & authors of the distinction between "knowing that" & "knowing how"). – Mind you, had I wished to make his examination really stiff, I might have replied to his imperative (following R.M.Hare's example of expounding Philosophy in pigeon English), "Alright, I won't say her like 'She's an It', but will say her like 'It's an It'".

Regards from my wife & myself to you both

-yours sincerely,

Arthur N. Prior.

Annotations

- (1) Prior is referring to his article that was critical of Raphael's *Price*, as mentioned in the previous letter (**VL1638**).
- (2) The word "honour" is not fully legible and may be something else.
- (3) This letter is great in the sense that it shows us that Prior's relationship with Raphael went beyond work. The other letters from Prior to Raphael that have been included in this thesis, are centred around Prior's career and publications. It is nice to see that there was in fact another side to their relationship in 1949.
- (4) Martin Prior in fact went on to become a linguist.
- (5) This discussion that Arthur had with Martin around the correct use of pronouns is like the content of a letter that Prior wrote to Mary in 1946. A more detailed examination of these two letters is provided in the discussion.
- (6) This word is unclear in the original letter, however it looks as if Prior is referring to Gilbert Ryle.
- (7) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

12) Letter from D. D. Raphael in support of Prior's appointment to Chair of Otago

(04/05/49)

(VL1634)

Department of Moral Philosophy,
The University,
Glasgow, W.2.

4th May, 1949.

I am glad to testify to the capacity of Mr. Arthur N. Prior to occupy the Chair of Philosophy in the University of Otago. During my residence in New Zealand I had several meetings and philosophical discussions with Mr. Prior when he visited Dunedin. I have also had correspondence with him on some problems of logic, in the course of which I learned much from him. He has a good knowledge of modern logic (both formal—including symbolic¹—and philosophical), and an unusually thorough acquaintance with the history of the subject². He has likewise a detailed knowledge of the history of ethics in modern times, and of related questions in theology³. His scholarship and critical ability in both these fields of philosophy are clearly shown in his published articles in Mind and The Australasian Journal of Philosophy. He must, in addition, be well versed in the other branches of philosophy, as his teaching duties at Canterbury University College⁴ have covered almost all of the philosophy options prescribed in the University of New Zealand's curriculum.

Mr. Prior's list of published articles and notes is impressive. His recent articles and notes in Mind and Analysis seem to me to be of high quality, and as far as I can judge from the comments of colleagues in Scotland⁵ these articles seem to have aroused attention and interest among philosophers in this country. I understand that Mr. Prior has written a book on ethics⁶, which will shortly be published by the Oxford University Press. I have as yet no direct acquaintance with this book (though I am looking {2} forward to its appearance), but the mere fact of its acceptance by the Oxford University Press is evidence of its merits.

Personally Mr. Prior is a very pleasant and stimulating colleague. I have greatly enjoyed and benefited from my meetings and correspondence with him. As an Otago graduate he has already brought credit to the University by his philosophical publications, and I think he would make a good occupant of the Chair of Philosophy there.

DDR⁷.

8

Annotations

- (1) It is interesting that Raphael points out that Prior's knowledge of symbolic knowledge is sound, as it was not until the early 1950s that Prior's knowledge in the field of logic really transferred from syllogistic to symbolic logic. Though as noted in letter 10 (**VL1638**), Prior was aware of symbolic logic by this time. Raphael was a key influence in Prior's academic career, and it is clear from their correspondence that they shared philosophical interests and had a scholarly respect for each other. Furthermore, they were colleagues but also good friends, as the letters between them suggest.
- (2) Raphael is one of the many scholars during Prior's time who commented on his historical knowledge of philosophical subjects. As can be seen throughout this discussion, Prior's knowledge of history in philosophy and religion gave him an advantage, as it enabled him to fill his arguments with great amounts of detail.
- (3) Prior was still publishing works concerning theological positions in the late part of the 1940s. Although his interest in symbolic logic was beginning to take shape by 1950, this certainly did not take him completely away from his religious enquiries.
- (4) Prior was the only Philosopher at Canterbury University College for some time during the mid-1940s.
- (5) Prior had well-rounded knowledge of Scottish history, especially Scottish theology. One of the books that Prior managed to save in their house fire in 1949 was a book on Scottish Catechism from the 1640s, which he mentions in letter 10 (**VL1638**). Furthermore, Prior was also writing a book on Scottish theology at the time of the house fire, which included notes from Adam Gib's *Sacred Contemplations*.
- (6) *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* (1949): Interestingly, the 'logic' that Prior included in this work was comprised mostly of syllogistic logic (Copeland, 2020).
- (7) D D R obviously stands for David Daiches Raphael.
- (8) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Adriane Rini.

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

16/5/49.

Dear Raphael,

Very many thanks for your testimonial¹. I shall not spread it about that I have one from you; but I am sure that it will carry considerable weight with the appointing body (particularly as it accompanies one from Findlay²), & it was very good of you to give it to me.

Broad's reply to my suggestion about the Johnson book arrived just a day or two before your own letter. It was a very decent little note. He gave my suggestion sufficient consideration to pass it on to Braithwaite³, who in turn had another look at Johnson's articles, but finally decided against their publication in book form; & Broad is not prepared to go against his judgement on the point. He passed on Braithwaite's letter to him, & also an offprint of each of Johnson's two articles on The Analysis of Thinking in Mind 1918, which Braithwaite was kind enough to suggest that I should have. (They were left with him for distribution, by a relative of Johnson's). – Braithwaite's verdict is given in the following terms: "So far as the Mind 1892 & Mind 1918 articles are concerned, Johnson presumably had good reasons for omitting those parts which were not included in his {2} Logic Parts I. II. III; & the question of publishing in book form the publishable chapters of Part IV (on probability) was gone into & rejected in 1931 when I published them instead in Mind. My view is that Johnson's reputation properly rests upon his Logic; & that anyone who is further interested would find no great difficulty in turning up the articles in Mind. There are certainly a few people to whom it would be convenient to have the articles in a book (I have them so bound up myself), but not enough to warrant their re-publication in book form. I should not be able to advise the syndics of the Cambridge Press to re-publish them (what's much more important is to get Logic Part II – which is out of print – into print again)". – Rightly or wrongly I decided not to pursue the matter further with Broad, but bowed to Braithwaite & his decision, & thanked him for his consideration & for forwarding his letter & offprints. It seems plain enough that the possibility of the C.U.P.⁴ republishing Johnson's articles would be ruled out now, but the impression Braithwaite's letter leaves with me is, I must confess, a magical one. With his conclusion in parenthesis, of course, I entirely agree {3} getting Part II of the Logic into print again should

have priority over any other republication – of – Johnson project. (I agree with this all the more heartedly though having no copy⁵ of my own of Johnson’s Logic now!) And I think there are good grounds for not re-printing the ~~probability articles which were~~ probability articles (the unfinished draft of Part IV), or the Mind 1918 articles on The Analysis of Thinking, which contain much that was bodily incorporated into the Logic, & Johnson may well have felt (not with complete justification, in my opinion – still, it’s a fine point) that what he has incorporated was all that was worth preserving of those. But the 1892 articles on The Logical Calculus are on a different footing – there is plenty of internal evidence that J. regarded these as supplementary to rather than as superseded by his Logic. I’m pretty sure (I can’t verify this immediately, but could if given time) that there is a passage in part I of the Logic in which he says that something or other is more fully developed elsewhere, & “elsewhere” is in fact The Logical Calculus. There’s no full development of a symbolic Logic in the Logic, though the principles underlying such a system are {4} discussed there⁶. – Stebbing⁷, I notice, makes independent reference to The Logical Calculus (in her Modern Introduction to Logic). – But The Logical Calculus alone wouldn’t make a companion volume to the Unit of the Logic; & indeed it would be misleading to get it up as a sort of Part IV (sure Johnson had his own Part IV in preparation – the stuff on probability. My original idea was that what existed of this should be published together with the other articles). I think The Logical Calculus is the sort of thing that might one day be re-printed by someone like Blackwell’s⁸, just as they re-printed Boole last year. But it looks as if that’s something which we’ll have to wait for – the demand for it may grow. I’ve done my best to make it grow in the thing I’ve written on “Categoricals & Hypotheticals in George Boole & his Successors⁹” for the Australasian Journal. But though I’ve said a lot about Johnson’s Logical Calculus there, there’s one thing I couldn’t do, owing to the inadequacies of their set of types, & that was to bring out the extreme simplicity, symmetry & aptness of his symbolic notation – a point which was enthusiastically commented on last year by a very good student of {5} mine who came from America (& is now back there doing his thesis).

My second Determinables article, I’m afraid, consists more of a couple of digressions than anything else. I was & still am more confident of the worth of the digressions than of that of the main substance of the articles. That is, of the digressions considered in themselves; but I am even less confident than I was at first that they do much to illuminate the central problem of the articles. Perhaps I should have attempted to have them published separately, as notes in Analysis or something like that; but I felt at the time that they would be better understood against the background provided by the main theme of the articles. – I have more to say, though

perhaps a bit indirectly, about the relation of Johnsonian & Wittgensteinian Logics in my “Categoricals & Hypotheticals” thing for the Australasian Journal; but it’s nothing that you could call a “solution” of that problem. I’m assuming that it will be published, as it is my response to a request for something appropriate to the occasion of Blackwell’s re-printing of Boole. I’ll send you a copy when I have one.

I can’t remember whether {6} I thought to ask for off-prints of the Analysis thing. ~~They haven’t sent me any~~ (I may have been put off by the formalities involved in paying for them from here – Analysis charges for off-prints). They haven’t sent me any, anyway, though I’ve just received a contributor’s copy of the January issue. I have taken out a subscription to the thing, & asked to have it made as from January; so I may have a spare copy of that issue later, in which case I’ll give it to you. Or alternatively, I may have some copies of my article typed, in which case I’ll give you one of those.

That was rather rotten luck, you being unable to correct that point about absolute & relative virtue in Price before it went to print. Thank you for letting me know that the fault has already been pointed out by reviewers – I haven’t seen those reviews yet. – I think that means that I shall myself ignore the point in my revised thing for Philosophy, & make it just a study of some logical features of the relation of “fitness”. I haven’t been able to get round to that article again yet, though.

- I’m sorry to hear of your housing difficulties. I think you must {7} be worse off than we are, despite our fire. The rector of the College was able to find us temporary accommodation immediately, & we have now found a new place to move into from here in a few weeks’ time.

Thank you very much for sending me the off print of your “Equality & Equity”. I did lose all my periodicals (philosophical ones, that is – I think I mentioned that I dragged a case of theological books that was near a door, on to a landing, & there were some theological & other periodicals, including Landfall, saved among them). I’m looking forward to reading you on Butler¹⁰.

Yours sincerely

- Arthur N. Prior.

P.S. – I very much enjoyed your little contribution, about New Zealand students, to that Otago graduate’s magazine, & asserted very heartedly to your castigation of our local refusal to regard studying as “work”, so that students are discouraged from studying in the vacation etc.

Annotations

- (1) Prior is referring to Raphael's testimony for his appointment as the Chairman of philosophy at Otago University, which Raphael wrote and sent on the 4th of May. It is also important to note from this first paragraph of the letter, that Raphael had the courtesy to send Prior a copy of the reference letter, as this was not common practice.
- (2) John Findlay (1903-1987) was the Professor of philosophy at Otago University when Prior attended his courses on logic and ethics in 1934 (Kenny, 1971, p. 323).
- (3) R. B. Braithwaite (1900-1990) specialised in the philosophy of science field.
- (4) Cambridge University Press.
- (5) This would have been a book that Prior lost in the house fire in 1949. Although Prior's hope to see Johnson's 4th volume published was not successful, as Broad's reply suggests, Prior was obviously excited to think that Part II could be re-published again.
- (6) As Prior notes, Johnson's logic was not symbolic, although some symbolic principles were part of his logic as Prior states. He was influenced by Charles Peirce. What we can note from this is that Prior seems to be strongly connected, almost on an emotional level, to the works of Johnson in 1949. We can see this because of how strongly he feels about having Johnson's works published. This emotional connection also could be influenced by the fact that Prior himself was by 1949 beginning what Anthony Kenny called a turn towards logic.
- (7) Susan Stebbing (1885-1943) was a British philosopher. Stebbing was a generation older than Prior, and he mentions in a text that he learnt a lot of modern logic from Stebbing. Stebbing was the first female professor of Philosophy in Britain. She was also famous as the author of *A Modern Introduction to Logic* (1930) which includes some symbolic logic.
- (8) Blackwell's is a publishing company based in Oxford in the United Kingdom.
- (9) Prior wrote the article *Categoricals and Hypotheticals in George Boole and his Successors* in 1949.
- (10) Prior is referring to Joseph Butler (1692-1752) who he refers to as Bishop Butler throughout *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* (1949).
- (11) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

Canterbury College

Christchurch, N.Z.

27/5/49.

Dear Raphael,

Copies of my new Boole thing have now been typed, & I'm sending you one under separate cover. As it's a little bulky, I'm not sending it by air. You'll probably be bored stiff by it anyway, as such philosophy as it contains is pretty thoroughly buried under a mass of purely formal manipulations. You'll see it, of course, when it appears in the Australasian Journal, but I don't think that will be for a little while yet. Passmore¹ tells me, too, that he'll probably have to break it up into instalments. – In the same letter, Passmore mentions that he contemplates applying for the Otago chair, having been urged to do so by Popper. It's a very decent little note he has sent me; he knew of my application - I should think from J. Anderson², of whom I had asked a testimonial (not imagining that Passmore would be in the field, as I thought that if he had wanted the position he would have applied last year). - In my reply to J.A.P³. I commented on his review of your Price (that issue of Mind having arrived here now); & took the liberty of passing on to him your information that you had yourself discovered your errors about "formal" & "material" goodness, but too late for your corrections to be accepted. Incidentally, while Passmore is of course right in denying that Price discovered this distinction, I doubt whether he's right in suggesting that Price was at this point particularly indebted to Cudworth⁴. Cudworth's use of the terms "material" & "formal" in Ethics was a little peculiar, whereas Price's was what was in those days the usual one. (His indebtedness to Cudworth was more in the earlier parts of the Review, I should say, than in GG. VIII).

Regards to your family & yourself from us both

- Yours sincerely

Arthur N. Prior.

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Annotations

- (1) John Passmore was a philosopher from the University of Otago in Dunedin, and a friend of Prior's.
- (2) John Anderson (1893-1962) was a Scottish Philosopher who was a professor of Philosophy at Sydney University between the years of 1927 and 1958.
- (3) Prior is referring to John A. Passmore
- (4) Prior is referring to Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688) who was an English theologian.
- (5) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.
- (6) The second page of letter 14 (**VL1641**) is a photograph from the *Virtual Lab* of the back of the letter which contains the N. Z. Air Mail Letter Card. Due to copyright, the photograph cannot be included.

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

Wednesday Morning.

13/7/49

Darlingest,-

-Am just scribbling this in my shop¹. – I didn't come straight here after I left you – thought we might have forgotten to switch off the hot water, so went back home. Called on the way at a bike shop to see if they could “do up” my bike, & found it would cost £3 & take 3 weeks; so I think I'll get some sandpaper & paint, & do it myself². – When I got home, I was in time to greet the man bringing the wood (the 3 bags of manuka³). I paid him by cheque, & stacked the wood. I drank one of today's two bottles of milk⁴ before leaving; & brought in the washing. Haven't collected the old washing yet, because (a) there's no sense doing it till last thing before I go home, & (b) I haven't brought the ticket anyway – think it's in my suit. There's a lot else that I left behind too. My cheque-book, for instance (I must have left it on the table or somewhere after paying the wood-man). ***but I got another at the bank, & got money out with that.** And I brought in my “Exempted Students” file to get them all {2} fixed this morning; & find that I've left behind, in another file, the test papers I am going to send them.

3.p.m. – Had lunch with Sutherland⁵, Crowther⁶, Scott⁷ & Thompson⁸, at the “Stud. Ass⁹.” Sutherland was delighted at this unusually complete concourse of philosophers, & thought we should have a Staff Luncheon once a week¹⁰. – This afternoon's mail has brought some books from Sampson & Williams – Moody's Ockham¹¹, Broad's McTaggart¹², and, alas, Joseph. I now have 2 Josephs, with this one & the one that Jack O. gave me. What shall I do with the extra one? Donate it to Scotty, perhaps; or someone like that. – Scotty is much enjoying the topic of Existential Import – says he never had it at V.U.C¹³. – After that long lunch & pow-wow¹⁴, I didn't get back home for the earlier part of the afternoon as I had planned – haven't got back yet; & must post this shortly, as I'm going right through from 4 to 7p.m.

I have written the articles on “Category” & “Circular Definition” for my Dictionary¹⁵, which means that I am through as far as “Class” with the continuous part of it – 108 pages. Then the articles on “Complementary Propositions”, “Compound & Complex {3}

Propositions”, “Contraposition”, “Form”, “Existential Proposition”, “Identity”, “Modality”, “Syllogism”, “Syllogism, Figures of the”, “Syllogism, Modal, & “Syllogism, moods of the”, make up another 137 pages. That’s 245 pages in all that I’ve done of it so far.

Have just dropped a line to Marty¹⁶ also

Heaps & heaps of love

-Arthur

XOXOXOXOX

OXOXOXOXO

XOXOXOXOX

Annotations

- (1) Prior mentions writing from his shop in another letter to Mary, 'shop' being his office at Canterbury University.
- (2) Prior commuted to university every day on his bicycle, which was something that has been noted over the years. Jim Wilson, a former student of his at Canterbury University commented that Prior would turn up with ruffled and vertical hair, and bicycle clips around his trousers (Copeland, 2020).
- (3) Manuka is a bush native to Australia and New Zealand and produces manuka honey which is a sought after product on the global market. It is also a wood that burns well.
- (4) One interesting note that can be taken from this is that in an earlier letter to Mary in 1946 (VL1629), Arthur mentions a "milk billy" which is how milk was stored and distributed through New Zealand. Families would drink out of them and then return them to receive another billy of milk. This was common up until the end of the 1940s, when milk began to be stored and distributed in glass bottles nation-wide. This slight change in New Zealand history can be seen in these two letters.
- (5) Ivan Sutherland (1897-1952): The Professor of the Psychology and Philosophy department at Canterbury College until 1952.
- (6) Alan Crowther (1913-1986) was a psychologist who joined Canterbury University's philosophy department in 1939.
- (7) Harry Scott (1918-1960) was another psychologist in the department.
- (8) Richard Thompson was a philosopher who was at Canterbury University College when Prior was there. He was interested in the junior lectureship role in November 1945, when Prior was waiting to hear if he had been accepted into Canterbury University as a head philosophy lecturer.
- (9) Prior is referring to the Student's Association.
- (10) In the letters that Prior wrote in 1949, we can see how much his academic connections and relationships have grown, especially in the letters between Raphael and himself. These connections that Prior made and sustained during these earlier years, saw him through well into the 1950s.
- (11) Prior is referring to *The Logic of William of Ockham* (1935), written by Earnest A. Moody.
- (12) Prior is referring to the *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy* (1933), written by C. D. Broad.

- (13) Victoria University College was based in Wellington, the capital of New Zealand. It then became Victoria University of Wellington.
- (14) 'Pow-wow' means a conference/meeting between friends.
- (15) There are other letters too that contain Prior's self-assessment of his Dictionary.
- (16) The name that Prior has written here is unclear.
- (17) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Adriane Rini.

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

26/7/49.

Dear Raphael,

There are a couple of things that I sent you by surface a while ago, though I don't know whether they'll have arrived yet (things often take a while that way, though not as long as they used to do). One is just a parcel of food; the other, a carbon copy of my article on Boole for the A.J.P. – I have just written to Passmore asking him to delete the note at the end of this, & hope it's not too late (if it is, I'll have the same experience as you did over material & found rightness in your Price, though of course it would be much more irritating to have to let a mistake stand in an important work like that¹ than to have to let it stand in a journal article, which is always – with me at least – something of a piece of “kite-flying²”). – The mistake I have made is this: I have suggested that “X implies Y”, in the sense of “Y may be inferred from X”, has the same logical force as “Every fact with which X accords is one with which Y accords, & every fact with which Y discords is one with which X {2} discords”. The first conjunct of this conjunction would be true not only if Y were inferable from X, but also if X were false; while the second would be true not only if Y were inferable from X, but also if X were true – each of them gives rise to one, but not to the other, of the “paradoxes of material implication”; & I thought I could get rid of both paradoxes by the simple expedient of conjoining the two. And I do; but there's a weakened focus of the paradoxes (it's a single paradox which is a weakening of both the others) to which my formula still gives rise. “X materially implies Y” is true if X is false as Y is true; & this is not enough to give a “vacuous” verification to my “X implies Y”; but “X is false and Y is true” is enough to do so. So I'm afraid my formula isn't equivalent to “Y is inferable from X”.

I have taken seriously your suggestion that I should write a book on Logic, & have been at work in my spare time on a Dictionary of Formal Logic³. I'm not sure, however, what's going to come of it. I've told Davin⁴ what I'm doing, & he has just written back to {3} tell me that Oxford are contemplating the production of a Dictionary of Philosophy & Politics, & that as this would contain articles on logic, this would make their attitude to my own project “rather

dubious". He suggests, however, that if I decide in the light of this information to drop my own work, I should send over what I have already done of it, & he might investigate the possibility of using some of it in the Dictionary they plan. – My own feeling is that there wouldn't be space in a general Dictionary of Philosophy (& Politics) to go into the formal details that my own work goes into, & that consequently there wouldn't really be much overlapping; but I may be wrong about this, so I'm polishing up, & getting typed, a number of items that I've already more or less completed (Algebra of Logic, Analogy, Circular Argument, Complementary Propositions, Compound & Complex Propositions, Dilemma, Reduction of Dilemmas, Existential Preposition, Moods of the Syllogism; & perhaps others), & will send them over to him. If there would be overlapping of the two projects, I think I might be wise to see what chance I have of being roped into the wider one⁵. – If you haven't already found time to read my Boole thing (as if it hasn't arrived), I'm inclined to advise you not to bother; most of what I still look upon as good in it is now being worked up more {4} clearly in these dictionary articles.

I have, of course, heard nothing further as yet about Dunedin⁶. I don't think Aitkens will be back from Britain quite yet.

-Yours sincerely,

Arthur N. Prior.

P.S. I am still remembering your request for a copy of my Analysis thing; but the extra copy I have been expecting hasn't arrived yet.

A.N.P.

Annotations

- (1) Prior is referring to a mistake that Raphael was not able to correct before his 1948 work went to publication.
- (2) The phrase kite-flying means to test public opinion about something through sharing or discussing a topic.
- (3) This Dictionary of Formal Logic that Prior mentions was never published. Prior also mentions his work on the dictionary in a letter to Mary in May 1949 (VL1624).
- (4) Prior is referring to Dan Davin (1913-1990), who was a New Zealand author with a 1935 degree from Otago University. Davin lived most of his life in Oxford, England and was an editor at Oxford University Press. (National Library of New Zealand, University of Otago Library).
- (5) A point that can be taken from here, as small as it may be, is that Prior's engagement in his professional correspondence is important in his transition from 1949 into the 1950s. We can see in 1949 that Prior begins to engage with higher-level discussions of philosophy.
- (6) This is in reference to Prior's application for the chair of philosophy at Otago University, for which Raphael sent through his recommendation of Prior. Unfortunately for Prior, he was not successful in his application for the chair.
- (7) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

Canterbury College Chch., N.Z. 14/8/49

Dear Raphael,

Thanks for yours of the 3rd, which arrived yesterday. And thank you for being so fast about the food parcel¹ – it is useful to know where such things make least difference as well as where they make most; & in accordance with your request, we shall send you no more.

Thank you also for keeping me posted on such matters on the Otago chair, the reception of my stuff in Britain, & so on. Davin did not tell me explicitly that Ross² had read my ms. for the press, though I suspected it, as there were consultations with Ross about a change of title, & his suggestions indicated that he knew the contents of the thing.

I would like to take a year's leave of absence & spend it in Britain (not only for the pleasantness of it, but also because I feel the need of the contacts it would make possible, for my own better working); & I intend to do so, but do not know when. If I remain here, I probably ought to wait until about 1951 or 1952, when our new course will be going properly at all stages. (I'm not actually down for leave until still later, but ought wangle at them).³

I'll be interested to see your article on Butler, & comments on Macpherson. I mentioned to Macpherson some of the points at which I myself differed from him; but one thing I like very much about his article was his attaching new importance to the Analogy. – I'm not sure when I'll get around to my own actual thing⁴ for Philosophy (Hooper said there was no hurry); but it may be in this coming short vacation. There are a lot of other things that have piled up, though, that I want to attend to them.

I'll be sending you under separate cover, by surface, some of the items from the Dictionary of Formal Logic that I mentioned in my last note to you. I'll not bother you with the item on Algebra of Logic, as the substance of it is in the article on Boole that you have already read, nor with those on Syllogism and on Syllogism, Figures of the ***which is just more or less standard stuff**; but will send you that on Syllogism, Moods of the (Categorical & Hypothetical), as that carries somewhat further the things I said about the syllogism in the second instalment of Determinables, etc.; I will also send you the item on Circular Argument, as it contains a criticism of a view that I defended in my Mind note on Facts, Propositions, etc., & in correspondence with you when you were out here; & one or two others.

It's good to hear that you have a house now. We are completely settled into our new

place too. Martin is looking forward with some impatience to the arrival of a brother or sister at the end of the year.⁵

Kindest regards to you both from my wife & myself

- Arthur N. Prior.

P.S. I'm doubly glad to hear that people in your circumstances do not really need food parcels,⁶ as we felt a little mean at not sending you our sections in the year, & yet felt that we couldn't directly do so then, at practically the same time as I was asking you for a Testimonial.

A.N.P.

7

{2}

8

Annotations

- (1) Prior is referring to the food parcel that he sent Raphael, which he mentions in the previous letter 16 (**VL1642**).
- (2) Sir William David Ross (1877-1971) who is usually cited as W. D. Ross, contributed to ancient and moral philosophy.
- (3) Prior in fact did not take a year's leave of absence in Britain until 1956. Ryle came out to New Zealand, bringing with him in 1954 an invitation to Arthur Prior to give the Locke lectures. Prior took leave from Canterbury University in 1956 to travel to Britain and give the lectures.
- (4) The two words "actual thing" may in fact be something else as the writing is unclear.
- (5) Arthur and Mary did in fact have their second child, Ann Prior.
- (6) Prior may be referring to the fact that following the end of the Second World War, there were things that people could not easily get in Britain. Therefore, Prior would have been glad to hear that by 1949, the food parcels people in New Zealand sent to Britain were finally becoming unnecessary.
- (7) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.
- (7) The second page of letter 17 (**VL1643**) is a photograph from the *Virtual Lab* of the back of the letter which contains the N. Z. Air Mail Letter Card. Due to copyright, the photograph cannot be included.

STUDENT

No. 5, August, 1946

Journal of the New Zealand Student Christian Movement.**Tomorrow We Die****A. N. Prior**

Death is not a fashionable subject. For all that, psychoanalysis¹ suggests that subconsciously we of the twentieth century are very much preoccupied with it. Such repressed interest is unhealthy. It should do us good, therefore, to listen to what one book, written out of sixty generations of facing the facts, has to say about death. If we find its attitudes - as here summarised - difficult to follow, that is probably because our own thinking on the subject has been superficial.

The Bible knows of no “death of the body”, that is not a death of the whole person. It knows nothing of an “immortal soul” which the death of the body cannot affect. It has hints of a shadowy existence apart from the body in “Sheol” or “the grave”, but this is not considered worth calling “life”. Physical death means being “cut off from the land of the living”, from the “habitable earth” which God gave to the children of men from their home. Where the Bible holds out hope for the dead, it is the hope of a miraculous resurrection of the whole person, body and soul, in a redeemed universe, “a new heaven *and a new earth.*”²

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{2} The Bible takes death equally seriously as a divine judgment on our sin. There is no very obvious “justice” about the way in which particular persons die; but death is a judgment on mankind as a whole; and further, the defeat of our purposes and breaking up of our warmest personal ties which death (the death of others even more than our own) brings to each of us, is something we should learn to accept individually as a just judgment on *our own* sin. “Lord, . . . thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of man . . . Thou carriest them away as with a flood. . . . For we are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled. . . . For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told” (Psalm 90).

Last Enemy

Thirdly, the Bible takes death seriously as an active *power* in the universe. Death is “the Prince of this world”; the “last enemy” which Christ shall destroy; a power which holds us prisoners until it is forced to deliver up its prey (Rev. 20:13). I find it easiest to think of this in terms of a change, consequent upon our sin, in our relationship with *Nature*, which, instead of our servant, has become our destroyer. The desire of romantic poets to be absorbed in Nature is perceived by the Christian as well as the psychologist to be a diseased hunger for death – for it is only in death that we really lose our identity in Nature⁴.

In the Bible, the story of the Fall is rapidly followed by that of the Flood, in which Nature shows this destructive aspect, and in Biblical imagery the sea is constantly depicted as a rebellious, destructive Power. Christ’s miraculous stilling of the waters was perhaps symbolic of His victory over Chaos and Death! And in *Revelation* it is said, “There will be no more sea.”

All this is strongly echoed in Melville’s *Moby Dick*⁵. In this classic the destruction of the sea reflects a destructiveness within ourselves. Death as a “power” reigns within us even while we are alive. There is an irrational destructiveness in us which “takes sides with Death” and shrinks from living and loving. This is the fatal impulse described in Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner*⁶. In the Biblical myth of the Fall, the sentence, “In the day that thou eatest (the forbidden fruit), thou shalt surely die,” is literally executed even though “Adam” lives on long after his sin – Death has entered into his nature, into *our* nature.

Yet the delay of Adam’s actual extinction, man’s continued existence on the earth, is a real reprieve. The life that is yet granted to us, and the orderliness in the universe that makes it possible, are marks of God’s merciful patience with us, a constant fulfilment of the promise after the Flood that “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease (Gen. 8:22). And this is granted to us that we may turn to God in repentance and faith (II Peter 3). If we partake of death even in life, by trust and love we may also partake, even in this present life, of the life that is “eternal”.

This present life is in fact a constant conflict between trust, hope and love on the one hand, and the forces of death within us and without on the other. See, again, *Moby Dick*. The White Whale is the symbol and instrument of the reign of Death in the world, and the madly brave Captain Ahab is a fighter against Death, but he fights with defiance and destructiveness, not with love and trust in God beyond the Kingdom of Death and overruling it (for Ahab Death and God are one, and of this God he says, “Thy best worship is defiance”), and so his very struggle is the expression of the triumph of the enemy within himself.

Destruction Wins

This conflict in which we are all engaged is brought to an end by our literal, physical dying. Life and love must go down in the end before senselessness and destruction. So in *Moby Dick*, the whaling ship and its men are smashed and sunk by the White Whale. Not only does Ahab's suicidal defiance meet with its natural end, but the sane and human elements on board go down too. To emphasise the point, a seabird is accidentally hammered to the mast of the stricken ship, "which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living portion of heaven along with her."

The outward world moves to the same end. One individual death is, as it were, the beginning of the end of the world. For each one of us it *is* the end of the world – the world then means no more to us; it falls away from us into an abyss. For the Bible this is not only an appearance but a prophecy. The world is "passing to perdition" and will really reach there.

That *this* should be the end of our conflict, of all our conflicts, is, as we have said, an execution of the divine judgment upon us. It is God's severe reminder that we are always "unprofitable servants," and can never really "make good" before Him, for all our hope and trying.

But this is not the last word, if only because it is not really even the first. It is only from the death of Christ, foreshadowed in the Old Testament and enacted in the New, that we learn all that has been so far said about⁷. He has entered the Kingdom of Death with us and for us, perceiving and feeling and accepting God's judgment in it as we are unable to perceive and feel and accept it, and maintaining love and trust in the midst of this Kingdom as we are unable to maintain them. In Richard Baxter's words, "He leads us through no darker rooms than He went through before."⁸

And His sojourn in Death's Kingdom has not only lit up its nature for us but revealed its limits. God's Judgment has spent itself on Him, and in His resurrection He has given us a hope of our own, and of the earth's renewal, when the "last enemy" is quite overthrown. "When Adam lived, that is, when he sinned, death devoured life; when Christ died, that is, was justified, then life, which is Christ, swallowed up and devoured death" (Martin Luther).

Transfiguration

In the light of this hope we may see even in Nature, in the "seed time and harvest" of the promise to Noah, tokens and parables of the final renewal. Christ's parables are to be seen in the light of His death and resurrection; He has made the emergence from the earth of the shoot from the buried seed speak to us of the world's final transfiguration, so that Butler in his

Analogy of Religion can use such natural transformations as arguments for the resurrection. They are not arguments, but they are tokens and foretastes given to our faith. There is a Christian romanticism as well as a pagan one; exemplified perhaps by some of the tortured landscapes of van Gogh, which I once heard a Swiss theologian describe as “a better commentary than many a stodgy religious print” upon that passage in Romans 8. “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within – ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

Read On

On the “death-wish” within ourselves see Freud’s *Civilisation and its Discontents*⁹, de Rougemont’s *Passion and Society*, and the chapter on *The Embassy of Death* (an interpretation of Hamlet) in Wilson Knight’s *The Wheel of Fire*.

I do not know of any writer who has systematically developed the Bible’s attitude to Nature in the light of its attitude to death and resurrection since Edward Irving did so (early last century) in a lecture on *Teaching by Parables*, in Vol. I of his *Works*, in Knox Theological Hall Library. More accessible to some may be Henry’s Bible, the comments on Genesis 1-9 and on Psalms 90 and 96.

Annotations

- (1) The word “psychoanalysis” in this context refers to Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and his works, whom Prior became intensely interested in during the Second World War.
- (2) This is a direct line from *Revelation 21*
- (3) Prior has included on the bottom of page 1 the painting *The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane* by El Greco.
- (4) Interestingly, this comment “for it is only in death that we really lose our identity in Nature”, contradicts what Prior wrote in 1931 in one of his first publications *Essays Literary*, in which he reflected on his own thoughts on death, through Percy Shelley’s (1792-1822) words in Shelley’s elegy *Adonais*. In *Essays Literary*, Prior discusses Shelley’s conception of ‘death’ - this being that ordinary man’s understanding of death is merely destructive and is the “cessation of individual existence”, while men with deeper intuition understand that “death is a reunion with nature” (Prior, 1931, p. 141-142), compared to what he writes here – that our relationship with nature will cease upon our death.
- (5) Touching on *Essays Literary* again, interestingly what we find in that piece of literature is that Prior discusses theological ideas within a poetic framework, but in *Tomorrow We Die* we can see the opposite happening, as Prior discusses *Moby Dick*, and the key ideas from that novel, but within a theological framework.
- (6) *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1798), again resembling attitudes of the ocean symbolising chaos.
- (7) The remaining last three words in this sentence are unable to be seen behind a tear in the page.
- (8) From Richard Baxter’s poem *Lord, It belongs Not to My Care* (1681).
- (9) Prior’s interest in Freud’s writings during the 1940s has not been too intensely discussed. Per Hasle and David Jakobsen have both made comments regarding Prior’s interest in Freud, but nothing further. Jakobsen also discusses Prior’s engagement with atheism in his paper *An Illusion close to life* (2016), where he refers to Prior’s discussion of Freudian theory in *Can Religion be Discussed?* (1942), as he notes that “Prior’s argument distinguishes itself from the general linguistic reason for rejecting the definition of God” (p. 3439), which is in reference to Prior’s comment on psychological-analysis.
- (10) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Penny Smith.

BACKGROUND TO OVERSEAS NEWS¹

by Mr. Prior

10 a.m. 10/2/49

The event which has occupied the most prominent parts of the news pages in the past week or two is, of course, the trial of the Hungarian Primate, Cardinal Mindzenty². Mass protest meetings against this trial have been held in several parts of the world, and some very strong things have been said. Before saying anything about this trial myself, I think I should say something on the more general subject of the relations between Church and State in Hungary. Slightly over one-half of the population of Hungary are Roman Catholic at all events on paper, and there are one or two important issues on which Roman Catholic leaders, and particularly Cardinal Mindzenty, have been at variance not only with the present Hungarian Government but also with the leaders of other Churches of that country. First of all, there's the land question. Before the war, I mean before World War II, Hungary was a country of very large landed estates, on which peasants worked for intolerably long hours, not merely for starvation wages, but for the most part for no cash wages at all, though they were provided² with somewhere to live and generally with a bit of land for their own use. Peasant's couldn't move from one estate to another, and were to all intents and purposes slaves of the land-owners. I think I have suggested before that this is the sort of country which Communism seems to find it easiest to conquer. This is not quite in accordance with Marx's own expectations. Marx thought of communism as a revolution against the evils and inequalities produced by a high stage of industrialisation, but in fact it has reached power most easily in relatively backward, more or less feudal countries such as Russia and the Eastern European countries and China³. Anyway, in Hungary after the war, land reforms were rapidly introduced, and the large landowners deprived of their power and most of their land. The Government included Protestant Church leaders, and the Hungarian Protestants generally seem to have been in favour of the land reforms. The attitude of Hungarian Catholics [sic] was not quite so enthusiastic; as the Roman Catholic Club was one of the two largest landowners in the country: the other was Prince Esterhazy, who was tried at the same time as Cardinal Mindzenty. It seems fairly clear that these men were guilty at some stage of preparing, as far as in their day, for the establishment of a monarchical government which would have returned the great estates to their old owners.

Another point of tension between the Roman Catholic Church and the Hungarian Government has been the question of education. Before the war, all the schools in Hungary except one or two in the cities, were Church schools. But now the Government has taken over primary education, though it has left the Churches with some of their secondary schools, and even in the primary schools religious instruction is still compulsory, with a conscience clause protecting the rights of parents who object to it, and religious teachers are paid by State. That is to say, there is considerably more religious teaching in the schools in Hungary than there is in New Zealand. The Protestant Churches have accepted the new arrangement, but the Roman Catholics, in Hungary as in other countries, want to have their own schools run by themselves. {2} Now this education issue didn't come up at the trial, which the Government shrewdly kept confined to political and economic matters, but it's part of the general background of tension.

Now let us return to the trial itself. As I have already hinted, Mindzenty has been guilty of the things alleged against him. This seems to be at all events, the view of the "Manchester Guardian". But that's not to say that he and his associates have had a fair trial, or that the sentences passed upon them have been just ones. First of all, with regard to the trial itself. For evidence, the prosecution seems to have relied mainly on confessions extorted from the accused themselves. And these confessions at all events the Cardinal's, seem to me to be quite worthless as evidence. It is, of course, quite impossible to verify the rumours that the Cardinal was drugged or tortured, and reporters with no bias in favour of Communism have insisted that at the trial he appeared to be fully in command of himself and showed no signs of ill-treatment. But before the proceedings he did say that any confession or recantation that he might later make, was to be disregarded. SO all we can do now, it seems to me, is to disregard the confession and recantation that he has made, and that must apply I take it, even to his formal withdrawal of his earlier statement. Normally, when a person gives evidence in court, he first of all swears, or makes an affirmation, that he is going to tell the truth as he sees it, and his evidence isn't worth anything unless he does give this undertaking. But that is just what the Cardinal in effect refused to do – he made it quite plain that what he said was not to be relied on. No doubt this constituted the gravest contempt of court, though I don't think this charge was one of those brought against him; but anyway perhaps this court was really contemptible. There has been a certain meanness, to use no worse word, about the sentences it has imposed. I am not now thinking mainly of the sentence on the Cardinal, though that was foolish as well as vindictive. The Manchester Guardian has said bluntly that the Cardinal's actions were not those of a martyr and in court he did not behave like one; but the court's sentence has practically

made him one in spite of himself. But what struck me most was the severity of the mildest of the sentences, the three years imposed on a man who had a fine record of anti-Nazi activity during the war- helping Jews and so on- and whose main aim seems to have been refusing to inform the authorities of the doings of others.

Well, there it is. We cannot say that standards of justice and freedom are very high in Hungary at the moment. I cannot help being a little disturbed all the same at the way in which this particular injustice which is anyway a sort of mixed injustice, has been seized upon for more vehement and widespread protests than anything else that has occurred behind the Iron Curtain. The case for example, of the women who were not allowed out of Russia to join their husbands⁴, seems to me a much more serious case, if a much clearer case, than this one. Moreover, it's not only behind the Iron Curtain that Justice and freedom are mocked and trampled on to-day. There are still anti-Communist dictatorships as well as Communist ones in the world. There is an anti-Communist dictatorships [sic] in Spain for example, and for years now the kind of thing that shocks people when it goes on in Budapest has been going on in Spain. Men, poor men, tramway men for example, have been carted off to prison for small things as distributing a forbidden newspaper; after months they have been tried; they have been found guilty, in many cases they have probably been guilty, but their {3} guilt has been established by confessions extorted from them in all kinds of ways, and long and severe sentences have been passed upon them for very small breaches of very oppressive laws. And it seems to me that the addresses we have lately read about from such people as Cardinal Spellman⁵, and Dr. Downey⁶ of Liverpool, and the Duke of Norfolk⁷, would have been vastly more moving and impressive if these men had been equally to the fore in organising mass meetings and protests against the same sort of injustice when it occurs – as it is continually occurring – in a place like Spain. For tyranny is tyranny, and injustice is injustice, whether it is practised in the name of something in which we believe or in the name of something in which we do not believe. And in one way, tyrannies and injustices which are practised in the name of something in which we believe are worse than the other sort; at all events, they concern us more directly. The misdoings of the Hungarian Government, whatever suffering they may cause, at least do not soil the good name of the great religious institutions of which Cardinal Spellman and Dr. Downey are spokesmen; but the misdoings of the Spanish Government do have that effect. Somewhat similarly, the actions of the Spanish Government, and the utterances of a Spanish Bishop, who said last year that all non-Catholic religious services ought to be forbidden in a predominantly Catholic country such as Spain – such utterances tend to

blunt the force of the moving pleas which Cardinal Spellman and Dr. Downey have made for religious liberty; and since religious liberty is a very precious thing, and is really menaced by Communism, I cannot help regretting, that Cardinal Spellman and Dr. Downey did not put themselves in a better position to defend r.l.⁸ by denouncing this attack upon it by their Spanish colleague. I am sure there are many Roman Catholics who regret this too⁹.

Before closing, let me mention one other matter that's been in the news. If there are some public issues, such as religious liberty, on which the Church of Cardinal Spellman and Dr. Downey seems at present to speak, with a divided voice, there are other public issues on which Her voice is crystal clear, and if an outsider may say so, good to listen to. Roman Catholicism has set its pace¹⁰ against at least some forms of racial discrimination and segregation. Some of you may remember my asking some time ago, why it is that the Teutonic race seems to have more race prejudice than other European races. Although I am a Protestant myself, I cannot help suspecting that the Protestantism of the Teutonic peoples has something to do with it:

I don't think there is a single Roman Catholic leader who would dream of admitting that a marriage could be treated as null and void merely because it is contracted between people of different races. I have spoken about this subject before, and have told you that in the Southern States of America inter-racial marriages are not recognised. Our neighbour country across the Tasman has not gone quite that far yet, but the deportation order which has been made out in Australia against the Indonesian woman, Mrs. O'Keefe¹¹, suggests that the authorities are not taking seriously the fact that she is married to an Australian. Mr. Calwell has said, "You can have a white Australia or a black Australia, but a mongrel Australia is impossible!" Talk of that sort, it seems to me, thoroughly warrants a few mass meetings and perhaps even one or two addressed by Cardinals.

Annotations

- (1) This article was written as a transcript for a radio broadcast.
- (2) József Mindszenty (1892-1975). Mindszenty was appointed as the Hungarian Primate in 1945 and cardinal one year later. From the moment that he became a priest in 1915, Mindszenty was politically active and strongly opposed any totalitarian regime. His refusals to accept the secularisation of Roman catholic schools led to his arrest in which he was charged with treason in 1949. He remained imprisoned until 1956, when he was released during the social uprising that year (Encyclopedia Britannica).
- (3) The typing is “proveded”, but clearly a typo.
- (4) Prior is referring to a unique case in which 15 Soviet woman who had married British Men during the Second World War, were not allowed to leave the Soviet Union under order by the government, even after the end of the war, for fear that they would become spies and enemies of the state. Only one woman by the name of Klara Hall managed to escape the Soviet Union for Britain, whereas unfortunately the other 14 woman remained trapped for the remainder of their lives (Manaev, 2022).
- (5) Francis Spellman (1889-1967) was an American Bishop as well as a Cardinal of the Catholic Church in 1946.
- (6) Dr. Richard Downey (1881-1953) was the Archbishop of Liverpool.
- (7) Bernard Fitzalan-Howard (1908-1975) was the 16th Duke of Norfolk between the years of 1917-1975.
- (8) Prior’s comment about how communism finds its way into less established and profitable countries is an interesting reflection, one that suggests that Prior had well and truly left communism as an interest behind at this point.
- (9) Transcriber’s note: Prior has penned in by hand “r.l.” which must refer to religious liberty, mentioned two lines above.
- (10) It is interesting to note that this article begins as what the title suggests, as a report of foreign events, with no initial argument being laid out. However, Prior’s own voice becomes clearer as the report continues, and it seems that he feels that there has been an attack on *religious liberty* or more so a lack of defence of *religious liberty* in the face of hostility. Religious liberty appears to be something that Prior takes seriously and feels the need to enforce and protect, which makes a lot of sense. Prior’s voice in this article at times even sounds like preaching, for example the line “for tyranny is tyranny, and injustice is injustice, whether it is practised in the name of something in which we

believe or in the name of something in which we do not believe. And in one way, tyrannies and injustices which are practised in the name of something in which we believe are worse than the other sort; at all events, they concern us more directly” (p. 3).

(11) Annie O’Keefe (1908-1974) took refuge in Australia with her husband and family after the Japanese military invaded Indonesia during the Second World War in 1942. Their struggles against fear of deportation in the late 1940s gained global awareness, because with public support, Annie and her family were able to successfully appeal to the High Court, and challenged the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (the White Australia policy as it was commonly called). They were successful and remained in Australia (Tao, 2019). It is not often that Prior refers to events that occurred on a global basis in his articles and letters.

(12) This text has been transcribed by Patrick Smith and proof-read by Adriane Rini.

Part II – Arthur the man: Prior’s life in the 1940s.

- **Mary’s Hospitalisation**

Mary’s hospitalisation in the 1940s became a mystery in a sense for my research. From 04/11/46 to 04/12/46 there are several letters that Prior wrote to Mary while she was hospitalised. Outside these letters, I found no record of this 1946 hospitalisation anywhere. Adriane Rini had been informed by someone that Mary had contracted tuberculosis in 1946, which seemed likely because of a few things, such as the fact that Arthur and Martin would wave to Mary from outside the hospital, rather than meet in the room with her. However, I was unable to find any evidence anywhere that confirmed that Mary did in fact have tuberculosis, therefore I contacted Martin Prior and asked him myself. At first, Martin did not think that Mary was ill in 1946 at all and did not believe that it was tuberculosis. I sent through to him a collection of passages of some of the letters from 1946, and these were surprising for Martin because he had not realised that Mary was in fact ill during that year. However, Martin eventually was able to provide me with some excellent details which have cleared up this year in the Priors’ history.

Martin explained to me that in the later part of 1946, the Priors were expecting their second child. However, Mary had a miscarriage in November but was unable to birth her dead child, a son. As a result, their baby was dead inside of her for two weeks, which led to her hospitalisation. Mary became incredibly unwell and quite delirious as Martin recalls – “she told me how she announced that she had squared the circle! So the fact that she waved to me from the window showed that she had improved, but still would have found it tiring to cope with me visiting” (M. Prior, personal communication, July 15, 2022). Mary’s parents came up from Timaru at the time and stayed with Martin and Arthur, which aligns well with what is in the letters. Arthur and Mary later did have another child, a daughter Ann, who became a famous author. Ann passed away in 2016. The correspondence that I was able to have with Martin has been valuable because it clarified facts that no one else would have been able to clarify. We would have continued to assume that Mary had tuberculosis in 1946, whereas we now know exactly what happened in that year. It would have been undoubtedly a tragic and hard time for the Prior’s, as the letters suggest. The trauma of the miscarriage also explains the tone of the letters, as Prior tried in every letter to cheer Mary up and remind her of his love.

This event from 1946 is what brought my attention to the fact that while Prior is known as the ‘father of Logic’, he is not as well known for being the father that he was to his two children, or the husband that he was to Mary. While one part of his life is very well known and has been

investigated thoroughly, these years from the 1940s have not been investigated to the same degree. The purpose of this part in the discussion, is to discuss Prior as a family man. What I mean by this is I want to set aside the intellectual history momentarily and discuss what kind of father and husband he was, which is especially important because in the period that I am investigating, the Priors faced significant setbacks in their family life.

Firstly, Mary's hospitalisation in 1946 and the letters that Arthur writes to her are a glimpse of a private world. On the face of it, these are letters from a man to his wife that include updates on his and their child's day. However, there is more to them than just that, as the discussion within each letter suggests. In two particular letters, letter 5 (**VL1632**) and letter 11 (**VL1639**), we can see that Prior is fascinated with Martin's mental development and cognitive abilities. An upside of Mary's hospitalisation in 1946 is that it gave Arthur the opportunity to become a very involved father, and to bond with Martin, whereas this may not have been the case if Mary had not been so unwell. It would have been a stressful time in their lives, yet Arthur appears to have found positive experiences throughout it all because Martin became his focus. These letters give us an idea of what kind of a father Prior was, and what we learn from these is that Prior was a good father, and a good husband. In letter 6 (**VL1626**), Prior remarks to Mary about the stresses and worries he is facing. Prior is waiting to hear if he still has a job lecturing at Canterbury University, and all the while Martin was separated from his mother for over a month. Prior refers to Mary's parents and himself as "muddlesome bringers-up" of Martin, which is finely put. The responsibilities that would have been put upon Arthur would have been enormous to say the least - he was the support both financially and emotionally for the Prior family during this time. However, Mary's parents who moved to Christchurch from Timaru were a significant support for Arthur. Mary's parents stayed with Arthur and Martin while Mary was in care, and they most likely cared for Martin when Arthur was working during the week.

Arthur took Martin on various trips to see Mary during her time in hospital. It is a fact, which not many people are aware of, that Arthur became a solo parent for that time. The subject of his letters changed from religious and academic debate with colleagues and friends, to updates on his and his son's day. Prior himself even comments on this in a letter, writing that there was 'no one else' to write about. Firstly, one interesting thing we can see in these letters to Mary, is that Arthur shows his engagement with Martin by describing Martin's actions and growing abilities. Arthur writes about what noises Martin would make and what he was interested in depending on the day. In various letters to Mary, Arthur correlates these actions and abilities

of Martin with Martin's interest in machinery. For example, in letter 6 (**VL1626**) Arthur writes about Martin's interests in motor cars, fire trucks and aeroplanes. And when Martin develops an interest in geometrical patterns, Arthur even takes the time to sketch the railings of a bridge that fascinated Martin. In letter 7 (**VL1629**), Arthur mentions Martin's fascination with aeroplanes again. Arthur writes about these things as a proud father would, and to help reassure Mary that their child is well. Mary was only able to see Martin on visits, which usually involved Arthur and Martin standing on the street, waving at Mary through her window. We know this from these letters because Arthur would often tell her that they would be over to see her if the weather was fine that day. Prior's 'note taking' of Martin's development in these letters is like a school report in which a teacher discusses what a child is learning, and how they are learning these new things. Prior wrote frequently to Mary during this time, which makes it obvious that Prior was concerned about Mary's health.

Essentially, reading how Arthur navigated this difficult time in the Priors' life, provided me with a glimpse into how Prior carried out his role as a father and husband. This event from 1946 grabbed my interest, because the letters from this period appear to only contain day-to-day reports from Arthur back to Mary regarding his time with Martin. However, I soon discovered that there was more to learn and appreciate from these letters, than one may assume. Therefore, the following sections include a closer reading and interpretation of these letters, which allow us to explore more of Arthur's role as a family man during the 1940s.

Martin's intellectual development.

- **Jean Piaget**

In letter 5 (VL1632), Prior is 'studying' Martin's development and is analysing how he correlates the idea of a 'steering wheel' with various other objects – such as the wheel of a pram or the circular pattern on the railings on a bridge. In this particular letter Martin is two-years old. Prior is in fact discovering similar things to what Jean Piaget (1896-1980) discovered. Piaget was a Swiss psychologist who was famous for his theory of cognitive development in children. Piaget developed a theory of *assimilation*. "Assimilation is the cognitive *process* by which the person integrates new perceptual matter [**the pram wheel**] or stimulus events into existing schemata or patterns of behaviour" [**the idea of a steering wheel**] (Wadsworth, 1979, p. 14). Piaget uses the simple example of a child thinking that a cow is a dog because it has four legs just as a dog has. In the case of Martin's intellectual development, Martin sees a circular object with a smaller central circle in it, and he perceives the object to be a steering wheel with a horn in the centre. Martin has already discovered what a steering wheel is and has also discovered that a steering wheel can produce a loud sound when the central button is pressed. So, in Piaget's terms, the existing schemata is that of the steering wheel and the now perceptual matter is the pram wheel. Prior is picking up on these developments and making note of them which, as I have put, is a form of analysis.

Another interesting letter where Prior is again analysing and commenting on Martin's development is from 1949, when Martin was four-and-a-half years old. In this letter, which is Letter 11 (VL1639), Prior is explaining to Raphael how Martin's sensitivity to the nuances of language is beginning to show, especially after Martin pulled him up on using the correct pronouns in a statement. Prior describes the situations as follows:

When I said of a motor-bus, "She has started moving", he pointed out to me that a bus was not a She, but an It. I agreed with him, but expressed my agreement by saying, "Yes, she's an It", & wondered what he would make of that one. But it was no trouble to him - he expressed his further objection by passing from the indicative mood to the imperative - "Don't say 'She's an It'; say 'It's an It'" (1949, P.3)

We can only imagine how proud Arthur would have been of his son for his mastery of gendered pronouns. Prior is clearly delighted by it, as we can tell because he writes about it to Raphael. What we can see Martin doing here is similar to how he formed his understanding of what a 'steering wheel' is in the previous example. A steering wheel in Martin's mind is a circular object. In the case of the pronoun situation, Martin is associating a non-gendered object such as a motor-bus with the pronoun 'it', which cannot be used to describe a gendered being because he has already connected in his mind the idea of a female with 'she', and something that is not gendered with 'it'. Both the example of the gendered pronouns and the example of the steering wheel show us a child whose mind is grasping to find connections between things in the world and the words and language we use to describe them. After all he picks the wheel off a pram, a wheel off a bicycle, an image from a book, and steel railings. The only correlative property of these things with a steering wheel is the *idea* of a circle. Martin had in his mind the idea of a steering wheel being circle, just as he had in his mind the idea of a 'she' being a female person and not a motor-bus. These interactions that Prior had with Martin in the 1940s, tell us a great deal about how Prior viewed the abilities of children, which was to not underestimate them.

- **Erik Stenius**

Erik Stenius (1911-1990) was a Swedish philosopher who wrote the work *Beginning with Ordinary Things* (1968), which contains a critical analysis of Willard Quine's 1960 *Word and Object*. In one section in his work, Stenius talks about an experiment that he conducted with his two-year-old son. I have included the quotation here, as there are some important details to outline. Stenius writes,

Let us examine an example of how a child learns the 'names of the colours'. When my boy was about two years old he had a set of bricks of different shapes and colours which could be combined to make gaudy figures. If I remember rightly, they consisted of red, green, yellow and blue squares, rhombs and triangles. I attempted to teach him the meaning of 'red' by first pointing at a red rhomb and saying 'red', then at a yellow rhomb and saying 'not red'. I then pointed at a red square and said 'red' and at a blue square and said 'not red' and so on. My son was

interested and tried in his turn to point out the red objects, but without success. I began afresh, 'This is red, this is not'; but in vain. He grew tired and told me to go away. I went, but as a last resort pointed to a red tooth mug in the bathroom and said 'red'. The result was the most startling example of 'a flash of insight' that I have ever seen. My son stared at the mug with an expression of deep thought, suddenly turned with enthusiasm to his bricks and now without difficulty picked out the red ones. This was not all: in a minute he had learnt the names of the other colours. The sight of the red mug had taught him what he had not realized before, namely, what difference there was between red objects and objects of other colours, and likewise what kind of difference we were looking for here, so he could learn the names of the other colours immediately from just one example. Now this procedure has something to do with extensions. We start from a restricted class of objects and separately point out in extension those objects in this class which are red and those which are not red. But in order for the learner really to learn his lesson, he must look for intensions¹, not extensions, that is, for a certain distinctive feature which is common to those objects which are called 'red' and by which they differ from such objects as are called 'not red'. Only when he has made a guess as to what this feature may be can he try to go on to make the division for new objects (Stenius, 1968, p. 40-41)

Let us examine this passage, because it is interesting to note what has been said here, and what similarities there are between Stenius's example and Prior's. Stenius states that seeing the red mug, taught the child the important differences between red objects, and other objects that are not red. Whereas, two-year-old Martin in letter 5 (**VL1632**) did not understand at the time that although a steering wheel may be circular, not all circular things are steering wheels. Then Stenius moves on to define *extension* – which in his story involves his son's learning "a certain distinctive feature which is common to those objects which are called 'red' and by which they differ from such objects as are called 'not red'." But compare this to Prior's story of his son, the boy comes to understand that they are all unified by a distinct thing – in this case the colour red. Martin had not yet learned "a certain distinctive feature which is common to those objects"

¹ The terms 'intension' and 'extension' are due to Rudolph Carnap's (1891-1970) *Meaning and Necessity* (1947). However, Prior shows no real awareness of Carnap's distinction.

which are called 'steering wheel' and by which they differ from objects which are not steering wheels. Martin *had* grasped the idea of 'circle' and had begun to associate that idea with the idea of steering wheel. But he seems not yet to have picked up that not every circle in a circle is steering wheel.

While Prior's thoughts on Martin's development touch on philosophy, language acquisition, and psychology, during Prior's time at Otago, which included his B.A in 1935, M.A thesis in 1937, and a one-year lectureship position that same year (Copeland, 2020), Philosophy and Psychology were in fact united in a single department and they continued to exist as one department up until the 1960s.

Psychology had been taught at Otago for many years prior to the foundation of the Department, but as part of the Philosophy programme. The roots of the discipline are reflected in one of its early names, experimental philosophy. At Otago it formed part of the subject known as mental science. In 1882 the course in mental science covered three areas: psychology, ethics and logic

(<https://www.otago.ac.nz/psychology/otago066781.html#:~:text=Psychology%20had%20been%20taught%20at,its%20early%20names%2C%20experimental%20philosophy>)

These two disciplines were viewed as 'mental sciences'. As far as I can tell, Prior did not teach any psychology Prior taught a good amount of logic in 1937 during his one-year lectureship, which was a decision partially influenced by John Findlay who was the professor of philosophy then. The whole department did also have meetings and lunches together, so Prior would have had discussions with his psychology colleagues.

Arthur the father: Kiwi fathers and men in the 1940s.

The letters from 1946 to 1949 paint Arthur Prior as a dedicated and loving father. Prior's dedication comes through in the various letters that he wrote to Mary and Raphael about Martin's development. Prior's role as a father in the 1940s is interesting because there is a substantial amount of literature written during and around this decade that created an idea of *who* a Kiwi father was in the 1940s. While the letters show us what kind of father Prior was, they do not indicate what kind of father he was in the wider context of New Zealand society. With this wider context available, we are able to gain a better understanding of Prior as a family man. The 1940s in New Zealand history marks a definite turning point and societal shift from war-time New Zealand, into a new modern era.

What was it to be a Kiwi father in the 1940s? Alison Gray in her book *The Jones Men* (1983) discusses the views of 100 New Zealand men who share their life stories. Gray describes who a 'traditional' kiwi father was in the 1940s, based on the accounts from the men that she spoke with. Gray wrote that,

They took their responsibilities as providers very seriously – with the socialisation they had they could hardly do otherwise. But they were trapped, the better they provided, the less they were home. And since they had little training in the intimacies of daily family life and few opportunities to practice, most preferred to opt out of this area altogether and concentrated on what they knew best (p. 96)

What they knew best was providing for their family. Gray's account of fatherhood in this era is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, this analysis of fathers and men in New Zealand during this era is common in a wide variety of literature. Secondly, Arthur's letters to Mary in the 1940s are evidence of a very different kind of existence than anything Gray describes. While Gray's account of fatherhood and masculinity in general is commonly assumed from this era, there were always exceptions and Prior was one of them. To demonstrate this, the following discussion will include various references to texts concerning masculinity from the inter-war period in New Zealand. Literature that was written during the 1930s and 1940s depicts men in the same light that Gray (1983) has depicted fathers from this period.

Jock Phillips's *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male - A History* (1987), focusses on the creation of a homogeneous masculinity that becomes the stereotype of all New Zealand Pakeha² men in the 19th and 20th centuries. The studies in this text are well before Prior's time, but they are in fact related. Ideas of masculinity that Phillips discusses from the earlier part of the 20th century align with the New Zealand literature that was being written in Prior's time. The colonial man has been described as many things such as rugged and versatile (Phillips, 1987, p. 24) and secluded mostly by choice (Brickell, 2014, p. 129), with terms such as 'bush-bachelors' being adopted during this time (MacDonald, 1999, p. 20). However, these ideals of manhood soon became unrealistic by the early 20th century. Post-1907, following the end of the colonial period in New Zealand, the 20th century brought with it greater rates of Pakeha urbanisation, as well as increasing rates of marriage, especially following the Second World War. This was partly due to the greater circulation of wealth throughout New Zealand at the time, which allowed more men to purchase homes and marry earlier in life (Phillips, 1987, p. 265). However, this would have been unsettling and difficult for a large proportion of men, as Phillips notes that "compared with these carefree days of bachelorhood, the obligations of a family must have seemed onerous" (Phillips, 1987, p. 240).

This societal change, and the uneasiness of some men, can be seen in literature later in the century. Many authors portrayed this in novels through creating male characters who reminisced on a once 'simpler life'. In the novel *Sale Day* (1940) by Frank Sargeson, the narrator comments that "in secret I yearn for something less complicated, let's say a milk round and an unworried living in a small country town. For committing myself to paper I have the good excuse that I am at present enduring another of my crises" (Limbrick, 1996, p. 13). The narrator feels security and nostalgic happiness when he reminisces about a simple rural life, a stark contrast to the life he now lives in suburbia. Furthermore, in the texts *A Man and his Wife* (1939) and *The Hole that Jack Dug* (1945), the main characters reject the suburban life that they find themselves living in. For these two main characters: Jack and Ted, the "world is feminine, and can be resisted in favour of a phallic, masculine sexuality, and mateship; in 'City and Suburban', the narrator can rely only upon a nostalgia for a version of masculinity to which he no longer has access" (Limbrick, 1996, p. 12). By the 1940s the country's colonial-style masculinity was no longer accessible to a large proportion of kiwi men. Written accounts and expressions of masculinity in the inter-war period, were riddled with this nostalgia.

² Pakeha – A non-Māori New Zealander.

Furthermore, because of New Zealand's colonial history, masculinity became a fundamental part of the cultural and national identity from its beginning.

We can see this nostalgic masculinity appear in other novels during this time, such as the *Me and Gus* collection by Frank S. Anthony. This collection of short stories that were re-published in 1951, are about the humorous adventures of two Taranaki dairy farmers, Mark and Gus. Anthony, who was a farmer from the Taranaki himself, is sure to show this in the stylistic makeup of *Me and Gus*, as the collection of stories is riddled with kiwi slang, as well as the frequent mention of iconic New Zealand places. It becomes clear that there is a general assumption made by Anthony, that the reader is a kiwi for no attempt to explain slang, phrases, or place names is made. Because of this assumed accordance between the characters and the New Zealand reader, these stories in themselves demonstrate the perceived or ideal nature of manhood in New Zealand and reaffirm what others such as Phillips (1987) and MacDonald (1999) state as being the perceived idea of masculinity. In this collection of short stories there is no place for women, both in the context of the men's day to day lives, and in the context of their ability to maintain relationships with women and with each other, which again brings about the perceived ideals of colonial New Zealand. Other texts such as the novel *Man Alone* (1939), written by John Mulgan, also affirm ideas of masculinity that Anthony describes in *Me and Gus*, with the protagonist Johnson who journeys throughout rural New Zealand, regularly moving from farm to farm, and living the 'bachelor life' that Macdonald (1999, p. 20) describes.

In the later part of the 19th century, and the earlier years of the 20th century, fathers had well defined roles. They were commonly only expected to financially provide for their family. Emotional commitment to their children and wives was not necessarily expected. New Zealand fathers from the 1950s onwards had greatly different expectations from previous decades. The Second World War dramatically changed how common gendered roles should be perceived, and men were accepting of this. Interestingly, in some cases men accepted these changes more readily than some women did. There is evidence that the arrival of women in the workplace was not entirely accepted by women in the 1940s and even through into the 1950s — a time when many women still believed that their place should remain in the family household (Cussen, 2017, p. 4). However, in these 'inbetween' years that I have been referring to (1920-1940) it is obvious looking at the literature available that there was an idea that men were unsure about their place in New Zealand society. Furthermore, while the Second World War

did lead to a societal shift, especially in the way in which women were integrated into the work force, this shift was slow and did not occur entirely in the 1940s. As Jock Phillips (1987) notes, the disruptions from the Second World War reinforced traditional gender roles in family life, and Kiwis were happy to settle down into family life, which many men who had returned home from war would have found difficult (p. 265). Marriage rates skyrocketed and the chance for a young kiwi family to purchase their own home was high, therefore all things pointed to comfortable domesticated living. Essentially, the end of World War Two brought about a fast shift backwards where women walked away from their roles in the workforce to resume their roles once again as stay-at-home mothers, and men resumed their roles in the workforce and reaffirmed their role as 'bread-winner' in the household.

It would now be worthwhile comparing Prior's attitudes and comments in the various letters that he wrote to Mary, with this social context in mind. As already discussed, Prior was a devoted father who took his role seriously, however there is more that can be interpreted from these letters. As Gray (1983) discussed following her interviews with several New Zealand fathers, there was the idea that men were essentially trapped as the key financial provider for their family, because this was what was expected of them, but they tended to accept this obligation without question (p. 119). Gray discovered from these interviews with these 100 Kiwi men, that they all had the same attitude that basic needs had to come first, such as food and shelter (p. 101). Gray notes that this idea has become more accurately defined by A.H. Maslow as the "idea of a hierarchy of need" (p. 178). When we look at how Arthur and Mary lived their lives together, a definitive image is created, one that shows a loving and egalitarian relationship between two equals who truly enjoy one another's company. This again provides an example of how Prior as a father and his marriage with Mary, differed from the stereotypes from the 1930's and 1940's.

A great example of this is from Letter 15 (**VL1624**), where Prior updates Mary that he brought in and folded the washing and took the time to stack the firewood. Arthur also updates Mary in this letter on his progress writing his Dictionary on Logic, and this inclusion of scholarly pursuits was a common occurrence. Mary had an academic background, and so it was common for Arthur to pass his ideas by Mary. There is no notion present in these letters of a hierarchical system in their relationship, a point which Martin also reaffirmed in an interview that he gave in 2017. Martin noted that before Arthur gained his position at Canterbury University College at the end of 1945, the family was broke. Martin recalls that Arthur and Mary lived off Mary's

long-term savings for a good period, and that Mary “had the attitude that she was prepared to have that arrangement as long as he made the effort to look for the best thing” (Personal correspondence, M. Prior, 2017). This arrangement was as much about their financial security as it was about Arthur’s happiness. Even in hard times, it appears that Arthur and Mary worked well together and equally supported one another’s needs. After all, philosophising was Prior’s passion and Mary understood that, encouraged it, and even shared that passion.

With regard to supporting one another, Arthur’s letters to Mary during her admission in hospital in the later part of 1946 demonstrate his care and love for her. These letters, as well as all the other letters that have been included in this discussion, are full of an abundance of romantic messages. Prior clearly adored Mary and it constitutes a wonderful part of who Prior was as a man, which we would not know of if it were not for these letters. In letter number 3 (**VL1579**), Prior very calmly with an understated attitude reflects on their situation when he writes “what a curious period of twofold suspense it is at the present time; waiting for you to get better, & waiting to hear about my job!” When in fact their situation was a little worse than a “curious period”, as Arthur was possibly without a job and Mary was unwell following her miscarriage. Yet Arthur in these few letters appears to have it all under control and only tells Mary what he feels she needs to know. This would undoubtedly have been the best form of support that he could have given her at that time.

To conclude, the purpose of **Part II** and the discussion surrounding Prior as a family man, has been to demonstrate two important points. Firstly, the private correspondence between Arthur and Mary, as well as D. D. Raphael, demonstrate that Prior took his role as a father seriously. Prior was engaged with Martin’s intellectual growth and was proud of what Martin was discovering. Furthermore, this part of the discussion shows what vast amount of information there is to find within primary sources such as these letters. The second purpose of this part of the discussion has been to frame Prior as a family man in consideration of the wider context of New Zealand society. A selection of narratives of what a kiwi male from the 1940s was have been included in **Part II**, in order to do this. The next part in this thesis will include a discussion concerning Prior’s academic career in the 1940s. Having now explored Prior’s personal life from this period, the following **Part III** will complete this overview of what kind of intellectual, father, husband, and philosopher Arthur Prior was in the 1940s.

Part III – Prior’s academic career in the 1940s: Arthur Prior: The ‘Public Intellect’.

For a man such as Arthur Prior, it is natural to class his development in the 1950s of tense logic as the work of a genius. However, there is a great deal more to his intellectual character before his discovery of tense logic. Therefore, the purpose of this part of the discussion will be to unravel what kind of intellectual Prior was in the 1940s. This is an important deliberation because the 1940s is an interesting and diverse time in Prior’s academic career. The 1930s saw Prior travelling and experimenting with various political and religious ideologies, and the 1950s saw Prior settling into a focussed and concrete academic pursuit. However, in the 1940s Prior’s religious beliefs are being re-considered, his academic roles are changing and his interests that we see throughout his writing vary dramatically, between ethics, theology, logic, and psychology to name a few. So far in this discussion, the private letters that Prior sent to Mary and Raphael have been discussed in the context of Prior’s personal life. In the 1940s there were a wide variety of articles that Prior wrote on interesting subjects that are somewhat removed from what he would go on to write in the 1950s. Two of these articles relevant to this discussion concerning Prior’s intellectual character in the 1940s include the radio broadcast transcript titled *Background to Overseas News* (1949) and the article *Tomorrow We Die* (1946). There is also a letter that Prior wrote to Raphael in 1949 that is relevant to this part of the discussion. These two works and the letter will be introduced soon, and transcriptions have been provided for all three works. Essentially, the purpose of this part in the discussion is to demonstrate that in addition to scholarly contributions, Prior made ‘public-facing’ contributions in the 1940s which adds another important element to his intellectual character,

- **Taking a Global View**

The term **public intellect** is either a relevant definition or totally redundant. The term public intellect can be seen as redundant because for one to be recognised as an intellect, one has already demonstrated that trait of theirs ‘publicly’, hence the redundancy of this term, as any intellectual in this circumstance would already be a public intellectual. However, there are several academics who believe that this term has relevancy, such as Daniel Brouwer and Catherine Squire who state in their work *Public Intellectuals, Public Life, and the University* (2003), that public intellectuals speak about “serious or grand issues. . . with exquisite depth of knowledge. . . [and are] listened to by important sectors of the public” (p. 204). Richard Posner

in his work *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline* (2003) states that an important role of the public intellectual is to educate broad audiences about equally broad public issues in a critical manner (p. 5). Finally, Amitai Etzioni in his work *Public Intellectuals: An Endangered Species?* (2006) states that public intellectuals “must engage in moral deliberations because all major public and social policies that they routinely criticize have important moral dimensions” (p. 3). These three definitions of a public intellect are useful in this discussion because they provide a theoretical backdrop against which we can consider Prior, his writing, and his own public-facing persona. What emerges is that Prior fits these three definitions well, as he was in the 1940s both a university researcher and a public intellectual.

Firstly, referring to Richard Posner’s definition of a public intellect - in which one educates audiences about broad issues - we can note that this is Prior’s aim in the radio broadcast transcript that he wrote in 1949 titled *Background to Overseas News*. In this transcript, Prior discusses the trial of Cardinal Mindzenty, who was the Hungarian Primate at the time before he was stripped of his role. Prior would have been interested in this piece of current events because the trial saw mass protesting on a global basis at the time. In this transcript Prior then goes on to discuss the unethical means the Hungarian government used to extort information from Mindzenty and his associates, and Prior further discusses and relates this event to other events in the world. The primary focus in Prior’s report is the Mindzenty trial itself, but as the title suggests, it becomes a more generalised report of the events overseas that are of the same nature as the trial in Hungary.

The following quotation has been provided below to give a sense of what Prior’s thoughts were on the global events at the time. This passage from *Background to Overseas News* (VL110) also contains attitudes that will be discussed in accordance with the previous definitions/roles of a public intellect.

There are still anti-Communist dictatorships as well as Communist ones in the world. There is an anti-Communist dictatorships [sic] in Spain for example, and for years now the kind of thing that shocks people when it goes on in Budapest has been going on in Spain. Men, poor men, tramway men for example, have been carted off to prison for small things as distributing a forbidden newspaper; after months they have been tried; they have been found guilty, in many cases they have probably been guilty, but their {3} guilt has been established by confessions

extorted from them in all kinds of ways, and long and severe sentences have been passed upon them for very small breaches of very oppressive laws. And it seems to me that the addresses we have lately read about from such people as Cardinal Spellman, and Dr. Downey [sic] of Liverpool, and the Duke of Norfolk, would have been vastly more moving and impressive if these men had been equally to the fore in organising mass meetings and protests against the same sort of injustice when it occurs – as it is continually occurring – in a place like Spain. For tyranny is tyranny, and injustice is injustice, whether it is practised in the name of something in which we believe or in the name of something in which we do not believe. And in one way, tyrannies and injustices which are practised in the name of something in which we believe are worse than the other sort; at all events, they concern us more directly (Prior, 1949, p. 2 - 3)

Firstly, looking back at Posner's (2003) definition of a public intellect, Prior educates a broad audience about a broad subject; the subject being how a corrupt political system that was employed in Spain was resulting in great injustices occurring, especially for the less fortunate members of the population. Instead of delving into a political discussion that is centred around political ideologies and theories, Prior brings light to the fact that people are suffering immensely. By using an example such as this, his discussion is universally understood by all listeners. Furthermore, a radio broadcast holds a different presence compared to a published article in a journal. Radio broadcasts reach audiences when articles cannot, and they also accommodate broader audiences than newspapers do. Etzioni (2006) discusses "moral deliberations" as being fundamental to the works of a public intellectual. In this report, Prior makes the comment that "tyranny is tyranny, and injustice is injustice, whether it is practised in the name of something in which we believe or in the name of something in which we do not believe" (p.3). Prior uses these words to evoke the idea that we are morally obligated regardless of our prior beliefs on the subject, or at least we are to accept that something is right or wrong despite our involvement in the subject.

An interesting piece of context to keep in mind when reading through this report is that it was written in February 1949, the same year that Prior published his book *Logic and the Basis of Ethics*. In this book, Prior examines and critiques arguments put forward by *naturalists* and *anti-naturalists*, with a wide variety of literature being included. Much of this work is made up

of long passages followed by deep analysis of what has been put forward. In letters to Raphael in 1949, Prior frequently mentions how he feels about philosophers that he was studying at the time, such as G.E. Moore, Bishop Butler and Ralph Cudworth, whose arguments are presented in *Logic and the Basis of Ethics*. Chapter II of *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* contains Cudworth's ideas on how 'things' are allocated their nature and role because of the qualities that they possess, which even God cannot change. These qualities are granted by nature and are inseparable from the thing itself, for they are what makes the thing what it is. In 1949, Prior quotes Cudworth in *Logic and the Basis of Ethics*, and includes Cudworth's statement that:

Moral good and evil...cannot possibly be arbitrary things, made by will without nature; because it is universally true, that things are what they are, not by will but by nature. As for example, things are white by whiteness, and black by blackness, triangular by triangularity, and round by rotundity, like by likeness, and equal by equality, that is, by such certain natures of their own (1949, p. 14)

Prior then sums up Cudworth's remark in his own analysis with the comment that "goodness can never be anything but goodness, and badness can never be anything but badness, nor can a thing be good without goodness or bad without badness" (1949, p. 15). Prior's comment here in *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* is similar to his comment "tyranny is tyranny, and injustice is injustice" in *Background to Overseas News* (1949, p.3). Both pieces of writing contain Prior's thoughts on how the necessary qualities that make up a 'thing', such as a moral 'right' or 'wrong', are inseparable from the thing itself. The influence from Prior's research into what became his work *Logic and the Basis of Ethics*, can clearly be seen in the report *Background to Overseas News*. While Prior discusses the Mindzenty trial, which forms the structure of this transcript, Prior then goes on to discuss Catholicism, mixed racial marriage, and religious liberty which all correlate with what was happening in Hungary at the time. All of Prior's points have substantial ethical deliberations within them, but he conveys these using a broad spectrum of language and a flair for tautologies. Prior must have enjoyed the fact that (1) 'tyranny is tyranny', (2) 'injustice is injustice', (3) 'goodness is goodness', (4) 'badness is badness', are all tautologies.

From the ‘Young Priggish Man’ to the ‘Symbolic Logician’: Arthur Prior during the years.

- **Political Interests**

I have put forward the argument that in the report *Background to Overseas News* as well as in Prior’s personal letters to Raphael, we can see Prior as a public intellectual. However, I believe that it is important to note that Prior’s public intellectualism was part of who he was well before 1949, in fact it was part of who Prior was throughout his entire life. This radio broadcast resembles a collection of letters that Prior wrote to the *Otago Daily Times* in 1937, twelve years prior to *Background to Overseas News*. In these earlier letters from 1937, Prior who referred to himself as ‘Independent Labour’, strongly opposed capitalist ideologies and therefore indulged in socialism in his case. In one letter Prior replied to a capitalist contributor of the newspaper who wrote using the name of ‘Junius N.Z.’, stating “‘Junius N.Z.’ also says that ‘the maximum wage for the minimum of effort’ is the slogan of Socialism. . . your contributor has taken sides in the class war. And so must we all. We must all fight either with the wage-earners for a society of wage-earners or with the profit-seekers for a society of profitseekers” (Prior, 1937). This letter from the *Otago Daily Times* reflected not only Prior’s thoughts at the time, but also the thoughts of some New Zealanders

The ‘great depression’ hit New Zealand in the early 1930s and New Zealanders felt the financial impacts through into the mid to late part of the decade.

For New Zealand, as for most of the world outside Russia, the great depression of the early 1930s was the most shattering economic experience ever recorded. Exports fell by 45 per cent in two years, national income by 40 per cent in three. . . The depression has rightly been described as a traumatic experience; for the second time at least since the founding of the colony, new New Zealanders found themselves disillusioned by the appearance in their adopted country of conditions they thought they had escaped from (A. H. McLintock, 1966).

In the 1930s, a ‘free for all’ styled magazine *Tomorrow* was created, with its first publication in 1934. The purpose of this magazine, created by Andrew Kennaway Henderson, was to generate a platform where anyone could share their thoughts regarding the unnerving and unsteady political situation in New Zealand at the time. *Tomorrow* soon became overtaken by

left-wing thinkers and writers, who took the opportunity to express their opinions freely, including Prior, who wrote articles for *Tomorrow* in the 1930s (Grimshaw, 2018, p. 16). With no editorial statement included in the publications until April 1937, this was a magazine that reflected the real thoughts of every individual who wrote in (Cutler, 1990, p. 24). Cutler goes on to state that the magazine “felt that New Zealanders were too accepting of their situation, and that there was not enough criticism and anger in the discussion of issues. The magazine also considered that there was a need for discussion and debate about controversial social and political issues” (p. 24). Prior’s contributions to this magazine reflects the controversial nature that Cutler describes, as Prior was writing for *Tomorrow* under the pen name ‘Richard Bramley’ as a precaution while he was still a student (Grimshaw, 2018, p. 21). The importance of this is that Prior’s discussion in *Background to Overseas News* resembles the discussions and past attitudes of Priors’, which gives us a better understanding of what parts of his ‘intellectual character’ remained as so throughout the years.

- **Religious Interests**

Tomorrow We Die (1946) is an article that Prior wrote for the *New Zealand Student Christian Movement* (NZSCM). Looking at the history of the NZSCM in the 1930s and 1940s, it seems clear that Prior would have joined the NZSCM when he was an undergraduate at the University of Otago. Prior’s religious and political interests were shaped and perpetuated by his involvement with the movement, and his involvement was nothing short of substantial. Prior co-edited *Open Windows*, which was the NZSCM’s home journal up until 1936 when it was renamed *The Student* (Grimshaw, 2018, p. 16, 17). Furthermore, Prior met Clare Hunter who would become his first wife and he subsequently met Basil Downing and Lex Miller with whom Prior remained in contact right through into the 1940s, because of his membership with the organisation (Grimshaw, 2018, p. 17). In the year that Prior wrote *Tomorrow We Die* in 1946, he had removed himself from his affiliation with communist/socialist thought and practice, which he admitted to Lex Miller in a letter in 1946 and wrote of his experience with far-left socialist thought as a bad dream of sorts (Copeland, 2020). This evolution of Prior’s political ideology can be noted in 1949 when Prior wrote *Background to Overseas News*, in which as previously discussed, Prior shares his views and concerns about communism as a corrupt political system that he eventually saw it as.

There are thematic similarities between *Tomorrow We Die* and other articles that Prior wrote in the later part of the 1940s, as he discusses pre-destination and psychoanalysis. It is an

interesting read as he discusses the subject of death within a religious context, while referring to psychoanalysis, poetry, and other aspects in literature such as the classic *Moby Dick*. Prior discusses symbols and the importance of them in *Tomorrow We Die*, which contributes significantly to his discussion surrounding the nature of death and human nature. Prior uses the examples of the forbidden fruit that Adam ate and the sinking of the whaling ship in *Moby Dick* to show that ultimate destruction is a tangible part of life, and although there may be life, destruction or death is an inseparable part of it. For example, as Prior writes in *Tomorrow We Die* “even though “Adam” lives on long after his sin – Death has entered into his nature, into our nature” (1946, p. 2). This is a pre-deterministic way of viewing the nature of life, and our part in it, which is how Prior was choosing to view life then. Death appears to be central to Prior’s thoughts in this article because it correlates with Prior’s uncertainties around pre-destination at the time of writing. Essentially, the importance of including *Tomorrow We Die*, is that it shows that Prior was still thinking about these themes through the earlier part of the 1940s up until 1946. These themes that are central to death and destruction, are somewhat of a continuation of Prior’s much earlier work *Three Little Essays* from 1931.

Another theme that is present in *Tomorrow We Die*, which Prior discusses in his *Three little Essays*, is Prior’s interest in symbols and hidden parallels. Prior’s interests in hidden parallels within texts can be seen in his *Three Little Essays* and throughout the many works of his that followed. Adriane Rini (2020) in her chapter *Prior in New Zealand, 1931* from the work *Three Little Essays: Arthur Prior in 1931*, discusses Prior’s interests in symbols and hidden parallels.

Prior is exploring the theme of determinism, and he does so by tracing it across a wide collection of literary, religious, and scientific texts. Prior’s chosen texts range, e.g., from Calvinist writings, to Shelley’s “Queen Mab”, to Einstein’s discussions of relativity. Where-ever Prior detects a whiff of determinism, he pounces on it, carefully noting it in his essays. As a consequence of this, the *Three Little Essays*, when taken as a whole, stand as what my old comparative literature professors would have called a study in ‘inter-textuality’ — a study in which Prior is asking how the concept of determinism fares when it is put to use here in this text and there in that one. We can already see a mind which delights in exposing parallels (p. 26-27).

In the June of 1937, Prior wrote to Ursula Bethell and talked of this method of learning and retaining information of any kind, that he called ‘cross-referencing’. Prior noted that he was “always reading Barth & finding that he reminds me of something in Maurice (or vice versa), & looking it up, & jotting it down in the margin of one book or the other” (Grimshaw, 2018, p. 120). Five years later in a diary entry from 1942, Prior refers to himself as a dabbler in many things, as he refers to his interest in dilettantism, and claims to be one for “piecing together a view of the universe out of various scraps of knowledge and putting the whole thing forward as an intellectual construction worth looking at” (Prior, 1942). This is what we can see Prior doing within the religious texts that he wrote in the 1940s, such as in *Robert Barclay, Quaker or Calvinist* (1941). Historically Calvinism as a religious doctrine accepts the theory of pre-destination, while Quakerism does not accept pre-destination as such a virtue, as Calvinists do. However, Prior finds linguistic similarities and patterns in both doctrines, that suggest otherwise and implies that both Quakers and Calvinists accept the theory of pre-destination. Prior believes that Quakers and Calvinists share a ‘trick of language’, in which both groups refer to the term “seed of Christ” (p. 5). This term has direct correlations with salvation versus damnation, as the scripture from both doctrines states that there is a seed within us that we can only awaken through preaching and prayer (p. 5). While John Knox refers to this seed only being in the hearts of the elect, and not all men, Barclay on the other hand describes this seed as a light that exists in us all, despite our sins (p. 5). Although it is a term that has slightly different implications between these two doctrines, Prior still sees it as a shared concept, and a concept that “shares important similarities in its concrete consequences” (p. 6).

Following the writing of *Robert Barclay, Quaker or Calvinist* (1941), Prior’s interests in religion and understanding how human nature is determined by God, became a focus in his writing for a moment. We can see how Prior is consumed by the thought and question of how can we be saved by God, when our own very nature is corrupt? Prior employs different trains of thought throughout these articles to help give him an answer, including turning to the literature of Sigmund Freud, who is commonly mentioned throughout the early and mid-1940s. This focus that Prior takes on religious enquiry, harks back to the younger Prior that we can see in 1931 in his *Three Little Essays*. As Rini (2020) states, Prior in 1931 was “exploring the theme of determinism, and he does so by tracing it across a wide collection of literary, religious, and scientific texts” (p. 26). This is exactly what Prior does once again in the 1940s. For example, in *Tomorrow We Die* (1946), Prior explores determinism by tracing it through literary texts such as *Moby Dick*, and by discussing Freudian theory.

Conclusion

- **Prior throughout the years**

Both Grimshaw and Copeland find a 'loud and controversial tone' in some of Priors writing from the 1930s. Copeland describes Prior during these years as a "priggish young man" (Copeland, 2020, 3.6), which Grimshaw somewhat validates in his book *Arthur Prior: A Young Progressive* (2018) as well as in his work *The prior Prior: Neglected early writings of Arthur N. Prior* (2002), in which Grimshaw states that "the predominant tone of much of his early writing is anything but collegial – in fact, much of it is unashamedly confrontational" (p. 483). Various factors contributed to this controversial young man that Prior was seen to be during these years. Among these factors were the social unrest in New Zealand during the 1930s, Prior's relationship with Clare Hunter and communism, and Prior's interest in religious doctrines such as Calvinism and the idea of pre-destination. This 'tone' is also present through his *Three Little Essays* that he wrote in 1931. I have made thematic parallels and noted differences that can be found in *Tomorrow We Die* (1946), which was one of Prior's last religious articles written in the 1940s, and *Essays Religious* (1931), which was one of the first pieces of religious text that Prior wrote. Similarities between Prior's earlier political writing from the 1930s and *Background to Overseas News* (1949) have also been noted. The purpose of including *Background to Overseas News* and *Tomorrow We Die* is to broaden the picture we have of Prior in order to allow us to trace the changes both in his personal life and in his academic interests, and to allow us to see that even in the midst of such changes, there are aspects of Prior's method which he retained over the decades. Prior's interest in religion, although forever changing throughout his life, **remained** an interest in his life. *Tomorrow We Die* can almost be seen as a 'last-ditch' effort of Prior's at discussing his interest in pre-destination within a religious context. My hope for **Part III** of this thesis, has been to create an image of what kind of intellectual Prior became, following the significant changes in his life. Finally, I aimed to represent Prior's intellectual opinions and works from the 1940s as honestly as I could. I therefore felt that describing Prior as a 'public intellect' throughout these years did him justice. Prior's sometimes 'preachy persona' and strong moral compass that can be seen in his articles and letters, are traits of this public intellect that effectively describes Prior.

- The letters

The 19 annotations that I have included, have formed the foundation and structure of what this work has become. The material within these letters and articles have provided me with an abundance of information that has led to what has become an investigation and exploration of Prior's life in the 1940s. By only including annotations from the latter half of the 1940s, a gap in Arthur Prior's life has now been filled with details concerning his personal and professional life. This detailed exploration of this decade also forms a bridge between Grimshaw's young and outspoken Prior, and the more mature scholar that many philosophers know as the 'Father of Tense Logic'. The Prior that we discover in the 1940s is a warm, loving and incredibly excitable person, who slowly finds his way into tense logic, which eventually became his life's work. My hope for this thesis is that it creates a clearer understanding of who Prior was in these selected years. Furthermore, as I stated in my introduction to this thesis, I feel that it has become a continuation of sorts of Grimshaw's *Arthur Prior – A 'Young Progressive'* (2018). Therefore, I have aimed to create a better understanding of who Prior was in these years, just as Grimshaw was able to do so in his research into Prior's life in the 1930s.

In summary, the most important findings from these letters, in the eyes of a Priorian scholar, are probably the details about Prior's turn towards logic in 1949. The remarkable extent of Prior's engagement with baby Martin is also a detail which these letters suddenly allow us to see. Firstly, the correspondence between Prior and D. D. Raphael in 1949, provide great insight into Prior's gradual shift into what became his life's work. Up until now, it has been suggested that Prior did not become familiar with symbolic logic until 1950. By late 1951, there is correspondence between Prior and M. Bocheński, a Polish Logician, that we have on record which detail Prior's evolving interest and engagement in symbolic logic. However, what we can see in Prior's correspondence with Raphael, is that Prior is finding Johnson's works of incredible value. Again, up until now Johnson has been commonly regarded as a traditional syllogistic logician, whereas we are now beginning to understand that there was more symbolic logic in his works than first believed. Prior was engaged in these works, and he asserted the need for a 4th volume of Johnson's *Logic*, which suggests that he was discovering interesting concepts in these works which led to his growing interest of formal logic. The importance of Johnson's influence on Prior is a discovery which has the potential to become a focus of future research concerning Prior's turn towards logic.

Finally, Prior's engagement with Martin's intellectual growth in the 1940s, is of value to the Priorian community, and to New Zealand social historians because it further establishes what kind of man Arthur Prior was. In particular, the correspondence between Arthur and Mary in 1946, indicates that Prior was a highly engaged father and husband, which has been an important point to establish. In **Part II** of this thesis, the historical information surrounding fathers and men in New Zealand in the 1940s helps round out and contribute to Prior's attitudes in the letters. As I have previously stated, it was the discovery of Mary's miscarriage in 1946 that grabbed my attention, because Prior effectively became a solo-parent, and his day-to-day life changed overnight. This unfortunate period in the Prior's life contributed a great deal to creating the more mellow and loving Prior that we see emerging in the 1940s.

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